

## Patricia Walsh

CEO + Founder | PAW Arts, LLC

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*Demystifying the \$4.4 billion public art industry: How understanding the process can transform your role in shaping community spaces.*

### BIO

Patricia Walsh is a leading public art expert and artist with over 20 years of experience transforming communities through innovative arts initiatives. As the founder of PAW Arts, LLC, she combines her passion for public engagement with extensive expertise in arts administration.

With a Master's in Arts Administration from Boston University, Patricia has held key positions across the United States, including managing San José's art collection and spending nine years at Americans for the Arts. Her experience spans policy development, cross-sector partnerships, stakeholder engagement, and collection management.

A dynamic speaker and consultant, Patricia has helped hundreds of community leaders implement public art policies and programs that authentically reflect local values. She's known for organizing one of the nation's only annual public art conferences and managing the Public Art Network, connecting over 1,000 professionals nationwide.

Patricia has presented at national and international conferences, offering practical insights and visionary approaches to harnessing the transformative power of public art. She has been a key resource to the media and provided information and on-the-record commentary to ARTnews, Nonprofit Quarterly, NPR, WBEZ Chicago, Associated Press, Apartment Therapy, and Chicago Tribune, among many other national and regional publications and news outlets.

Through PAW Arts, LLC, Patricia collaborates with various organizations to address community needs through the arts. She maintains an active artistic practice and serves as an advisor for the Arts & Planning Division of the American Planning Association.

Based in Poughkeepsie, New York, Patricia brings a unique blend of experience, visionary thinking, and artistic sensibility to her speaking engagements, inspiring audiences to leverage public art in community development.

## **BUILDING CURIOSITY: UNDERSTANDING HOW ART ENTERS OUR PUBLIC SPACES**

What starts with a simple question – "Who decided to put this artwork here?" – can lead to a transformative journey in public art. Drawing from two decades of experience managing public art programs, leading a national network of administrators, and consulting with communities across the United States, this presentation illuminates the often-hidden pathways through which art enters our shared spaces.

The \$4.4 billion global public art industry represents more than just aesthetic enhancement – it embodies our cultural values, histories, and community identities. Yet the processes behind these artistic expressions remain largely opaque to both emerging professionals and the general public. Through real-world examples and practical insights, this talk explores four key pathways through which public art comes to life: government funding, private sector investment, community-driven projects, and artist initiatives. Each pathway offers unique opportunities for engagement and impact, creating multiple entry points for the next generation of cultural leaders.

By demystifying these systems and sharing concrete strategies for involvement, this presentation aims to empower emerging artists, administrators, and community leaders to actively shape the future of public art. Attendees will gain practical knowledge about navigating public art processes, building successful partnerships, and creating meaningful connections between communities and their shared spaces. Whether you're an aspiring public art professional or simply curious about how art transforms our built environment, this talk provides valuable insights into making public art more accessible, equitable, and impactful for all.

### **TARGET AUDIENCES**

This presentation is designed for emerging arts administrators, artists seeking to expand into public art, urban planners, community leaders, and cultural advocacy organizations. It's particularly valuable for college students and early-career professionals in arts administration, public policy, or urban design who want to understand the intersection of art, community development, and public space. The content also resonates with established professionals in adjacent fields like architecture, city planning, or community development who seek to better integrate public art into their work.

### **EXAMPLE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

Recent speaking engagements include the 2024 Creative Impact Conference, Hudson Valley, New York, [March 2024 Brave New Girls podcast](#), 2023 National Planning Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the 2021 Virtual Art Symposium in Public Spaces, Guatemala City, Guatemala.