Art Commission Application Form

You must submit the following along with this form as a single PDF.

- Individual or organizational statement (250 word max)
- Letter of intent that includes history of project and its impact on the community (500 word max)
- Visual materials (See Art Commission Guidelines for requirement)
- Budget describing cost of materials, artist fees, maintenance, installation, etc.
- Two letters of support from project partners or neighborhood organizations
- One letter of support from the Department of Public Works or Department of Mobility & Infrastructure

Notes:

- You may be required to hold a Development Activities Meeting with the applicable Registered Community Organization prior to Hearing. For more information, visit pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/rco.
- After receiving Art Commission approval, any necessary permits, certificates of occupancy, legal agreements, or other city approvals are still required. These must be applied for separately at the appropriate City departments and are the responsibility of the applicant.
- Application format is a digital copy of full application form, required documents, and the presentation to be projected at the Hearing as one single PDF. Send all documents to pacd@pittsburghpa.gov.

Project Information

Type of Project: Conceptual Review
- Conceptual/Final Review
- Final Review
- Courtesy Review

Has this project been come before Art Commission before?
- No
- Yes, when:_____________

Duration of project: temporary exhibition, 2023

Permanen?  □ No  □ Yes
Project Location

Address: Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

Cross Streets or other relevant information:

Neighborhood:

Applicant Information

Name: Sarah Minnaert, Public Art & Civic Design Manager
      PACD, Department of City Planning

Mailing Address: 200 Ross Street, 4th Floor

City: Pittsburgh    State: PA    Zip: 15219

Phone: 412-389-8015

Email: sarah.minnaert@pittsburghpa.gov

Relationship or Role in Project: PACD Staff

Co-Applicant (optional)
Name: LAXART

Mailing Address: 7000 Santa Monica Blvd.

City: Los Angeles, CA 90038

Phone: 323-871-4140

Email: info@laxart.org

Relationship or Role in Project: Requesting Borrower

Presenter at Hearing if different than applicant:
City of Pittsburgh

DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

JOHN P. ROBIN CIVIC BUILDING

September 1, 2021

City of Pittsburgh Art Commission
200 Ross Street
Civic Building, Fourth Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Art Commission,

In October 2017, following a robust public process and special hearings, the Pittsburgh Art Commission voted to remove the 1900 statue, “Stephen Foster,” by Giuseppe Moretti from public property and public viewing. The City of Pittsburgh agreed to store the monument in a City facility until an appropriate location—including proper contextualization and interpretation—could be identified.

LAXART, a non-profit visual art space in Los Angeles that focuses on addressing the key social and political issues of our time through the lens of contemporary art, contacted the City in early 2021 to discuss the potential loan of Pittsburgh’s Stephen Foster monument to an upcoming exhibition.

MONUMENTS, co-curated by Hamza Walker, Executive Director of LAXART, and internationally known artist Kara Walker, will display de-commissioned Confederate monuments in the museum’s galleries alongside works of contemporary art in order to question the geographically-specific context for these statues and the role they play in conversations about race, censorship, and American history.

The Los Angeles exhibition is scheduled to open to the public in fall 2023 at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Additionally, scholars, artists, and politicians will be invited to contribute essays to an accompanying publication in order to provide greater insight into the history and impact of this unique category of public art.

Though he is not a Confederate figure, Walker asserts that Foster played a pivotal role in constructing a romantic vision of the Old South and perpetuated the “happy slave” narrative that is a central tenet of the Lost Cause. Moretti’s monument reinforces the centrality of blackface minstrelsy to both Foster’s career and the history of American music. Please see the July 16, 2021 loan request letter from LAXART, attached.

Lending Pittsburgh’s Stephen Foster monument to this important exhibition benefits the public both at a national and a local level. In addition to ensuring that all administrative, crating, shipping, and insurance costs are covered by the exhibition organizers, the City of Pittsburgh has an opportunity to create a condition of loan approval by which LAXART would agree to facilitate and arrange for the exhibition artist responding to Foster, to participate in Pittsburgh-based public programming around our monument, and the role it plays in race, censorship, and American history.

The Department of City Planning supports this loan request and recommends Art Commission review and approval as outlined in Chapter 175.04. We recommend that this loan request be placed on the September 22, 2021 Art Commission
meeting agenda. Following Art Commission approval, staff would work with LAXART on the details and conditions of the loan.

Sincerely,

Andrew Dash, AICP
Planning Director

cc: Sarah Minnaert, Public Art & Civic Design Manager
Dear Mayor Peduto,

I am writing to you in my role as Director of LAXART, a nonprofit visual-arts space in Los Angeles, California that utilizes contemporary art as a means of understanding key issues of our time. Following the actions of white supremacists Dylann Roof in Charleston in 2015 and James Alex Fields, Jr. in Charlottesville in 2017 as well as Bree Newsome’s defiant climb to the top of a flagpole at the South Carolina Statehouse to remove the Confederate battle flag, dozens of monuments were removed and schools and streets were renamed across the South. By 2018, the debate sparked by the removal of these Confederate symbols led to the conception of MONUMENTS (working title), an exhibition I am co-curating with artist Kara Walker slated to open in Fall 2023 at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in downtown LA.¹ Further, the events of this past summer have warranted an expansion of the exhibition’s scope to encompass the prospect of reparations, healing, and a greater reckoning with America’s past.

We have selected a group of recently decommissioned monuments from throughout the United States that we hope to put on display with the help of local and national municipalities as well as historical and art historical institutions. To date we have confirmed loans from Baltimore, Montgomery, Manatee County, Denton, the Houston Museum of African American Culture, and the Maier Museum at Randolph College. Additionally, artists such as Ja’Tovia Gary, Torkwase Dyson, Abigail Deville, Natalie Ball, Devóne Tines, and Leonardo Drew will create new artworks inspired by the historic monuments in order to confront and challenge long held beliefs about the real people behind these inanimate objects and the ways in which we can build a roadmap forward. In exhibiting a variety of monuments in an indoor gallery space, we are hoping to question the geographically specific context for these statues as well as the role they play in discussions about race, gender, and American history. How does collective memory differ from history and how should we decide who and what is worth celebrating, especially as public values change over time? The questions addressed in the galleries will also serve as a basis

¹ Though Los Angeles may seem an odd location for an exhibition about a largely Southern phenomenon, Los Angeles has its own interesting history with the Confederacy and MOCA’s galleries are not far from where D.W. Griffith’s The Birth of a Nation, another sort of Confederate monument, was filmed.
for a robust series of public programming featuring contributions from art historians, politicians, journalists, scholars, poets, historians, and artists. These talks and panels will also be translated into a scholarly publication that will accompany the exhibition and provide broader context.

_Stephen Foster_ would be an excellent addition to this exhibition. Though he is not a Confederate figure, Foster played a pivotal role in constructing a romantic vision of the Old South and perpetuated the “happy slave” narrative that is a central tenet of the Lost Cause. The inclusion of “Uncle Ned” in Foster’s monument reinforces the centrality of blackface minstrelsy to both Foster’s career and the history of American music. Additionally, the actions taken by the Pittsburgh Arts Commission are an interesting case study into the ways in which communities grapple with questions of heritage and representation and how municipalities respond to current events and/or the desires of their constituents.

We have contracted with **Methods & Materials, Inc.**, a professional art handling company based out of Chicago, for shipment logistics. They specialize in rigging, transport, installation, and de-installation of large sculptural works. They have worked with museums, art collectors, and municipalities throughout the country. All associated shipping and storage costs would be paid for, in full, by LAXART with funds from private donors as well as grants we have received from the **Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation**, the **Ford Foundation**, and the **Warhol Foundation**.

I understand that these objects evoke strong emotions and dig deep into collective identity and belonging; this is precisely the reason why MONUMENTS and the questions it hopes to investigate are critically relevant. I am available to discuss the project and our intentions with any and all concerned individuals to tell them more about this project. We are hoping to broaden and deepen the discourse _from_ all sides and _for_ all sides as the issue is anything but black and white. We cannot do this without your help. Thank you so much for your consideration and I hope this is the beginning of many conversations.

Sincerely,

Hamza Walker