

BIOGRAPHY SHELLY L. WILLIS

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After more than 25 years working for government, non-profit, and university systems, in January 2017 Shelly Willis began working in the private sector as a public art consultant. Her current clients include the County of Sonoma, County of Sacramento, Stonebridge Properties, McKinley Village, LLC, the City of Sparks, Nevada, the City of San Leandro, multiple artists, among others.

From 2008 – 2017, Willis worked at the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission (SMAC), first as the Director of the Public Art Program and then as the agency Executive Director. SMAC is a 40-year old City/County joint arts agency that provides more than a million dollars annually to artists and arts organizations through grants; promotes the arts through marketing, outreach and education initiatives; provides resources to support and increase regional arts education activities; serves as a community partner and agency; and manages the City and County vast public art collection and program. Willis directed SMAC's Art in Public Places Program for more than 9 years. In her tenure, she oversaw the development of dozens of permanent and temporary public artworks including the Sacramento International Airport Terminal B public art program (an \$8-million-dollar project) and the Golden 1 Center Entertainment and Sports Complex (a 9.5-million-dollar project). She managed the maintenance and conservation of the collection, developed the organizations procedures, policies, and plans. Through partnerships and collaborations, she managed projects for Regional Transit, the City of West Sacramento, Sacramento Public Business Improvement Districts, and private developers.

Willis came to Sacramento after six years managing the University of Minnesota public art program where she directed the development and installation of temporary and permanent public artworks on campuses throughout the University of Minnesota system. She developed a public art minor program at the University and taught courses in public art in the Department of Urban Studies and the Department of Landscape Architecture. Among other writings, her essay on the state of public art education in the United States was published by Americans for the Arts in the book titled Public Art by the Book, edited by Barbara Goldstein. Willis is co-editor of the book, Public Art Practice, published by Routledge New York in the spring of 2008. Willis came to Minnesota in October 1999 after 10 years managing visual arts programming for the City of Fairfield, California. She founded and directed the city gallery and the city's public art program, with an emphasis on exploring community identity through public art.

Willis curated "Finding Time," a temporary public art project involving 56 artists and 15 major works of public art in Columbus, Ohio. In 2013, she was the recipient of the Art Executive of the Year Award from the Sacramento Arts and Business Council and in 2016 received the Muriel Johnson Award for Arts Advocacy. Willis is the recipient of two City Manager Commendation awards for recognition of service that goes beyond normal expectations. She has taught gallery management (at Napa and Solano Community Colleges) and public art practice (at the University of Minnesota). She received undergraduate degrees in art history and business administration from California State University, Chico. She lives in Sacramento with her husband and two Labrador retrievers Olive and Lilly.

