



December 21, 2015
9 Tevet 5776

Robert DiMaio
Executive Director
The Artist Archive
robert@theartistarchive.org

Dear Robert:

Thank you so much for bringing this opportunity to us at Schechter Manhattan.

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Benjamin Mann
Head of School

Schechter Manhattan is a school with a deep commitment to the arts. We believe that our students' lives are enriched through opportunities to express themselves through art. Our art specialist, Ellen Art, brings years of experiences leading community art projects that enhance both the artists working together and the communities where the art is displayed. In addition, we, like Don Gummer, have a commitment to public art – our 4th graders each year write poetry, and then “take to the streets,” reciting their poetry on Columbus Avenue to passersby, where they can see the reactions of people experiencing their art and realize how impactful artistic expression is.

After viewing the film and seeing the sculptures on Broadway, we are inspired – inspired to structure an experience for our students that helps them to think differently about the environments they encounter on the streets of New York every day. We want our students – and their parents – to look at bridges and buildings as the art they see every day. We believe that enabling our students and their parents to see the world in this new way will enhance their appreciation of the art all around them and inspire them to contribute their own art to their communities.

We are proposing a four event series. We hope that you, Don Gummer and Meryl Streep will join us to speak at one of the events, and that Mr. Gummer will come back again to work with our middle school students to create actual sculptures. We believe that the series will have a lasting impact on the majority of our students, since the series will include all of our students in grades 3-8.

We are excited to present our proposal for incorporating the *The Art Works of Don Gummer* into our school. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Benjamin Mann
Head of School

Julie R. Sissman
Co-President, Parents Association
Vice President, Board of Trustees



Public Sculpture Installation at Schechter Manhattan
Inspired by the Street Sculpture Works of Don Gummer
and the Film, *The Art Works of Don Gummer*

Proposed Project: Public Sculpture Installation at Schechter Manhattan, inspired by Don Gummer's philosophy and process as shown in the film, *The Art Works of Don Gummer*, and by seeing his public sculptures on Broadway

- Don Gummer infuses his outdoor work with elements and understanding of iconic NYC bridges
- We are a Jewish school that fosters in our students a love of the arts and a love of culture related to Israel and Jewish life. We will build on this by exploring architecture and bridges in Israel as inspirations for own sculptural installations.
- We propose four events

Publicity: Announcement of Schechter Manhattan events (the full series of 4 events to our school's families, and just Event 2 to the wider public) and encourage people to visit Don Gummer's sculptures by including a link to his map.

Event 1

Arts Festival

February 2, 2016 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Grades 3-5 and their families

This event will include:

- In preparation for the night, several spaces in our school will be designated as potential sites for sculptures.
- Begin with a slideshow of architecture and structures in Israel and discussion of how art is all around us – the buildings, bridges, etc.
- Based on the elements they see in the slides, groups of families will brainstorm ideas for sculptures.
- The groups of families, working together, will realize the ideas in sculptural models with accompanying paragraphs explaining the architecture reference and other motivations.
- Materials for models will include, clay, model magic, paper straws, plastic straws, wire, skewers, craft sticks, hot glue, fabric, pipe cleaners, and duct tape.

Models will be prominently displayed in the foyer of the school.

This event will be solely internal – only for Schechter Manhattan 3rd-5th grade families, though publicized throughout the entire school population. (This is an annual event for our school – a 3rd-5th Grade Arts Festival every winter.)

Event 2

Film and Discussion Night

2-3 weeks later

Open to the public, advertised by Robert DiMaio and Schechter Manhattan, for broader impact beyond our school community. Our space can accommodate up to 170 people.

This event will include:

- Screening of “The Art Works of Don Gummer” by Robert C. DiMaio
- Panel discussion with Robert DiMaio, Don Gummer, and Meryl Streep about the art and the film, followed by discussion.
- Invite a group, including Ellen Alt (school’s art specialist) and other parent artists, to speak towards the end of the event. This shorter panel will focus on selecting appropriate, inspiring, and feasible model sculptures from Event 1 – to then be built by middle school students - for each location in the school. (The locations will have been chosen in preparation for Event 1.)
- Open voting to audience via text.
- Chosen sculptures will be brought to our middle school event.

Event 3

Sculpture Building

2-3 weeks later

Middle School students over several weeks

This event will include:

- A combination of class time and after school time will be devoted to groups of middle school students building the selected model sculptures.
- Refer to the scaled models and the architectural inspirations as well as clips from the film.
- Materials: wood, metal, paper mache, possible welding, cement, clay.

For this event, we invite Don Gummer to come and work with our students during some of their building time. We would love for him to share in the work that he has inspired, with our students!

Event 4

Art Opening

Yom Ha’atzmaut – Israel Independence Day, May 12

Students (and maybe their families) will walk the school, viewing and discussing each sculpture, the process, and the sculpture’s relationship to the “public space” it occupies in the school.