

ESTABLISHING AN ART RENTAL AND SALES SERVICE IN WHITE ROCK

Report on Consensus Consultations with Artists and Others

November 28, 2014

BACKGROUND

As early as 1975 residents of the White Rock – South Surrey area enjoyed access to works of art on a loan basis through the Picture Loan Society. This volunteer-operated organization provided area residents and businesses with the opportunity to rent original works of art for a nominal fee, with the option of applying rent paid toward purchase of the work. The Society retained a portion of the rental and purchase monies paid. Artists were invited to participate and could also approach the Program on their own. This service operated until approximately 2001.

Over the past several months Semiahmoo Arts (The Community Arts Council of White Rock and District) has fostered efforts to re-establish an art rental service. To that end consultations with artists and others were held through the summer with a view to gathering a consensus on how the service should be operated. This report brings that consensus forward. Our intention is to introduce a new Semiahmoo Art Rental and Sales Program in February of 2015.

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Progress to date is thanks to many of our local artists who provided suggestions and ideas and to the individuals who run similar art rental services in neighbouring cities and were generous with their time and advice. I also want to thank Richard Tetrault, whose experience as an artist, a client and in program delivery is matched only by his willingness to share it. My thanks also go to the Board of Directors of Semiahmoo Arts for their encouragement, support and patience. *Greg Smith*

OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMIAHMOO ART RENTAL AND SALES PROGRAM

The art rental and sales program has the following objectives:

- To enhance White Rock's vision of being a supportive environment for artistic expression
- To contribute to the economic success of local and regional artists
- To create a potent new context for members of the public to enjoy and acquire works of art
- To generate revenue for organizations engaged in fostering the arts.

BASIC OPERATING FEATURES

When will the Semiahmoo Art Rental and Sales Program get started?

Our intention is to introduce a new Semiahmoo Art Rental and Sales Program in February of 2015.

What kinds of art works will be accepted for rent or sale?

We want this to be an inclusive undertaking, to include paintings, drawings, etchings, sculpture and pottery, photographs and multimedia works. Any artist is welcome to contact the Program to discuss participation with us at 2gregsmith@gmail.com, at 604-862-3300, or in person at any location.

How can artists participate?

Participating artists will be asked to submit a photograph of up to three works of art (e.g. drawing, painting, photograph, sculpture or other medium) to be used in a catalogue, as well as biographical notes of up to a half page in length, including web site and other contact information if desired.

Artists are asked to send this material by mail or in person to Greg Smith, Semiahmoo Art Rental and Sales Program, 1046 Stevens Street, White Rock BC, V4B 4X7, or by email to 2gregsmith@gmail.com. For any other questions or concerns, please use the email address or call 604-862-3300.

Who decides what works merit inclusion in the Program?

In the initial stages of the art rental service, we will not use a jury process to select works to be included for rent or sale. The market will indicate what works are most appreciated. Nevertheless, the coordinator of the service may decline to accept a work of art. Over time we intend to introduce a jury process, as other similar services have, for at least some of the works available.

One issue underlined by several people is the need to keep the collection of works fresh. We will work with artists to rotate their work on a periodic basis.

Will artists be charged any fee to participate?

There will be no participation fee for artists or clients (renters and purchasers). Of course, we would encourage everyone to join Semiahmoo Arts as a way of strengthening the arts in our community.

Is this Program restricted to White Rock and South Surrey artists?

No. However, we will organize special showings and events to showcase artists in the communities served by Semiahmoo Arts.

How will submitted works be valued?

Artists will be asked to assign the value of each work they submit. The service will assist artists who are not certain of the value that should be assigned.

How will the service be promoted and advertised?

At the outset there will not be sufficient funds to carry out significant paid advertising; that may come later. In the meantime we will rely on unpaid advertising, posters and cards, word of mouth, targeted information campaigns, collaboration with businesses and other organizations, community festivals and events, and incentives for clients. For example, we plan to offer clients the chance to earn art rental credits by hosting residential art shows.

How will clients know what is available for rent or purchase?

We will maintain catalogues differentiated by medium and subject matter as the basic method of displaying works available. We will take those materials to clients who cannot conveniently come to see them.

Based on the advice received from clients and others, the service will not include an on-line gallery at this time. Artists may also be invited to contribute work to periodic shows intended to attract clients. Work will also be exhibited in participating businesses and institutions with information on the service.

Is rental the only option?

Clients will have three options: monthly rental, outright purchase, and rent-to-purchase.

What will it cost to rent a work of art?

Monthly rent to non-corporate clients will be based on 3% of the assigned value of the work. The rent for corporate clients (e.g. film companies and home stagers) will be negotiable.

How can a rented work be purchased?

Rent paid over as many as 6 months can be applied to the purchase of a work. Another option will be a rent-to-own conditional sales contract, through which equal monthly payments over a period of 6 to 24 months can be made.

Does a client have to purchase a work through the Program?

Not at all. Clients and artists are not constrained from making their own arrangements. Artists may choose to share a portion of the purchase price as a gesture of courtesy.

How much of the money goes to the artist and what happens to the rest?

The service will take 20% of rental and purchase payments. The rest will be paid to the artist. This is lower than most other services, and a good deal less than consignment arrangements. We will use the 20% to improve the impact of the service in meeting its goals, and to support the work of Semiahmoo Arts.

Initially the service will be operated by volunteers. As an incentive, volunteers will be offered the ability to earn art rental credits for the time they give to the service. Over time, and depending on the success of the Program, it may be possible to hire a Program manager.

What are the obligations of artists?

Artists will be expected to present their work suitably framed and matted as appropriate. The service will not provide frames, but will provide working space where artists can complete the preparation of work. Artists will also be expected to make their work available to a client in a prompt and timely manner. That may involve direct delivery to the client or delivery to the rental service to be passed along.

What else can artists expect?

We heard from a number of people that it is important to give participating artists chances to get together once in a while. We think this has lots of potential for drawing the community of artists and the community at large closer together.

What are the obligations of clients?

People and organizations who rent art are expected to protect and conserve the works they rent so they are not damaged in any way. They will be expected to purchase works that have been damaged.

What else can clients expect?

The idea of having clients host art showings in return for art rental credits is one way we can show appreciation for their patronage. We hope to come up with several more, including ones that link their support of the Program to opportunities to enjoy other dimensions of the arts scene.

How will transactions be documented?

We want to keep things simple and clear. The following documents are a consignment agreement between artists and the rental Program, and an agreement between the Program and a rental or purchase clients.