



City and County of San Francisco Civil Grand Jury 2011-2012

NEWS RELEASE

July 26, 2012

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THE ARTS COMMISSION IS NOT LIVING UP TO ITS CHARTER OBLIGATIONS

For the past year and a half the San Francisco Arts Commission has been under a cloud of City audits, Sunshine Task Force violations, and news articles decrying poor performance. The San Francisco Civil Grand Jury investigated the Commission and found that to be only half the story.

The Jury finds that since its inception in 1932 the leadership required of the Arts Commission has not kept pace with the demands of its Charter responsibilities. The programs administered by the Commission have grown significantly, needing a broader base of expertise for oversight of departmental operations and finances than the artist-dominated Commission can provide. The Civic Art Collection is not fully inventoried and is not adequately maintained. The Neighborhood Cultural Centers, located in underserved communities, need capital improvements and a plan for their long term facility and safety needs. The Street Artists Program does not meet the needs of the artists it licenses and needs to move out from under the Arts Commission. The San Francisco Symphony and the Arts Commission are involved in a dubious contract that requires the Symphony to give back almost \$800,000 of a \$2 million allotment from property tax revenues that the Charter allocates “to maintain a symphony orchestra.”

To remedy these problems, the Jury recommends:

*Expanding the size of the Commission to provide stronger management oversight, increased fund raising, and greater community awareness of its programs.

*Revitalizing the Commission’s interest in the \$90 million Civic Arts Collection by completing the long overdue Collection inventory as well as introducing ways of engaging the public in its treasure.

*Attending to the facility and security needs of the Neighborhood Cultural Centers as the Charter mandates.

Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco
Civic Center Courthouse
400 McAllister Street, Room 008
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 551-3605

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*Relocating the Street Artists Program to the Office of Small Business, so the Program and the street artists will get the proper attention they deserve and need.

*Renegotiating the contract between the Commission and the San Francisco Symphony to comply with the intent of the City Charter.

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