

**Public Art Plan for Ripley's Aquarium of Canada
301 Front Street West, Toronto, Ontario**

Presented to the Toronto Public Art Commission
July 20, 2010

by
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Also in attendance:
Bob Kirchgessner, Sr. Project Manager, Ripley Entertainment Inc.
Patrick Fejer, B+H Architects

1. Introduction to the Neighbourhood

Ripley's Aquarium of Canada is situated in the heart of downtown Toronto, between the CN Tower and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre South Building. This prominent site also lies within a concentration of other significant visitor attractions, including the Rogers Centre and Air Canada Centre.

1.1 Context Plan



2. The Building

The building design was developed to create a dramatic city landmark and to provide the highest quality environmental education in a richly entertaining complex. The architectural form consists of a stealth-like multi-faceted shell clad in large aluminum panels. The main architectural gesture is the lifting of the entrance roof and peeling away the earth's crust to reveal a window into habitats of the aquatic world. This expression is further emphasized through the folded light-coloured façade surfaces that juxtapose the vibrant reflective aluminum soffits.

2.2 Site Plan, Entrance Lobby (south west) and South East Corner



3. Art Mandate

Ripley's goal is to create an aquarium that is a fun, exciting and stimulating place for families, with an audience composed of lots of children as well as adults. Public art is envisioned as an important and integral part of this experience.

The client is looking for art that is memorable, distinctive and eye-catching -- for kids as young as two years old as well as for adults. The art should relate loosely and conceptually to the content of the aquarium, create a sense of wonder, be colourful, perhaps incorporate movement or interactivity, and be sympathetic to its sites.

4. Art Sites

After consultation with the client, the architect and City staff, including the area urban designer, the planner, and the public art coordinator, the Lobby at the entrance to the building has been selected as the primary site to be addressed by participating artists and the southeast corner as the secondary site.

4.1 Primary Site A

This dramatic, soaring Lobby is a grand, ceremonial space measuring 43' wide x 30' long x 30' high with inclined glazed façade surfaces. It is clearly visible from the grand CN Tower plaza and staircase to the west of the building, from the south along Bremner Blvd. and it slowly reveals itself from the north on the approach from the skywalk as you descend down the pedestrian path west of the Aquarium. The Lobby is glazed floor to ceiling on the west side and south sides, and partially on the north, with inclined panels measuring 5' x 10'. This inside location provides optimal viewing conditions year round and allows for the artwork to consider weather sensitive technologies.

The Lobby is a free, publically accessible area whenever the building is open (daily, generally 13 hours+/day). It will be essential that the artwork be clearly visible from outside the building as well as from the inside; it will likely be lighted to maintain visibility at night, after the building is closed.

There are many opportunities for art integration within this Lobby space. Although there is signage and facility entrance activity in the lower third of the space, the remaining area above is ideal for art to animate the environment. The artwork could be suspended from the ceiling, be sited near the glazing by attaching to the framework and/or the Curtain wall mullions and structural steel columns surrounding the window plane, or be lifted high into the air via an armature with a small footprint on the ground that doesn't impede pedestrian circulation.

The final colours, patterning and frit for the lobby glass will be complementary to the commissioned artwork and will be determined by the architects in consultation with the artist.

4.2 Secondary Site B

The community and planning staff requested an enhanced treatment in the southeast corner of the building facing Bremner Blvd. Therefore, the secondary site is the large wrap-around area that faces both south and east at this corner. It offers an ideal location to animate the streetscape for passersby from both directions, thereby creating a more intimate public art experience. The work will likely be colourful, lit at night and may include movement if it is placed within the glazed area proposed for that corner. It will become a dynamic presence in the façade and serve to enliven this section of the aquarium.

The cost for the public art for this site will be an upgrade/articulation to the building materials planned for that corner; the art budget will be calculated and applied to the upgrade for the cost of those materials.

5. Requirements for Art Sites

The following requirements will be listed in the Terms of Reference for the competing artists. The art should:

- Take into account the aesthetic of the architecture, the built form of the two sites and the content of the aquarium
- Be able to be viewed both from inside and outside of the building, day and night
- Be resistant to environmental conditions, including light
- Be mindful of public safety
- Be easy to maintain
- It is preferred that the proposed artworks not be static

6. Art Selection Process

The developers will conduct a one-stage invitational competition among three artists/teams:

Stephen Schofield, Montreal
Spencer Finch, New York
Michael Awad / David Rokeby, Toronto

Each artist/team will receive \$4,000.00 to develop a conceptual approach to the site and design of the art components and to present a fully documented budget. There will be a preliminary artist site briefing to review the drawings with the architect and any relevant sub-consultants.

The jury will hear presentations from the artists, review all submissions and select a winner. Jurors may offer recommendations to be addressed in the design development of the winning proposal.

The jury may decide to award both commissions to the same or different artists.

The client reserves the right to reject the decision of the jury; in that case the competition will be re-run (all expenses additional to the 1% commitment) or the client will revert to Option 1 of Section 37 and will opt to donate the 1% public art commitment to the City's capital budget for Public Art programs.

The public art consultants will continue to be involved in the process through to completed installation of the artwork.

7. Jury

The jury will consist of two representatives of the developer and three art experts, as follows:

Bob Kirchgessner: Sr. Project Manager, Ripley Entertainment Inc.
Patrick Fejer: B+H Architects
David Liss: Artistic Director and Curator, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art
Sarah Milroy: Art journalist and former art critic for The Globe & Mail
Lisa Steele: Artist and Associate Chair of Visual Studies, Dept. of Art, University of Toronto (works in ward)

8. Preliminary Budget

A budget of \$500,000 has been estimated for public art at 301 Front Street West and will be apportioned as follows:

Total amount: **\$500,000**

Administration: **10%**

Competition expenses, travel for non-local, art consultants' fees and expenses;

Contingency: **10%**

Architectural liaison, administration, additional supervision and administration; tax differential, artwork material price fluctuation, change orders, unforeseen issues

Maintenance: **0%**

Ripley's will remain on the project as the owner and operator of the Aquarium and agrees to maintain and conserve the artwork as part of the building's general operating budget. A detailed maintenance manual will be provided by the winning artist. This manual will list the materials, fabricators, and relevant contact information as well as recommendations as to regular maintenance procedures including frequency, cleaning products and methodology.

Managing museums and aquaria worldwide, Ripley's is keenly aware of the importance of public scrutiny and has implemented a policy of repairing or replacing defects. With their onsite staff of engineers and experts in technology to manage the complex technology, Ripley's will address problems that might arise with the public art. Given the highly public locations for art, Ripley's recognizes that it will be in their best interests to address any problems with art promptly and effectively.

Artwork **80%**

For the two sites, including and not limited to design development, testing, consulting / engineering fees, materials, fabrication, transportation, installation, insurance, legal fee, lighting, contingency, artist fees, all applicable taxes. As a guideline, up to 10% or more of the budget for artwork will be applied to Site B.

Total Art Budget: **100%**

9. Preliminary Timetable

Brief Sent to Artists	September 2010 (following City Council approval of Public Art Plan)
Artists' Briefing Meeting	October 13, 2010
Jury	February 10, 2011
Contract Stage	March – April 2011
Design Development	May 2011 – September 2011
Fabrication	October 2011 – February 2013
Installation	March – April 2013
Occupancy	Estimated to be June 2013