

Making public art more public: digital curation of a collection



ARTIST: UNKNOWN, KOBE BELL PHOTO SOURCE: SPIKE MARFORD



ARTIST: SUSAN ROBB, PARKING SQUID PHOTO SOURCE: SPIKE MARFORD



ARTIST: ISAMU NOGUCHI, BLACK SUN PHOTO SOURCE: SPIKE MARFORD

Office of Arts & Culture | Seattle

Seattle's Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS) has been investing in public art for over 40 years. With over 400 permanent art objects in their collection, they have fashioned Seattle as a hub for innovative art in public spaces. Featured in various locations around the city, these artworks help to foster communities while enriching the lives of residents and visitors.

Drawing on a digital curation plan, ARTS aimed to create a digital exhibition of their permanent public art collection. This unique collection was developed relying on digital assets that were then published on Public Art Archive (PAA). Through PAA, the online database and exhibit platform designed to showcase public art from around the world, ARTS has made their collection accessible to a wider audience.

Impact:

The curation of the art object records included preparation, collection, and organization into an established dataset that allows for reuse in discovery and retrieval of the collection. This cohesive dataset gives ARTS the ability to make future decisions to support, select, and share aspects of their collection over time.

By facilitating the collection in another digital environment, ARTS made their collection searchable and accessible to a wider audience. Increasing accessibility to their unique cultural collection online allows the collection to be shared beyond the constraints of the physical location while introducing people to both the history of the artwork and the history of Seattle. This also allows for information about the work to be readily used for educational purposes, research, and artistic inspiration.

OBJECTIVES

- Present over 400 artworks on the digital exhibit platform PAA for public discovery of the permanent art collection developed and maintained by ARTS
- Address wider access to the collection by distributing content on the web
- Establish a framework for collection of digital assets

CURATION PROCESS:

This Capstone project centered on curating an exhibit from the records of art objects in ARTS collection:

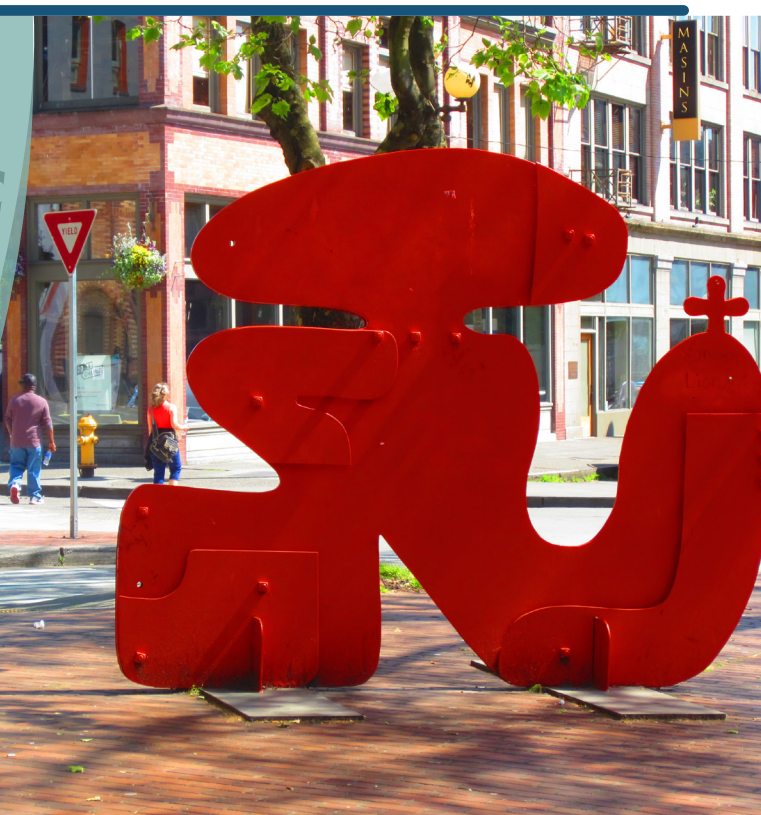
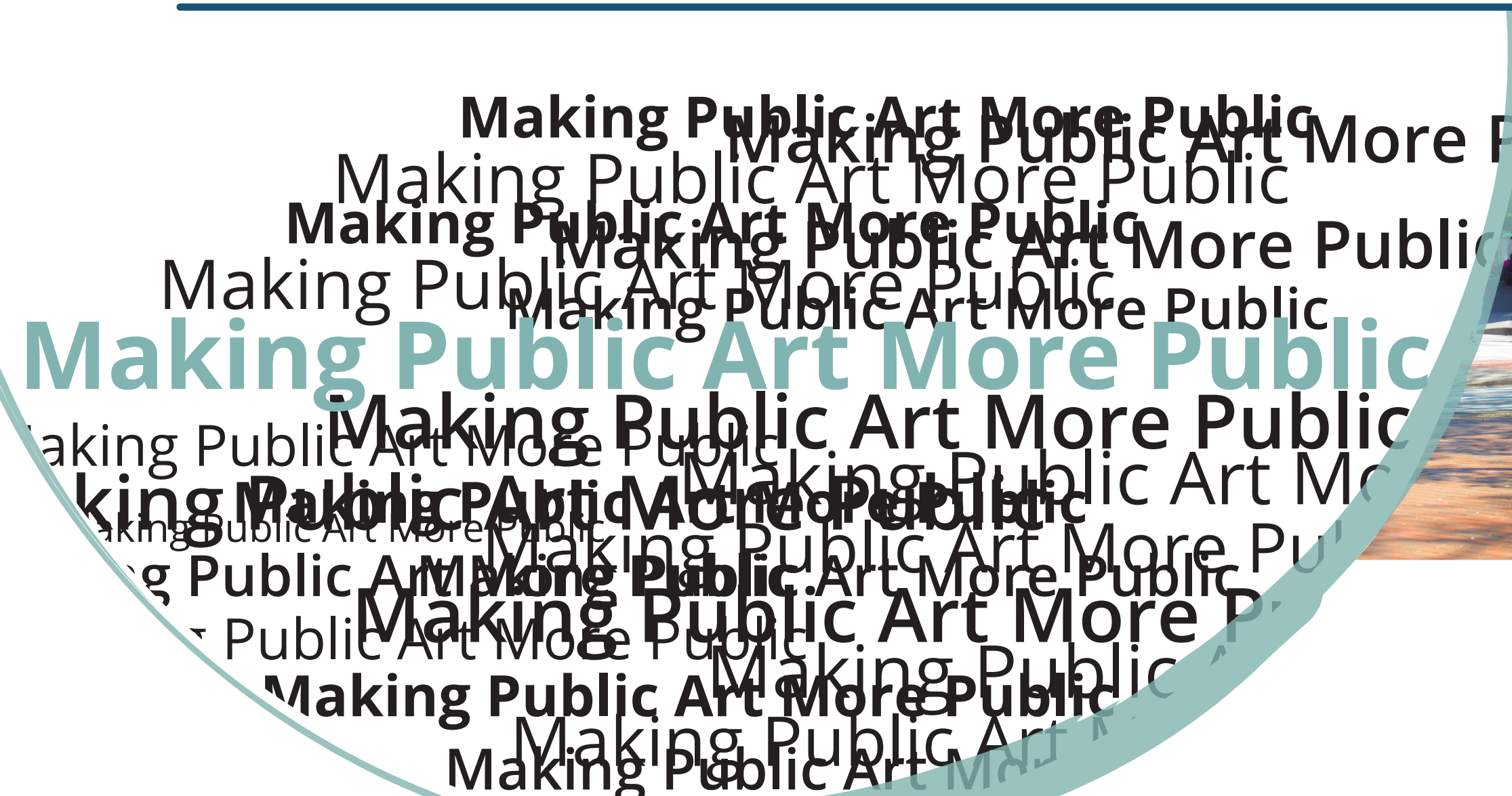
- Records about the art objects were located, organized and crafted into a dataset.
- Each art object was curated to provide informative and engaging stories about the object, as well as neighborhood development plans surrounding the object.
- Information includes location, descriptions and history of the art objects, artist statements, and images.

ARTS collection can be seen at

www.seattle.gov/arts
& www.publicartarchive.org



ARTIST: RITA KERNER, HUMAN FORMS IN BALANCE PHOTO SOURCE: ATHEA MERREDYTH



ARTIST: JIM EVANS, ANAVOGS PHOTO SOURCE: SOAC



ARTIST: BELIZ BROTHER, ILLUMINE PHOTO SOURCE: BELIZ BROTHER FFD05

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Special thanks to Joan Peterson at the Office of Arts & Culture | Seattle for guidance and support, and to Karen Chen MLIS, for her work during the first phases of the project.