

From Architect to Artist: Public Art by Charles Bergen, AIA

January 30–March 29, 2019



Chinatown Barnes Dance – Photo by [Victoria Pickering](#)

Overview

Charles Bergen, AIA practiced architecture for 22 years until his lifelong passion for art intervened. After two summer residencies at Salem Art Works in upstate New York, Charles founded his art practice and began a career as a professional sculptor. Over several years, Bergen experimented with a range of materials—mostly metal and wood—and subjects: animals such as birds, dolphins, and fish; and figures like Chuck Brown and Theodore Roosevelt. Additionally, he proposed sculptural signage identifying “Barracks Row” and “Capitalsaurus Chasing a Falcarius.”

In recent years, Bergen’s practice has focused on public art projects, many of which were awarded through public commissions. Notable projects include the narrative Centennial Artwork for the City of Bowie, Maryland and fire and police call boxes-turned artworks for Rhode Island Avenue NE Main Street. One of Bergen’s most celebrated and talked about projects is the “Barnes Dance,” also known as a pedestrian scramble, with its whimsical graphic of dragons and Chinese zodiac images at the intersection of 7th and H Streets NW in Washington, DC’s Chinatown.

Bergen's affection for animals and nature, combined with history, is evidenced in his body of work with sculptures that appear playful and decorative, yet serious and functional. With his artwork, he manages to strike a balance between imagery and narrative, demonstrating just enough to invite curiosity, imply a story, and inspire appreciation. This exhibition presents drawings, photographs, and objects from selected projects completed by the artist since 2014.

From Architect to Artist: Public Art by Charles Bergen, AIA is organized by AIA|DC for the Suman Sorg Gallery in collaboration with the artist. This exhibition was designed and modeled in ArchiCAD19, courtesy of Graphisoft. Generously supported in part by BluEdge. Installation by Tim Anderson.

Related Events

Reception

Tuesday, February 5, 6:30–8pm

Free.

Registration required via <https://www.aiadc.com/calendar>

Join us for light bites and drinks to celebrate the opening of *From Architect to Artist: Public Art by Charles Bergen, AIA*. Meet Mr. Bergen who shares informal remarks about his lifelong passion for art, the journey from architect to artist, and the public art practice he owns and operates today.

Talk and Walk: Charles Bergen, AIA and Chinatown Barnes Dance

Saturday, February 16, 1–3pm

Free for Assoc. AIA, AIA, & DAC Members | \$25 for Non-Members

Registration required via <https://www.aiadc.com/calendar>

Join Charles Bergen, AIA for a short gallery talk highlighting selected projects on view in the exhibition. Following his talk, participants walk with Mr. Bergen to the Chinatown Barnes Dance where he discusses the project brief, design strategies, and installation process for this unique project. As art in public space, he also shares tales of vandalism and the restoration practices and procedures required for repairs.

Integrating Public Art into Your Next Project

Wednesday, March 27, 6:30–8pm

\$10 for Students & Assoc. AIA Members | \$15 for AIA & DAC Members | \$25 for Non-Members

Registration required via <https://www.aiadc.com/calendar>

Public art is created for many reasons, among them to tell a story and engage the community. As art in the public domain, public art is—most importantly—highly visible and freely accessible to everyone. So,

how does public art come to life and what are the processes involved in the planning, development, and production of such artworks?

Join Charles Bergen, AIA as he discusses how to develop art commissions and seek public grants and match-funding. He also discusses how to select and work with artists, municipal agencies and/or private entities, consultants, and fabricators to integrate art into public sites throughout the District of Columbia and beyond.

Selected Images



Bowie: Past, Present, and Future – Photo by Greg Staley



Capitalsaurus Chasing a Falcarius – Photo by Bruce McKaig



Arts Park Sprinkler and Bike Rack at Dance Place – Photo by Greg Staley

About the District Architecture Center

The District Architecture Center (DAC) is home to the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Washington Architectural Foundation. Located in the historic Penn Quarter neighborhood, we celebrate the built environment through exhibitions and related programs that engage architects, architectural enthusiasts, allied professionals, students, and the public.

Exhibitions at DAC spotlight excellence in architecture, design, and urbanism; explore and disseminate significant artistic and architectural ideas; and pique curiosities about the man-made world around us. These experiences offer a platform for dialogue on the nature of contemporary design practice, the role of architecture in our communities, and the many ways that design impacts people's lives.

General Information

Location

District Architecture Center
421 7th Street NW
Washington, DC 20004

Contact

202.347.9403

Connect

aiadc.com
Facebook: @districtarchcenter
Instagram: @districtarchcenter
Twitter: @dcarchcenter

#DACgalleries

Admission

Exhibitions are free and open to the public. Refer to related events for admission pricing.

Gallery Hours

Monday–Wednesday: 10am–7pm*

Thursday–Friday: 10am–5pm*

Saturday–Sunday: Closed

*Hours subject to change pending special events, holidays, or inclement weather. Consult our calendar or call ahead.

Membership

Become a DAC Member at <https://www.aiadc.com/membership> to receive member discounts.

Contact

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