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:  
- [X] Conceptual Review
- [ ] Conceptual/Final Review
- [ ] Final Review
- [ ] Courtesy Review

Has this project been come before Art Commission before?

- [ ] No  
- [X] Yes, when: 11/17/21

Duration of project: From ___/___/____ to ___/___/____

Permanent?  
- [ ] No  
- [X] Yes
Conceptual Review for Art in Parks
Hutabut LLC

Project Location

Address: Frick Park – exact location to be determined

Neighborhood: Squirrel Hill

Applicant Information

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

Mailing Address: 200 Ross St, 4th Floor, Pittsburgh PA 15219

Phone: 412.255.8996 Email: sarah.minnaert@pittsburghpa.gov

Relationship or Role in Project: Public Art & Civic Design Manager
PROJECT CONCEPT

The description, annotated renders, and additional drawings address the Commission’s November 17th meeting questions and feedback and highlight considerations as it evolves from a concept to a final proposal.

I look forward to the Commissioners’ feedback on the revised concept proposal.

The proposed artwork for Riverview Hill in Frick Park uses the merry-go-round and the tilt-a-whirl as its visual and functional language to create a participatory, hybrid park bench/amusement park ride to create a folly in the landscape that will be a respite, a destination, and a gathering place.

**Canopy** Modify the shape & iconography. Consider the addition of colored translucent polycarbonate (KODA X).

**Benches** Consider other bench styles that make a strong visual connection to the canopy.

**Top of the three vertical pipes** Consider something other than spheres at the top of the three pipes, perhaps additional animated element(s).

**Color** The proposed colors will be primarily light and dark blues and lilac, with touches of yellow, creating a contrast to its principally green surroundings and a connection to the site’s other dominant color field—the sky.

**Movement** The 4-seat draped-steel seating units rotate about 50° such that one has a choice to face others and engage in conversation or look out at the panoramic landscape. If people are sitting back-to-back, turning the 4-seat seating unit requires cooperation.

The wind sways the canopy suspended ten feet above. Also, people interacting with the sculpture causes the three vertical pipes to shake and teeter-totter the canopy. The animated canopy occasionally results in people switching their gaze from other people or the landscape to the sky above at the same time as the canopy’s shadow dances on the grass. The swaying canopy atop a vertical column also mimics the trees that surround and dot the landscape.
Other movements such as bouncing or swinging potentially create safety issues, maintenance issues, and engineering challenges, given the dynamics of a vertical structure.

**Location** The artwork, a folly in the landscape, is located on the Riverview Trail, the artwork joins the series of steel structures—workout stations—distributed along the trail as it passes through Riverview Hill. Currently, I am leaning toward the location in the center of Riverview Hill but would like to make another site visit before proposing a final location.

**Interaction among viewers/participants** The sculpture instigates interaction and fosters engagement by:

- The possibility for a shared experience with a stranger which is, by definition, disarming; triangulation
- Creating a playful mood
- A seductive invitation to participate

**ADA** Based on experience, the artwork meets ADA guidelines if people in wheelchairs can actively participate by being in close proximity to the artwork. In the case of the proposed artwork, there is room for a wheelchair between the seating units.

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1 Triangulation is a term coined by urban planners William and Holly White to describe the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to strangers as if they know each other.
BIO
In the 1980s, Matthew Geller switched his studio practice from primarily sculpture to the production of video works, reworking the structure and style of television storytelling with comic narratives that played off conventional genres—documentary, fairytale, melodrama. Geller uses fragmentation and disjunction as storytelling devices to intercut several seemingly unrelated anecdotal stories into cohesive if nonlinear, narratives. Beginning with his fellowship at the American Academy in Rome, he integrated his storytelling skills by creating intimately observed worlds in miniature. For the past 18 years, he has taken these ideas, changed the scale, and extended the possibilities for site and a chaotic viewership by producing temporary and permanent public art, which has been described in various ways, from "urban earth-works" to "industrial baroque settees."

Geller has created public artworks throughout the United States and in Canada. He has exhibited at the: Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum, New Museum, Kunst Kanaal—Amsterdam, Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum—Eindhoven, Witte de With—Rotterdam, Smithsonian Institute, Los Angeles Contemporary Art, Queens Museum, Boston ICA, Chicago MCA, Moderna Musset—Stockholm, among others.

Geller’s public artwork has won numerous awards, and he has received fellowships from the American Academy in Rome, National Endowment for the Arts, and New York Foundation for the Arts. He has received grants from Creative Capital, New York State Council on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Jerome Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Art, and Greenwall Foundation, among others.

ARTIST STATEMENT
Matthew Geller’ history with public art has included many object-based and site-specific artworks integrated with their environment. The artworks are participatory, interactive, and kinetic, promoting inclusivity and creative uses of the site. While his work is visually eclectic, his work always creates moments of respite, contemplation, and delight, befitting the site’s functional and visual context. This would also be the case for the Frick Park public artwork, which will provide a sense of place, create a landmark and a destination, and foster the ideals of an inclusive and diverse community.

Geller purposefully uses materials from the everyday outdoor environment—anything from benches, to swings, to canopies, to pipes—and brings them into the realm of art. He creates a level of connection to the familiar while highlighting elements of awe and
beguilement, often using existing artifacts from the site and retrofitting them to make a micro public square or landmark that encourages creative patterns of use.

The works are spirited, accessible, participatory, and very often unexpected. By considering behavioral design and combining strong visuals with dynamic elements activated by people and changes in ambient light and weather, the resulting work is in constant flux. The artwork becomes part of the community's fabric and is integral in shaping how we live in public space. The idea is to surprise while fostering a sense of community around an unlikely object or site.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- August Frick Park tour focusing on potential sites
  - Sarah Minnaert, Public Art & Civic Design Manager, Department of City Planning
  - Erica Heide, Park Ranger
  - Kathryn Hunningen Sr. Manager of Special Initiatives, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

- Site review by Tom Paulin, Superintendent, Department of Public Works
  - No issues with the site.

- Squirrel Hill RCO (SHUC) meeting
  - Presented past work and shared potential sites
    - SHUC to share information with other RCOs adjacent to the Park and others.

- AiR Community Meeting, November 10th

- Sophia Fang, Frick Park Storyteller
  - Meeting to discuss public art and storytelling project status and process.

- Engage Park Survey
  - https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/art-parks/hutabut-llc
Consider something other than spheres at the top of the pipes. Perhaps an additional moving element.

Modify shape & iconography.
Consider the addition of colored translucent polycarbonate (KODA X).

Consider other bench styles that make a strong visual connection to the canopy.
Artwork Sites Under Consideration