



The public art debate

Is the city's Percent for Public Art Program doing its job?

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This spring, aliens will invade Toronto. The two tallest will measure over 10 feet high, one with five bright yellow legs and the other a giant blue head. And they won't be alone. They will be surrounded by smaller, multi-coloured friends.

You might expect them to be am-

bling around the Entertainment District, looking for a raucous night club where they'll blend in. Instead, the creatures, part of new \$1.5-million art installation, will be bringing whimsy uptown, at Yonge and Eglington. They will be spreading out between two new condo towers on Redpath Avenue, a joint project between Freed Developments and Capital Developments currently under construction.

The piece, called STARGATE and envisioned by Toronto art collective Blue Republic, was commissioned as part of the city's Percent for Public Art Program, sometimes simply called Section 37, as a reference to the planning item it falls under. As the name suggests, the initiative mandates that certain developers — those building for-profit projects over 10,000 square metres, and those asking for either a height or density

variance to the zoning bylaws — commit one per cent of their construction budgets for new sculptures or installations.

Section 37 has been around for 53 years but has taken on greater import recently. Of Toronto's 400-plus pieces of development-related public art, over two-thirds have been installed since 2005, owing to the city's long boom in condo buildings.

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