



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH CITY ARTS COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

October 9, 2025
Agenda Item No. 4

TO: CITY ARTS COMMISSION

FROM: Library Services Department
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TITLE: Curatorial Panel Assessment of Submitted Works – Sculpture in Civic Center Park Exhibition, Phase X

ABSTRACT:

Arts Orange County will present the curatorial panel rankings of the Sculpture Exhibition Phase X entries. The City Arts Commission will discuss the ranking results and approve works for inclusion in the Public Online Survey for Phase X of the Sculpture Exhibition.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommend that the City Arts Commission and guest curators review the panel rankings, and the City Arts Commission approve a list of finalists for inclusion in the Public Online Survey for Phase X of the Sculpture Exhibition.

DISCUSSION:

The Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park is an integral feature of the Newport Beach Civic Center. Civic Center Park was designed by renowned landscape architectural firm Peter Walker and Partners (PWP). PWP developed a master plan for art in the park and identified various spots in the park where art, particularly sculpture, may be exhibited.

The City Arts Commission determined that a rotating exhibition was an optimal approach to utilize the PWP design and to bring sculpture to the City in a cost-efficient manner. In August 2013, the Newport Beach City Council authorized the City Arts Commission to implement an inaugural rotating sculpture exhibit in Civic Center Park.

The acquisition program that the City Arts Commission developed for the exhibition created a model in which pieces are loaned for a 3-year period. Sculptors of works chosen for the exhibition are provided with a small honorarium to loan their work to the City. The City is responsible for installing the art, while sculptors are responsible for the maintenance and repair of their work. Admission is free and the exhibition continues to be enjoyed by residents and guests. In essence, the exhibition has been designed to offer a temporary exhibit that allows the City to avoid the obligation and expense of owning public art. The rotational nature of the exhibit ensures that residents and guests are exposed to a variety of work. The City Arts Commission, along with a curatorial panel consisting of Genevieve Williams, Founder of GW Contemporary in Laguna Beach, and Virginia Arce, Exhibitions Program Coordinator for the City of Irvine, will evaluate submissions for inclusion in the public online survey. The artwork chosen by the panel must meet the following criteria:

1. Artistic Merit — the artist has strong professional qualifications, and the artwork is of high quality and demonstrates originality and artistic excellence.
2. Durability — the artwork is made of high-quality materials, requires minimal maintenance, and can withstand the outdoor elements of coastal Orange County.
3. Practicality — the artwork is appropriate for audiences of all ages and does not exhibit unsafe conditions that may bear on public liability.
4. Site Appropriateness — the scale of the artwork is suitable for the environment, and the artwork is suitable for viewing from all angles.

Selected works will then be available for public vote in an online poll open from October 15, 2025, through December 5, 2025, with the top ten sculptures to be recommended to City Council for installation. The survey will also determine alternate sculptures in the event a replacement is needed for one of the top ten.

The City Arts Commission will review the results of the public survey at its December 11, 2025, regular meeting and submit the results for City Council approval at the January 13, 2026, City Council regular meeting.

Pending Council approval, the selected artworks will be prominently showcased for three years in Civic Center Park in Newport Beach.

NOTICING:

This agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Arts Commission considers the item).