

From: Stewart, Jana
Sent: Monday, February 02, 2009 3:04 PM
To: Jomsky, Mark
Cc: Flores, Silvia
Subject: 2/9 Council Agenda - District 5 Resignation

Dear Colleagues:

I resign my position as Commissioner for the fifth district on the Arts & Culture Commission. My eye is fixed on the artists, Hans Peter Kuhn and Dennis Oppenheim, whose work was left undefended last night by us on the Commission.*

My eye is also on our citizens who must see \$150,000 and three years of work be regarded as negligible; this is an unconscionable waste. On the Commission, we approved a particular position on December 10 and we were superseded by City Manager, Michael Beck, and staff who presented a different position last night. To me, the democratic process established by the Arts & Culture Commission is not democratic when a few can dictate and alter what the body has in good conscience decided, using its collective expertise and valuable volunteer hours.

The decision last night not to move ahead and approve Kuhn and Oppenheim's works was a poor and cowardly decision for which the citizens ultimately pay. The word is out among the artists in Pasadena, in Los Angeles, and it may spread across the network of America's 100,000 arts organizations and also abroad: Engage with Pasadena at one's own peril. Public art can and will be censored by a powerful few. And, yes, censorship is an appropriate word.

I am sorry for my decision to resign, because I very much enjoyed the company of each and every one of you and of my fellow commissioners. I know I can do more on the outside for Pasadena than I can on the inside. Had there been a more healthy, robust coverage of this issue in the media, perhaps the Council, the Commission, Michael Beck and the Pasadena Cultural Affairs staff would have stopped to think, question and examine the repercussions of participating in a late date decision that the art is, for whatever reason, unworthy.

In fairness, I have been taxed by the amount of time this Commission has taken in my schedule and have been weighing whether I can keep it up for some time now. The scales tipped last night. But I still believe in my heart in the value that an Arts & Culture Commission can have -- perhaps at another time in my life and in the Commission's.

I wish you all the best in the next stage.
Sincerely yours,
Sasha Anawalt

02/09/2009
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