

The Art Law Blog

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Symbolism

Friend of the Barnes Evelyn Yaari responds via email to my [post](#) last week wondering what difference it would make if the Delaware River Port Authority rescinded its \$500,000 in funding for the move to Philadelphia:

"This particular grant is distinctive because it is public money and because the DRPA is a regional governmental body. There is symbolic value in it if, by some miracle, the votes come together to rescind it, or even get close. Besides, we saw an opportunity to raise some of the issues that are far more important than the half million dollars, including:

- Not only has the DRPA not evaluated the Barnes project in line with its own Guidelines on Economic Development; none of the interested parties (Pew, Lenfest, Annenberg, the City of Philadelphia) has published a study of the project. ([Link](#) to the Statement by Professor M. Marcus)
- There is absolutely no evidence to support what appears to be a fore-gone conclusion that a Philadelphia Barnes project is of great benefit to Philadelphia and the region.
- The only study we have seen is The Abruzzo Case Analysis, by Professor James Abruzzo, which calls the Philadelphia Barnes plan "highly risky". That was in 2004 - before the current climate of extreme uncertainty. ([Link](#) to the Abruzzo Analysis)
- What we are looking at is, among other things, a huge Pork Barrel Project that will become a major consumer of public and private funding now and for however long it can stay together.
- Rather than an undertaking that ensures a financially stable future for the Barnes, this exposes the institution to a level of risk to which it has never been exposed in Merion. That there is no legal means of stopping it is a disgrace; however, we will continue to pursue whatever avenues remain available to block funding.
- The high risk, combined with the enormous lump sum investment for this insanity will affect other institutions as well. That is inevitable and explains why many in the arts and culture community perceive of the Barnes project like The Blob."

POSTED BY DONN ZARETSKY AT 9:31 PM