SEATTLE CITY LIGHT Artist in Residence Proposal Descriptions

Created for Seattle City Light and The Seattle Arts Commission



Electrical Parade New York 1884

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Seattle City Light's Art Master Plan Submitted March 7, 2000 and amended April 7, 2003

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Other Artist Opportunities

Ongoing Artist in Residence Program Performance at the Georgetown Steam Plant Display Lighting at Broad Street and/or South Substation Recycled Light Union Substation (*The Electric Gallery*) North Cascades Environmental Education Center Seattle Center Winterfest Display Truck Visibility and Billboards Pad Mount Transformers within Neighborhoods Parade Floats and Visibility Ladder Creek Falls Rehab SCL Web Page Art Collection Rectifier Buildings and 4kv Substations Powerline Right-of-Ways Downtown Substation SCL Employees Gallery SCC Mural

Concluding thoughts



This residency was a fascinating opportunity to view a large multi-faceted public utility from the inside out. Of all the divisions to be located in, the Environment and Safety Division has a remarkably broad breadth of interactions that slice throughout the entire utility. Through them, I feel honored to have had the opportunity to see so many parts of Seattle City Light.

In beginning to understand this division, the employees took me snorkeling with the spawning salmon- giving me a fisheye view of the amazing dance that begins and ends their lives. We went up to the Skagit River to observe the bald eagle populations, the bear and other wildlife that cohabits the river that we use to generate power. I was taken to an old out of commission powerplant that once ran on coal and fuel- and now remains a historic monument to that forgotten age. Then I was swept off to the largest hydroelectric facility we receive power from- on the Canadian / Idaho boarder. While there, I was taken deep within the bowels of the earthen dam- and inside the water tunnels and turbine runner chambers. Then back in Seattle, I was given a tour of the System Control Center- the "master control" of the utility. There I saw the giant curved wall that displays all the electrical distribution of the region with flashing lights and digital displays similar to an airport tower control. And of course, I had great interactions with the line crews and the folks that manage the day to day operations at SCL.

From the proposal descriptions, you will see that I was significantly inspired from these and many other rich experiences within the utility. There is a wealth of education, experience and inspiration at work within the walls- and out of doors of Seattle City Light. I only hope that the public through some of the artwork generated through this residency will have the opportunity to glimpse some of the inner workings of SCL.

This Artist in Residence was composed of three elements: conceptualizing projects that I would be interested in creating, identifying other opportunities for other artists and giving artistic design advice and feedback to design teams for ongoing CIP's within the Environment and Safety Division. The following list contains descriptions of proposal ideas and opportunities I have identified for other opportunities and myself in the near future.

UPDATE:

The italicized notations are the in-line updated information with regards to the selected projects. Other projects without updates while still part of the arts plan may have yet to be engaged or selected as active priorities.

The Artist in Residency program swiftly moved from the planning to the implementation phase of the residency. The residency has seen substantial change within the agency, from a swelling of prospective revenue and energy trading in order to capture the most profit for the City to the disastrous energy scandal epitomized by the Enron debacle and ultimately the loss of the utility's top position through an unsavory political debate.



At the end of the project proposal section are some final thoughts and comments on how the residency could be improved.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROPOSALS

Skagit Streaming

-This is an artwork utilizing various video streaming and projecting technologies to give city viewers various windows into the Skagit River.







Background

Seattle City Light is connecting the Skagit Hydroelectric Facilities to the various administrative and operational locations in Seattle via a new fiber optic cable. This cable runs on top of the powerlines and connects into the city's communication system so that the Skagit facility can teleconference and have better shared information with the SCL operations here in Seattle. What originally inspired this project was the fact that the people operating the water levels at the dams were hundreds of miles from the hydro facilities. I thought that a video monitor showing how their actions directly influenced the environment would lead to helpful and thoughtful understandings of how their actions impact nature. And as an afterthought, that this information would give a unique window into the Skagit River system where we harness the river's water for Seattle's electricity.

Video Streaming

The idea is simple. At the Skagit River there will be 3 cameras providing 3 views. The cameras will be turned on in the morning and will record and send the video signal down the fiber optic cable to Seattle. In Seattle, the signal is split. A live version of the Skagit images will be put on a web page so that anyone at a computer can have a "live" window into the Skagit. The other half of the signal will be recorded on a "digital VCR" server that will save the video for after dark. In the evening, the "live video" will play back 4-6 hours of unedited footage depending on the time of year. The video images will be projected onto a large white screen attached to the backside of the Bon Marché' parking garage.

The windows into the Skagit will provide 3 distinctly different views: **Creekside, Fisheye** and **Microscopic**. Each window tells a different story and offers a unique and ever-changing perspective. Each camera view will be shown for 1-2 minutes and then will be switched to the next camera.

The **Creekside** camera will show a static shot of the flowing river, reeds, trees and creekside animal activity. We can expect to sometimes see bear eagles, otters, raccoon, elk, deer, butterflies and other animals as they pass before the camera.

The **Fisheye** camera will be placed under water- hidden in an artificial boulder. The angle of the camera will provide not just a fish nose swimming into the camera shot, but will also show fish from a 3/4's side perspective.

The **Microscopic** camera will capture the smallest life in the river. In order to get interesting footage on a microscopic level, we will be sampling the river water and bring it to a university laboratory to film this fascinating world. This 6 hours of microscopic footage will be stored in the video server and will be accessed like a live camera as the perspective shifts from one camera angle to another.



UPDATE: This project had a successful temporary launching on the side of the Bon Marche' parking Garage Seattle Muni Building and the WWW. The project was originally designed for permanent location on the surface of a building or solid wall. As a temporary showcase of this project, we erected a 38'x 40' black out screen on the side of the Bon parking garage. The screen material was designed to last 2 years, where upon we planned to have had found a permanent home for the project.

The project was launched April 6, 2001 and was successfully embraced by the community and the press. I personally viewed a number of folks would come out with their lawn chairs to watch the evening's activities. Others came and parked their car and viewed the project as if it were a drive in.