

WESTPORT ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

12noon, Town of Westport recorded Zoom call

Present: Nancy Diamond, Richard Epstein, Kathie Bennewitz, Miggs Burroughs, Eric Chiang, Frederic Chiu, John Dodig, Lee Goldstein, Jerri Graham, Diane Lowman, Elizabeth Strick.

Absent: Deirdre Kelly, Carole Schweid, Doug Tirola,

Guests: Harris Falk, Charles Rosoff, Ive Covaci, Steve Zimmerman.

1. Meet Jaime Bairaktaris

Jaime was unable to join the meeting today, but he and Diane discussed the idea of WAAC contributing a monthly Arts column to his blog, WestportLocalPress.com, which Diane would write. This will be a great way for WAAC to connect with the community. Monthly themes would incorporate the colors of the rainbow, a different color for each month, and feature an artist, musician, dancer, arts organization or actor. Hopefully we will start in February with the color red. Suggestions for the featured artist should be sent to Diane.

2. WestPAC exhibit at Town Hall.

On exhibit in the lobby of Town Hall beginning Feb 1 will be an exhibition of lithographs by Tracy Sugarman which focus on the civil rights movement of the 1960's. The exhibit was curated by WestPAC member Ive Covaci. One of these lithographs was lent to MoCA for its exhibition "World Peace". In late spring the work by artist Roe Halper will be featured in Town Hall. Although both are white artists, Roe, like Tracy, was active in the civil rights struggle in Mississippi. Kathie and Ive have approached a speaker from the Mississippi Museum to speak about the African American experience, and the original art work which Tracy donated to the Museum. The Museum in 1966 issued a series of prints based on Tracy's original work, one of which is in the Town Collection.

As part of these exhibitions a panel discussion is being organized by Kathie in which excerpts from Tracy's books will be recorded. Richard and John both

volunteered to read. Miggs suggested getting in touch with Lori Sugarman, Tracy's daughter to see if she would like to be involved.

Kathie is to let us know how we can visit Town Hall and see these exhibits during the pandemic.

3. Progress on pursuing anti-racial statement adopted in December.

The WAAC Statement supporting Anti-Racism has been sent to all the WestPAC members.

Kathie reported that we need to broaden the Art collection to include people of color. Any suggestions should be sent to Kathie and Elizabeth who will head up a subcommittee to seek artists for the collection. John, Eric, Diane, Miggs, Ive and Frederic have offered to help gather names and galleries who might be of help. Kathie has already been in touch with Adger Cowans, a black photographer living in Bridgeport who is in his 80's

Informational signs in Town Hall are being re-written by Ramin Ganeshram executive Director at the Westport Museum of History and Culture to better reflect the Town and its history. In the early days of the Town there was a black community living on Main Street in the area known as Onion Alley.

4. New Business

Charles Rosoff was invited to join the committee and he has accepted. Charles has worked in the art world for a number of years as an appraiser of Fine Art, Antiques and the Decorative Arts. He is also a Member of Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyor's.

School lawn sign project. Steve Zimmerman from the Westport Schools and Diane are collaborating on "American voices" a project with Elementary and High School students to take place on March 22 – 26. Lawn signs with student art and poems will be placed on Town property and around Town. Signs to be produced by March 1st Diane and John will place.

Jerri updated the committee on the WAAC social media platform. She will send the committee her ideas for are comments and ideas. It was suggested that

Instagram might also be a good outlet. Jerri has offered to update and manage the accounts.

Colytown Middle School is now open after an extensive interior rehab of the mold issue. All the art work will be returned to the school and be hung during the spring break.

Richard reported that he has stepped down as co-chair of the committee, but will continue on as treasurer. Everyone was grateful for all his efforts and were pleased he would still be part of WAAC.

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS FEBRUARY 9, 2021
AT 12 NOON**

Meeting adjourned at 12:59 am

Elizabeth Strick, Secretary Westport Arts Advisory Committee