

Pratt  
Teacher /  
Local Arts

Arguing for a 1% for the arts initiative,

Tyna Ontko

Born and raised in the Seattle area, I have watched this city grow and change and rapidly expand over my 28 years. I believe the integral role that the arts has played in the constant regeneration of Seattle has helped to instill creativity as a force within its cultural framework, one with the power to revitalize our urban spaces and in turn our communities.

I have had the honor and privilege to work within the arts community here over the past decade. During this time I have exhibited my own work locally, received funding from Artist Trust among other in-town organizations to see through personal projects, and have recently worked with two internationally renowned artists who are both in the process of completing large-scale projects with the Port of Seattle-- previously, as a studio assistant to the artist John Grade, and currently, as a studio manager to the artist Marela Zacarias. I can personally speak to the attention to detail that the design, fabrication and installation of projects on this scale require. Specifically in my experience as the point person for budgeting at Marela's studio, I see the direct effects of how funding influences the creation and the outcome of public art, in times of plenty and in times of need. Both Marela and John are currently slated to install projects in highly trafficked pedestrian environments within new wings of the SeaTac Airport, where their impact on such a large audience has the potential to instill a shared sense of experience. Working with public art has given me insight into the nature of building environment within a city, and how our experience in the space we inhabit can play a significant role in shaping a collective sense of identity.

I support a 1% initiative for the arts in Seattle because in affording these kinds of opportunities to a broad array of artists, we are strengthening the network of voices who contribute to the vibrancy of both our city and our experience within it. The spaces in which we lead our daily lives deserve recognition as an integral dimension of our heritage, and should be considered as linked into a communal sense of belonging, for us and for future generations to share.