



*Connecting the Arts with the Community*

**Community Conversation about PUBLIC ART & “Gateway to Norwalk”  
Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> @ Norwalk Community College – East Campus Gallery**

**Who was there?**

Robin Sattler, The Hour; Peter Bondi, Susan Hardesty, Joe Fucigna, Melissa Slattery, Sue Brown Gordon, Dennis Bradbury, Chris Bradley, Suikang Zhao, Julyen Norman, Pierre Antoine, Maribeth Becker, Tony Velez, Duvian Montoya, Becki Christopherson, Angela Whitford, David Green, Lynn Massey, Susan Wallerstein

**What did we talk about?**

**Norwalk Community College art programs** – Susan Hardesty & Joe Fucigna

What do we think about Norwalk’s “art in public spaces”?

- Want more
- Wish I could get paid to do public art
- Increase community involvement
- Need to move it around, mix it up
- Need to renew attention, re-engage, maintain
- Need more info about the artists, the pieces
- It's there but it's not there...people don't even realize the pieces are in the train station are art...fades into the landscape
- Working on improved signage, digital interface, walking tours, etc.
- Need to take advantage of opportunities to connect with placemaking, more thoughtful placement, relocation, etc.

**Suikang Zhao – his beliefs, vision and plans for the “Gateway to Norwalk” installation**

- Art in public spaces - other than traditional sculpture - a relatively new concept...it's about creating art in empty spaces, site specific.
- New approaches are often criticized by mainstream where public art has had been focused on decoration and beautification rather than creativity.
- Today creativity is embedded and belongs to everyone...very different from traditional/mainstream.
- Art has to do with physical and psychological context. In its most radical form = graffiti.
- The artist's mission is to spread seeds of creativity, to make people feel like they're part of the process.
- (My) use of language is not just a tool, but culturally significant content which incorporates how different languages are expressed ... left to right, right to left, top to bottom...woven into the tapestry of architectural space using forged metal.
- People often ask, why bother with words if I cannot easily read or see them? This highlights the differences between east and west, individual vs. collective expression.
- I am interested in projects that present a challenge, redefining the creative process and the purpose of art - with public money, this should belong to everyone.

**COMMUNITY GROUPS** suggested so far for conversations with Suikang: Center for Global Studies (@ Brien McMahon High School), Norwalk Community College, Norwalk Housing Authority - 20 West Learning Center. Possibility of partnership with Norwalk Arts Festival in late June.