2008-2009 HOT SEASON FOR YOUNG PEOPLE PRESENTS

GHOST BALLET FOR THE EAST BANK MACHINWORKS

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Dear Teachers,

Welcome, Teachers, to the 2009 TPAC Ed ArtSmart Visual Art Study Unit. We are pleased to invite you and your students to Alice Aycock's "Ghost Ballet for the East Bank Machineworks" for several reasons.

Internationally acclaimed sculptor Alice Aycock was chosen from 155 artists to create Nashville's first work of public art. What does this mean? Although Nashville benefits from many works of art in public places, "Ghost Ballet" is the first created for Nashville with public funds dedicated through the nationally proven Per Cent for Art model. Read more about this on pages 5.

The Metro Nashville Arts Commission (MNAC) was the guiding force creating and shaping the policies and procedures for this and public projects to come. (The Metro Public Square Per Cent for Art projects are underway now.) MNAC was also invaluable in the preparation of this guidebook, and provided “An Introduction to Nashville’s Public Art Program” DVDs to participating schools. We are very grateful to them for their constant cooperation.

As a monumental, permanent outdoor work of art, your students can activate their explorations and connections with "Ghost Ballet" for as long as they live in or visit Nashville. Engaging them with this stimulating, evocative creation can become an enduring touchstone of their aesthetic and curricular education they can enjoy, remember, and renew for decades.

Through its exciting east riverbank location and its many possible curriculum connections, we believe "Ghost Ballet" will offer a dynamic experience for you and your students. Bring your open mind and let's all explore it together!

F. Lynne Bachleda
for TPAC Education

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**A note from our Sponsor - Regions Bank**

For over 125 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as our area has. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we are committed to this community and our customers.

One area that we are strongly committed to is the education of our students. We are proud to support TPAC’s Humanities Outreach in Tennessee Program. What an important sponsorship this is - reaching over 25,000 students and teachers – some students would never see a performing arts production without this program. Regions continues to reinforce its commitment to the communities it serves and in addition to supporting programs such as HOT, we have over 43 associates teaching financial literacy in our classrooms this year.

**Thank you, teachers,** for giving your students this wonderful opportunity. They will certainly enjoy the experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.
Ghost Ballet, as it is informally known, is made of aluminum, steel, neon, and thermo-formed acrylic shapes. These join steel beams resting upon the base of a gantry overhead crane once used by Nashville Bridge Company to build and launch barges. Ghost Ballet is 100 feet tall, 100 feet wide and 60 feet deep.

Aycock’s sculpture is site-specific—integrated with its physical location. It draws the eye to the environs of Cumberland River’s east bank from the Coliseum to Shelby Street. Ghost Ballet also reflects our own time in this site’s long history. It was completed in 2007, with one element being rotated slightly on site in 2008 to more accurately reflect the artist’s vision.

Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission (MNAC) sponsored Ghost Ballet as the city’s first Percent for Public Art Work. This new program funded the roughly $500,000 cost of the sculpture, including artist fees, engineering and fabrication of the sculptural elements; site preparation; restoration of existing steel beams; transportation; signage; installation; and lighting.
Learning Connections

“Ghost Ballet” is potentially exceptionally rich in curriculum connections. The sculpture can be a touchstone for the following:

- Boats and barge building
- Civic process
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Recycling
- River culture
- Role and need for public art
- Rules (in government and in art)
- Selection criteria
- Shapes
- Site-specific sculpture
- Storytelling from another’s point of view
- Symmetry and asymmetry.
- Tennessee and Nashville history
- The nature of ballet in objects
- Timelines (including past, present, and future)
- Urban architecture
- Visual balance
- What professional artists do
- Women artists

**Ghost Ballet for the East Bank Machineworks**

by Alice Aycock

Language arts in the poetic title

Math: measures, curves, angles, scale, geometry

Multiple perspectives

Negative & positive space

Pattern recognition

Physical balance

Definition of public art

Design versus manufacture

Found versus created art

Geography and map reading

Historical references

Industrial Revolution

Machines

Math: measures, curves, angles, scale, geometry

Multiple perspectives

Negative & positive space

Pattern recognition

Physical balance

Women artists
About the Artist: Alice Aycock

Alice Aycock is an American sculptor born in 1946 at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Considered one of the major sculptors and conceptual artists of the last two decades, many of her early site-specific sculptures deal with the relationship of art and the environment. This includes *Ghost Ballet for the East Bank Machineworks*. She has taught at numerous colleges and universities including Yale and New York’s School of Visual Arts since 1991.

Aycock is internationally acclaimed. Her work has appeared in the Americas, Europe, and Japan. Among numerous awards she has received four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships. Museum collections include the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Nashville’s *Ghost Ballet for the East Bank Machineworks* was completed in 2008. Tennessee will have two Aycock outdoor sculptures when work for the Johnson-Ward Pedestrian Mall at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville is completed in the spring of 2009.

While she was working on Nashville’s sculpture she was also creating *Strange Attractor for Kansas City* at the Kansas City International Airport, *The Uncertainty of Ground State Fluctuations* for Clayton, Missouri; and *A Little Cosmic Rhythm* for 645 Madison Avenue, New York City.

The sculptural properties of the bridges, the sculptural properties of the stadium, and the historical past—I compressed these together into a kind of ballet movement because the piece changes as you move around it. It suggests a certain kind of movement, if you will: positions, dance, movements, which is why I referred to it as a “Ghost Ballet.”

--Alice Aycock
Nashville’s New Public Art Process

The Metro Nashville Arts Commission’s (MNAC) public art program was established in June 2000 with the passage of a public art ordinance by the Metro Council. The ordinance dedicates one percent (1%) of the net proceeds of general obligation bonds issued for construction projects to fund public art. MNAC established a Public Art Committee (PAC) as a standing committee to oversee the public art program.

Simultaneously the Nashville Civic Design Center hosted forty public meetings that resulted in “The Plan of Nashville” publication that had ten guiding principles for the city’s urban design. One of these was “to integrate public art into the city.” Potential sites for public art were discussed and the East Bank was overwhelmingly the first choice for Nashville’s foray into public art.

MNAC distributed an RFQ (Request for Qualifications) and 155 artists responded. The nine member citizen selection committee reviewed resumes and over 3,000 slides twice to select six semi-finalists. These six artists then had eight weeks to design a work of art, build a scale model, develop a budget, and specify a maintenance plan.

The selection committee determined that Alice Aycock’s proposal for “Ghost Ballet for the East Bank Machineworks” best fulfilled the goals stated in the RFQ:

The artwork should:
* focus attention on the Cumberland River and its east and west banks
* be seen as a connection to both sides of the river
* define the area
* attract pedestrians to the site
* contribute to the positive experience of downtown for residents and visitors
* engage pedestrian and vehicular viewers, both day and night
* be a focal point on the east-west axis of Broadway and Shelby Avenue

In a broader sense, the project may:
* contribute to the visual character and texture of the community
* foster collective memory
* give meaning to place by recalling local and regional history

**Ten Beliefs about Public Art**

Why is Public Art Good for Nashville?

*Public art enriches the lives of citizens and visitors in a number of ways.*

It can:
* enhance an experience of being in a public space
* create a sense of place
* contribute to the visual character and texture of the community
* give visual expression to local values and cultural diversity
* foster collective memory and can give meaning to a place by recalling local history
* further the community’s sense of spirit and pride

**What are Other Benefits of Public Art?**

It can:
* strengthen the positive reputation of Nashville in local, regional, national and international arenas
* contribute to cultural tourism
* give citizens a voice in shaping their civic environment
* unify neighborhoods around shared traditions and experiences
History of the “Ghost Ballet” Area
(from MNAC’s Request for Qualifications inviting artists to participate)

Nashville owes its origins to the Cumberland River. For centuries before the European settlers came, Native Americans built villages, buried their dead, and hunted game along the river and its tributaries. After the Robertson and Donelson parties arrived and built Fort Nashboro and outposts fanning out from the core of the frontier town, the river was the lifeline between the settlers and the outside world. The river provided their water and power, carried goods and travelers, and received waste from manufacturing and milling. Today, both riverbanks in downtown Nashville still reflect that utilitarian character.

In today’s zoning terms, it would be said that the West Bank was mixed use. The City Hotel and the county jail were neighbors to varied businesses such as a soap works, a manufacturer of iron stoves, a lumber yard, a creamery, as well as a few rough residential structures. The city wharf was along the west side of the river; Front Street, or today’s First Avenue, grew along the wharf to accommodate the cargo of the river boats. Workers unloaded goods into the east doors of the buildings there, and merchants sold those products, wholesale and retail, out the Second Avenue side. Bars were interspersed with the other businesses, the most well-known being the Silver Dollar Saloon at Market Street (now Second Avenue) and Broadway. Nashville’s rowdier side was especially evident near the river.

The East Bank (site of “Ghost Ballet”) was almost totally industrial in character up until the construction of the NFL stadium, long after the west side’s conversion from a mixture of uses to more consistent urban development. Maps of the East Bank show brickyards, lumber companies, a casket manufacturer, and a coal and ice house.

Rail lines served these businesses, as they did on the West Bank. As the twentieth century progressed, the Nashville Bridge Company, headquartered in the building still standing adjacent to the Shelby Street Pedestrian Bridge, became increasingly visible on the East Bank. The launching of barges built there in the last decades of the century often drew onlookers from across the river.

The Shelby Street Pedestrian Bridge, built 1907-1909, is on the National Register of Historic Places for its significance as one of Nashville’s best examples of modern technology and engineering at the turn of the century, especially its bridge trusses made of reinforced concrete. When the bridge was built, the East Bank was populated by industries that used barges for transportation on the Cumberland River. Some of the industrial artifacts remain today as sculptural elements along the East Bank Greenway. Now a vital link in Nashville’s greenways system, the Shelby Street Pedestrian Bridge stands as one of the longest pedestrian bridges in the world, an important recreational and transit corridor, and a popular destination.
“Its presence will be a focal point for the East Bank and will perceptually extend Broadway in a visual way. As one studies it, the piece will pull them in and then visually push them back to see the big picture of all that happens around it—the stadium, the pedestrian bridge, the interstate, the greenway, residential neighborhoods, and the river.”

*Alice Aycock*
Art Meets Industry on the East Bank

Artist Alice Aycock’s Statement from the Competition Proposal

My proposal for the East Bank Greenway is located at the site of the gantry overhead crane. The location of the sculptural installation on the existing concrete pillars and steel trusses is intended to emphasize the historical significance of this place as well as to operate as a memory trace of the past industrial activities there. The installation takes full advantage of the existing structure’s height and presumed structural integrity in order to maximize its placement on the Nashville skyline. The new metaphorical construction operates as a sign signifying the activity and energy that was generated on the site and also refers to the energy and excitement that still exists. The flying trusses and bridgework, which form the compositional structure of the project, refer not only to the cranes that once occupied the site but also to the existing bridges, which span the river. The flying trusses suggest that the viewer experience the entire site as a work of art - a museum without walls. The turbine whirlwind on the ground is a reference to the dynamo, which generates energy for the spiral galactic lighting elements above. These elements could be seen as the “ghost image” of the past as well as the visual manifestation of the energy of the present. The materials are painted aluminum and stainless steel where necessary for structural integrity. (bolts, plates, etc.). Additional sculptural components are neon and thermo-formed acrylic shapes. The neon light will be attached to a small aluminum truss for structural strength.

The overall dimensions of the installation are approximately 100’ long x 100’ high x 60’ deep. The design is entirely conceptual and components will be adjusted in consultation with the project structural engineer. The structure will be engineered for hurricane strength winds, snow and human loads. It will be engineered locally, most likely fabricated at Dover Tank and Plate Company in Dover, Ohio where it will be shop fitted before installation and trucked to the site prior to installation. A local construction firm under the supervision of the artist will install it. Wherever feasible local businesses will be utilized.

Who Physically Made “Ghost Ballet’s” Elements?

Public art often differs from studio art in ways beyond larger scale. For much public art the artist’s role is to have a vision, communicate it to others, and oversee its realization. Alice Aycock did not physically make any of the elements of “Ghost Ballet.” Instead she enabled other experts to harness their talents with her creativity. The end result is a lasting Nashville landmark that no party could have produced on their own.

Dover Tank and Plate Company

Founded in 1922 in Dover, Ohio, the company fabricated steel and in the process earned a reputation throughout the state of Ohio for excellent quality workmanship. The Dover Design and Management Group, LLC, is staffed by experienced, licensed engineers and draftsmen. Like its sister company, DDMG is dedicated to excellence and quality.

DDMG offers complete building design and custom design of bins, tanks and ductwork to suit special requirements. DDMG also offers a full line of engineering & architectural services with a strong emphasis on commercial and industrial projects.

Perfection Electricks

Founded in 1984, Perfection Electricks is a custom electrical, electromechanical, and electronics manufacturer specializing in products for the entertainment business. From their initial focus in television they expanded into the theatrical, film, trade show/industrial and museum industries, as well as artist support.

As they say, “Many artists have found themselves trapped between concept and realization, especially when the latest technologies are involved. Perfection Electricks provides technical consultation and solutions to those whose challenges seem insurmountable. Our background has uniquely prepared us for the creative process.”

Gantry cranes are particularly suited to lifting very heavy objects. Huge gantry cranes have been used for shipbuilding where the crane straddles the ship allowing massive objects like ships’ engines to be lifted and moved over the ship. --Wikipedia
Planning a Class Trip

Directions & Map for Tour
The purple circle marks the location of *Ghost Ballet for the East Bank Machineworks*. The red star on the West Bank of the Cumberland marks a turnaround at the foot of Broadway at 1st Avenue. *Ghost Ballet* is best viewed from 1) the turnaround ★; 2) the East Bank Greenway near Titans Way ★; and/or 3) the Shelby Street Pedestrian Bridge. Here is a suggested tour route:

1) Approach downtown via the Gateway Bridge (Korean Veterans Way).
2) Turn right on 1st Avenue South
3) Drop passengers at the 1st Avenue / Broadway turnaround to view sculpture. This is a no parking zone, so bus will need to circle back around to pick up passengers for next leg of the tour.
4) Take 1st Avenue North to Woodland Street (public restrooms are available at Fort Nashbor along the way) to cross the Cumberland via the Woodland Street Bridge.
5) Turn right on South 2nd Street; right on Victory Avenue; and park on Titans Way. Passengers disembark and cross RR track to view sculpture from the East Bank Greenway. (Stay on sidewalk to avoid hazards).
6) Exit the area via Titans Way, Russell Street; South 2nd Street to Gateway Blvd.

To view the sculpture from the pedestrian bridge, ( ) passengers may be dropped at South 1st Street and Shelby on the East Bank side, or 4th Avenue South and Shelby on the West Bank side.
Exploration One: Connecting Shapes and Lines

Warm-Up
Have children notice the shapes in the room by outlining them with their fingers and naming them. For example, the circle of the doorknob, the square of the window pane, the rectangle of an eraser, the curve of a curtain pulled back, the line of the edge of a book, the “horse shoe” of a filing cabinet handle, the triangle of a folded piece of paper.

Activity
In a circle call out a shape and ask children to form it with their bodies. Remind them they don’t always have to stand. They can use the floor, for example. Ask them to find more than one solution for each shape.

In groups of eight assign with slips of paper the following (one to each child). If the class does not produce evenly divided groups of eight then the smaller group can work in the same way with fewer shapes.
2 horse shoes
2 straight lines
2 curves
1 circle
2 triangles-composed with one child

Using their bodies to make their assigned shapes, ask students to form a group work of art. They need to decide what parts should be touching and what parts should stand alone. The result will be a sculpture.

After all groups have worked out their sculpture and can remember how to form them, let each group show the others their creative solution. Ask the others to move around the sculpture and observe it from many different angles. With each group notice how different the sculpture appears as you move around it. For an additional step you may want to ask the sculpture to start to move and the audience to stand still.

Discuss and Reflect Group by Group
• What shapes did you see?
• How did they change, appear, or disappear when the observer moved around the sculpture?
• How and what did they feel when moving around the sculpture? Did they move fast or slow? Go high or low? What other choices might dancers make?
• What changed when the audience was still and the sculpture began to move? Did they move fast or slow? Go high or low?
• Which way was more satisfying? Why?
• Older children may discuss their decision-making process. Did a lead artist emerge?

View Images of “Ghost Ballet”
• Notice the shapes and lines.
• How does the sculpture change?
• Why did the artist call it a “ballet?”
Exploration Two: Designing the Past, Present & Future in a Particular Place

In this activity, students will select a location for a small building project; will work with simple materials to symbolize the past, present, and future; will compare and contrast their choices to Alice Aycock’s work.

Materials per child
- 8 clothes pins
- 7 pipe cleaners, two colors
- 1 piece of typing paper

Warm Up
Discuss what kinds of objects, shapes, and colors they associate with the past, present, and future. Conversation can be initiated and confined to objects in the room.

Activity
With the knowledge they are going to create a sculpture in a particular place, have them choose a spot in the room and place their white sheet of paper there. Possible locations include desks, the floor, chair seats, window sills, in book cases, on filing cases, etc.

Model how each child will use their clothespins to make two free-standing bridge forms (two pins connected end to end make the top, one on either side at right angles form legs). Have them “install” the bridge forms standing up on their paper. Tell them the clothes-pin bridges stand for the past (“yesterday” for young ones).

Ask students to assign one of their pipe cleaner colors for present (or “today”) and the other for future (or “tomorrow”) designs. Using all seven pipe cleaners invite children to make forms, lines, or shapes that stand for their ideas about the present and the future.

Allow independent play time for students to find a way to combine their pipe cleaner forms and bridges into a single design. To encourage variety, suggest that pipe cleaner forms might connect: to one or both bridges; other pipe cleaners; from any direction. Remind them that their sculpture stands for past, present and future.

Reflection
- Notice and discuss the creative choices and reasoning of each work of art.
- Do certain forms dominate ideas of the present or the future?
- What color(s) would they paint the sculpture and why?
- How does the sculpture connect, inform, highlight, differ, or resonate with other objects in the room?
- What difference does the installation site make?
- Can you move around it?
- Does it need different lighting? What if the room lights are turned off?
- What would it look like at night?

View images of “Ghost Ballet.”
- Discuss which elements represent the past, present, and future. Why do you think so?
- What were the challenges and opportunities of the river bank location?
Exploration Three: Communicating Ideas to the Artist

Preparation
Following the trip to view “Ghost Ballet,” ask students to record their observations in illustrations or written notes. Keep these for later reflection.

Warm Up
Return the observation journals to students, and continue with discussion about the prompts below.

Activity
Review instructions for proper letter form as appropriate for your grade level.

Write a letter to Alice Aycock. Some potential topics to address include:

- What you like best and least and your reasons for each.
- Your First impression of “Ghost Ballet” and how impressions changed as you studied it.
- How well you think she met the MNAC criteria for selection (see page 5 of this study guide).
- Your thoughts on what it is like to be responsible for such a big and public piece of art.
- Your thoughts on if the creative response of the artist should be different if the work is paid for with public funds versus private funds.
- Your thoughts on whether or not you would like to be an artist and why.

Because Alice Aycock is a living artist with a relationship to the Metro Nashville Arts Commission it may be possible to forward letters to her. She may or may not be able to respond. Consult with Leigh Jones, ArtSmart Director 687-4285, to pursue this possibility.
Exploration Four: Imagining the World of the Other

Warm Up
Choose different elements of the sculpture and imagine if they had eyes, ears, a nose, and the ability to taste and feel. Talk about what kind of experiences they might have.

Activity
Write a poem or a story from the point of view of “Ghost Ballet” as a whole or from the point of view of one of its elements.
Resources

The artist’s website that has images of her works from the 1970s to the present.
http://www.aaycock.com/

Video on the selection process and construction for *Ghost Ballet*, including a short clip of artist Alice Aycock introducing the ideas behind the work.
This video should also be found in each school library as *An Introduction to Nashville’s Public Art Program.*
http://www.artsnashville.org/pubartprogram/process.php

This site has various images of the sculpture, the submissions of the other semi-finalists, and more.
http://www.artsnashville.org/pubartprojects/ebgw/ebgwsrapbook.php

A Q&A with Sherri Hunter, a Middle Tennessee public mosaic artist with international recognition, who goes into detail about what’s involved in creating public art. Hunter was on the selection panel for *Ghost Ballet.*
http://www.artsnashville.org/pubartprogram/pubartres.php

Images and history of public art on five continents, plus a balanced essay on the home page about the process and vitality of public art.
http://www.publicartaroundtheworld.com

“Love it or hate it public art is free to all and should be embraced with delight and mild amusement. It should make us question, admire, reflect, and most importantly, think.”
~Publicartaroundtheworld.com