


Sacramento Press

Mayor holds meeting "For Art's Sake"

by [Jonathan Mendick](#), published on June 12, 2009 at 9:50PM

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Community Tags: art artists b street theater business community crocker art museum culture for arts sake kevin johnson kvie mayor mayor johnson mayor kevin johnson People politics sacramento ballet sacramento metropolitan arts commission second saturday six degreez



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It was a veritable who's who of Sacramento artists, arts organizations and art supporters inside KVIE Public Television's offices Friday morning.

Nearly 100 invitees gathered to listen to Mayor Kevin Johnson's remarks in a meeting entitled "For Art's Sake."

"Performing arts, visual arts and literary arts -- we need all three to reach the potential of what Sacramento can be," Johnson said in his speech. "Our commitment: We are going to promote the arts in a real way."

The mayor stressed that the arts community doesn't just use city money, it creates revenue for the city. Therefore, the relationship is a reciprocal one.

He then introduced Sharon Gerber, founder of arts and event planning company Six Degreez, as his liaison to the arts community. Gerber introduced herself to the audience and gave a short speech. She then asked each person in the audience to stand and identify themselves.

Members of the B Street Theater, Crocker Art Museum and the Sacramento Ballet introduced themselves. Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission members and Councilman Rob Fong attended.

This was followed by a town-hall style forum addressing the question: What do art organizations need from the mayor and City Council?

What followed was a smorgasbord of ideas.

Some wanted federal money to support artists, who are by the nature of their profession unemployed for extended periods of time. Other groups wanted money to go into new arts facilities.

Some even noted how Second Saturday artists get relatively nothing in return for Second Saturday, and some of the money that the city generates from the event should be given to the artists as an honorarium.

"I interviewed a lot of gallery owners and the community, and the thing that I found was that the galleries and the artists are not really benefiting from that event. As this economy continues to tank, those galleries are going to continue to suffer," said Liv Moe, senior editor of Midtown Monthly and an artist herself.

Several people addressed youth programs. It was brought up that Sacramento needs to recognize young artists in the media, and the youth need money for new art resources and technology in the classrooms.

Others wanted to create a new process for how money is delivered from the city to artists so that when money does become available, nonprofits don't end up with the short end of the stick.

After the comments were made, Johnson announced that this meeting would be the beginning of an ongoing process. This group will reconvene every month for 12 months, build an action plan to focus on key issues and build a leadership team of six to 10 volunteers who can meet more regularly.

"On one hand, there are tremendous challenges, but we're not just going to ask [businesses] for a handout." Johnson said. "We've got to say a little bit more, we've got to get people out to see the project."