



Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association, Inc.

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Dr. Gavin Malone
Visual Artist & Cultural Geographer
Via e-mail at: gavindmalone@gmail.com

Dear Dr Malone

Public Art within the Adelaide Park Lands

APPA in brief

Starting in 1987, the Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association (APPA) has led the effort to preserve, protect, restore and encourage appropriate use of Adelaide's irreplaceable garland of historic Park Lands as well as its many green City Squares. More about APPA, our principles, what we do, our current concerns and much else can be found on our website: www.adelaide-parklands.asn.au.

Public Art in the Adelaide Park Lands

As you will know, Adelaide is fortunate to have many fine pieces of public art located within its Park Lands and Squares. These reflect different periods, styles and subjects, and include statues, more modern pieces, ornamental gates, water fountains and memorials to the fallen. In almost all cases, public art makes the surrounding Park Lands more attractive, adds extra interest and provides food for thought and reflection.

A new APPA initiative

With the above in mind, I'm writing to seek your potential guidance and support to an important new APPA initiative. This will seek to learn more about the role Public Art plays within our Park Lands, to document it, support its conservation and help plan for its future development. The new initiative will be separate from, but clearly complements, APPA's existing bi-annual Adelaide Park Lands Art Prize.

Our APPA Committee Members Michael Seager and Walter Dollman are jointly coordinating the new initiative and can be contacted directly on seager10@hotmail.com and wdollman@gmail.com. Our principal expert supporter and backstopper is Dr. Janice Lally, currently Academic and Public Programs Curator, UWA Art Museums, based in Perth. As you will recall, Dr. Lally was the inaugural Manager of Art for Public Places in the SA Department for the Arts in the 1990s and was also the Curator for Public Art at the Adelaide City Council for several years.

Dr. Lally kindly gave us your name, as one of Adelaide's leading art figures, and someone who might perhaps give in-principle support to the APPA Park Lands Public Art initiative. I do hope this will be the case, either personally, or in conjunction with other artists, curators, academics and students with whom you collaborate.

What is planned

Initially we are planning to start off with helping ensure there is an up-to-date, comprehensive and publicly-accessible data base of public art and memorials located within the Park Lands. Whilst there is a lot of fragmented information available on-line on public outdoor art city-wide, so far we have not been able to find a really comprehensive data base in relation to the art in the Park Lands on which to build. If it does not exist already, it would be really good to have things all-in-one-place, publicly accessible and updateable.

Content of such a data base might include an artistic interpretation, a summary of the significance of the piece (in its own right artistically and as a contribution to the broader landscape of the Park Lands), photographs and further details of each piece, the artist responsible, the date it was crafted and its history. A summary of likely ongoing preservation and maintenance needs and any perceived threats would also be important. In addition, opportunities for new public art sites and new styles, to further compliment the landscape, might also be identified and discussed.

The work could be kept dynamic and interest maintained by considering encouraging people to make their own contributions to the data base in the future, via a moderator, adding additional photographs say, and noting when pieces are removed, damaged or in need of repair. Guided walking or cycling tours could also be developed, based on the data base, taking in Park Lands public art highlights and helping raise wider awareness.

Ways in which we might collaborate

Two opportunities come to mind, though there may also be other avenues you want to suggest:

1. For one or more of your student or junior curator associates to undertake a study into the Public Art of the Park Lands (perhaps along the lines set out above, and beginning with a search for existing data), as the basis perhaps of a taught-course Masters (or Bachelors level) dissertation;
2. For you and/or one of your close associates to join Janice Lally and potentially others in kindly agreeing to backstop and guide the initiative, from your respective expert perspectives.

Given APPA's objectives, our overall aim in promoting this initiative is naturally to stimulate interest in, preservation of and use of the Park Lands. We want to get people engaged in and enjoying this precious shared resource and all it has to offer. Art in the Park Lands – existing and future – is, we think, an excellent way of helping achieve this. But equally importantly, the planned initiative will also be a way we believe to encourage appreciation and enjoyment of art more widely, something APPA also sees as important, as our existing Art Prize demonstrates.

I do hope therefore that there will be opportunities, perhaps along the lines outlined above or in other ways, for our collaboration on this new initiative.

Yours sincerely



Ian Gilfillan
President

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