

Percent for Art in New York City

- 1965 Mayor Robert Wagner issues an executive order supporting the inclusion of artwork in City buildings. Few agencies take advantage of this opportunity.
- 1971-1975 Doris Freedman (1928-1981), founder of the Public Art Fund and Director of the Office of Cultural Affairs within the Department of Parks and Recreation and Culture, drafts Percent for Art legislation and begins to lobby the City Council. The City becomes immersed in a fiscal crisis and the legislation lies dormant.
- 1976 The Office of Cultural Affairs becomes a separate agency: The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA).
- 1978 Edward I. Koch is elected Mayor of New York City.
- 1981 As the City emerges from fiscal crisis, the administration and City Council begin to contemplate Percent for Art legislation. Deputy Mayor Ronay Menschel and Chief of Staff Diane Coffey are key advocates.
- 1982 City Council passes Percent for Art legislation; Mayor Koch signs it into law. Percent for Art Law requires that one percent of the budget for eligible City-funded construction is dedicated to creating public artworks.
- 1983 The Percent for Art law is enacted. Overseen by DCA Commissioner Henry Geldzahler and Deputy Commissioner Randall Bourscheidt, the program is initially administered by the Public Art Fund (Director, Jenny Dixon). Jennifer McGregor is the program's Administrator.
- Following the example of the City's Percent for Art legislation, the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) establishes a similar program for its capital construction projects. During the early years of its existence, the MTA's art selection panels are chaired and coordinated by DCA's commissioner.
- 1984 First artist selection panels meet.
- 1985 The MTA establishes the Arts for Transit Office to oversee the Authority's public art operations.
- First project is completed.
Jorge Luis Rodriguez, [Growth](#), Painted Steel Sculpture, 1985
East Harlem Artpark, Sylvan Place and East 120th Street, Manhattan
Architect: HPD Open Spaces Program
- 1986 DCA assumes full administrative responsibility for Percent for Art. Jennifer McGregor continues to direct the program.
- 1987 First library project is completed.
Ann Gillen, [Medb's Crown](#), Aluminum Bas-relief, 1987
North Hills Branch Library, 57-04 Marathon Parkway, Queens
Architect: Abraham Geller & Associates
- First school project is completed.
Susan Gardner, [Animal Party](#), Painting/Relief Installation, 1987
Public School 94, 6th Avenue and 50th Street, Sunset Park, Brooklyn
Architect: Division of School Buildings

- 1988 *Projects and Proposals: New York City's Percent for Art Program* exhibition celebrating the program's fifth anniversary is on display at DCA's gallery at 2 Columbus Circle.
- First firehouse project is completed.
David Saunders, [Firehat](#), Aluminum relief, 1988
Firehouse for Engine Company 41, East 155th Street and Melrose Avenue, Bronx.
Architect: Stephen Kagel & Associates
- 1989 The Board of Education establishes the Public Art for Public Schools Program as a way to partner with DCA on Percent for Art projects and conserve and exhibit the Board's vast collection of art.
- First police project is completed.
Valerie Jaudon, [Reunion](#), Brick and Granite Paving Plan, 1989
Police Plaza, Civic Center, Manhattan
Architect: Iffland, Kavanagh Waterbury with James Balsley
Art Commission Award for Excellence in Design 1987
- 1990 The School Construction Authority (SCA) is established to oversee the construction of new public schools and manage the repair and renovation of capital projects in existing schools. The SCA administers a five-year capital plan that leads to the commissioning of more than a hundred artists for Percent for Art projects.
- Tom Finkelpearl becomes the Director of Percent for Art.
- First social service organization is completed.
Charles Searles, [Cultural Harmony](#), Wall Reliefs, 1990
Oberia D. Dempsey Multi-Service Center of Central Harlem, 127 West 127th Street, Manhattan
Human Resources Administration
- First conservation project is completed.
Abram Champanier, [Alice and Friends at Coney Island Playland](#), WPA Mural Restoration, 52 Art Works Purchase, 1990
Coney Island Hospital Emergency Room, 2601 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn
Alan M. Farancz, Conservation Studio Inc.
- First and only neon project is completed.
Stephen Antonakos, [Neon for the 59th Street Marine Transfer Station](#), Neon Light Installation, 1990
59th Street Marine Transfer Station, 59th Street and 12th Avenue, Manhattan
Architect: Richard Dattner, P.C.
- 1992 First Department of Corrections project is completed.
Kit-Yin Snyder, [Judgment](#), Sculpture, 1992
White Street Detention Center, White and Centre Streets, Manhattan
Architect: Urbahn & Litchfield Grosfeld
Art Commission Award for Excellence in Design 1988
- First Infrastructure project is completed.
Toshio Sasaki, [First Symphony of the Sea](#), Wall Relief, 1992
The New York Aquarium, Boardwalk and West 8th Street, Brooklyn
Architect: Goldstone & Hinz
Art Commission Award for Excellence in Design 1992

- 1995 First courthouse project is completed: [*Dialogue with the Sun*](#) by Susumu Shingu for the Queens Criminal Court addition.
- 1996 Charlotte Cohen becomes the Director of Percent for Art.
- 1997 First project for the Department of Transportation is completed: [*Freedom's Gate*](#) by Charles Searles at the Fulton Street Traffic Triangle in Brooklyn.
- First project at an early childhood center is completed: [*Time Flies*](#) by Christy Rupp for Public School 4 Annex in the Bronx.
- Since the program's inception, 154 Percent for Art projects have been completed.
- 2003 Mayor Michael Bloomberg hosts the twentieth anniversary celebration of Percent for Art. Former Mayor Koch is awarded the Doris C. Freedman Award, established in 1982 to honor excellence in public design. The ceremony is held at P.S. 234, site of Donna Dennis's [*Dreaming of Far Away Places: The Ships Come to Washington Square Market*](#) (1988).
- 2005 Since the program's inception, 189 Percent for Art projects have been completed, as well as four conservation projects. An additional thirty-nine projects are underway.