

Locke Street Public Art Competition
Concrete Poetry
Simon Frank

“To walk the streets of this city is to love it”



Hamilton
Community Services Department
Culture Division

Simon Frank Concrete Poetry
Locke Street Public Art Competition Proposal 1 of 3

I am proposing an artwork entitled **CONCRETE POETRY** - where a poem is spread out along Locke Street - with each word or line of the poem “written” on a series of small bronze plaques embedded safely and securely in the sidewalks, flush with the surface of the concrete. The plaques will be installed along both sides of the street - mapping out a path that will begin and end at the same location – thereby creating a kind of walking trail loop. The poem will act like a series of signposts along the path, or as a kind of guidebook, up and down the street – one that will prompt pedestrians towards a deeper consideration of their experience when walking on Locke.

Just as Locke Street is unlike any other street in Hamilton, **CONCRETE POETRY** is not an ordinary or conventional public artwork. It does not function as just a decorative sculpture, installed in the public space. Instead it will work to activate the entire site by directly engaging people and guiding them towards a more poetic encounter with the street. It invites people to become participants in the work, rather than simply viewers. As such, it is an artwork that perfectly compliments the vibrant and exciting pedestrian character of the street and surrounding community. Despite the fact that it occupies no vertical space, **CONCRETE POETRY** will have a strong presence on the street. It does not interfere with the movement of people, but rather encourages them to walk and explore.

The poem itself will be about walking on Locke Street. Walking is at the heart of the Locke Street experience and similarly, people can only read the poem and fully interact with the work by walking. The poem’s text will also include direct references to many of the other important key attributes of the neighbourhood; including both the natural and human history of the area. The text will make authentic connections to both these histories, past and present: the natural history, like the Niagara Escarpment and the pond at Bold, that once collected water from nearby creeks; and the human history of the community, like the Beasley Racetrack, or the HAAA “Tigers”.

By its very design, **CONCRETE POETRY** belongs to its setting, defining Locke Street as an important place in this city - a site of gathering and human activity rather than a mere location.

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Artist’s Statement



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Typical Plaque in Sidewalk



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Walking on Locke

Approximate Dimensions for Bronze Plaques

Length - Is entirely dependent on length of word or line of poem
Maximum length approximately 25"

Width - approximately 2 1/2" - 3"

Depth - approximately 3/8" - 1/2"



Rods extending from the base of the plaque will provide secure and stable installation – flush with the surface of the concrete sidewalk

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Detail of Plaque