

Minutes of the meeting of the Block Island Airport public art selection panel

Block Island Airport, May 6, 2008, 12:15 pm

In attendance: community member Ray Torrey, Rhode Island artists Brower Hatcher and Kathy Hodge, architect Luis Torrado, RIAC employees Ahmed Shihadeh and Joseph Levesque, RISCA panel facilitator Liz Keithline

Overview: The purpose of the meeting is to start the process of selecting public art for Block Island Airport by setting guidelines for the writing of the Request For Qualifications. Sites, content and budget were discussed.

A condition of the new construction is a commitment to displaying photographs that document the old airport terminal. More information is needed. Architect Luis Torrado will report back. Ted Sanderson is the contact from the State Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission.

Possible sites for artwork:

1. The center cupola area is 30' high, approximately 19' across. Steel trusses cross back and forth in the space. There is a central fan, which could possibly be raised. Artwork could be suspended in this area. Artists installing kinetic art would need to ensure that their piece was above the level of detection by the security system, as the building closes and is alarmed in the evening. Windows in the terminal are remotely controlled. Natural lighting comes in the cupola windows.
2. There is a strip that wraps around the ledge of the central semi-hexagonal terminal. It is 12' off the floor. The strip is 24" high. This frieze might be a good place for a ceramic or painted mural, or other artwork.
3. The 35' hallway leading off the lobby could be used for the historic photo display or other 2D work.

An aspect of low maintenance will be very important for this commission. Although a maintenance fee is built into the project, it is difficult and expensive to get people out to the island for cleaning or repairs.

Possible content of the artwork:

Artists might concentrate on the following elements or themes:

There could be a nautical theme to the work. It could be 'elemental', 'meteorological'. Living on the island is like living on a ship. You are out on the ocean. Art could address elements of water/air. It could address the vulnerability and the toughness of life on the island. It is sometimes difficult to get here and to live here in the elements. It is rugged. Those who live there year round are subject to the whims of weather. Block Islanders are adventurous. There could be elements of aviation. The airport is like a harbor.

Panelists indicated a desire to see something integrated, not cluttered.

Budget:

With a total budget of \$100,000, the committee decided to allocate \$10,000 for the historic photo project and \$90,000 for a single commission crafted by either a single artist or a team of artists. It is felt that the scale of the site could not support multiple smaller projects.

Next meeting: September 25, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Keithline

May 8, 2008

Addendum to the minutes: 5/15/8

Jeff Emidy of the RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission has indicated that the documentation of the old Block Island Airport Terminal is to be paid for and directed by his agency. Therefore, the RFQ will be written without a \$10,000 budget item for historic photographs.