



NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

April 9, 2024
Agenda Item No. 13

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director - 949-717-3801,
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TITLE: Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park – Phase IX

ABSTRACT:

At its March 14, 2024 regular meeting, the City Arts Commission approved 10 sculptures and four alternates for the exhibition within Civic Center Park, as selected through a survey of Newport Beach residents. The City Arts Commission requests the City Council's consideration and approval of the selections and alternates. If approved, the 10 Phase IX sculptures will be on display for a two-year period, with installation commencing in June 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- b) Approve 10 sculptures and their placement and two alternate sculptures within Civic Center Park as selected by the public and recommended by the City Arts Commission for the temporary sculpture exhibit.

DISCUSSION:

The Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park is an integral feature of the Newport Beach Civic Center. Civic Center Park, which turned nearly half a million square feet of undeveloped land into a new public 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 bring sculpture to Newport Beach in a cost-efficient manner. In August 2013, the Newport Beach City Council authorized the City Arts Commission to implement an inaugural rotational 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 two-year period (or phase). Sculptors of works chosen for the exhibition are provided with a small honorarium to loan their work to the City of Newport Beach.

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 of all ages and sensibilities. In essence, the exhibition has become a “museum without walls” that offers the temporary display of public art in a unique, natural setting. Moreover, the City is able to exhibit a well-balanced representation of public art, with artistic merit, durability, practicality and site responsiveness as criteria in the selection process. The rotational nature of the exhibit ensures that residents and guests are exposed to a variety of work. Borrowing the pieces remains a cost-effective alternative to owning and maintaining permanent public art.

Since 2014, the City Arts Commission has presented eight phases of the Sculpture Exhibition, with the installation of Phase VIII occurring in June 2023. On October 24, 2023, the City Council authorized staff to reallocate funding within the total Cultural Arts Division budget to fully fund Phase IX of the Sculpture Exhibition project and its installation of 10 sculptures. The City then entered into a professional services agreement with Arts Orange County for \$119,000 for Phase IX of the Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park. This amount includes project coordination and management fees, in addition to sculpture installation and de-installation fees.

Arts Orange County (Arts OC) was established in 1995 as the nonprofit, countywide arts council of Orange County, California. Arts OC has been recognized by the California Arts Council as a model agency based on the quality of its work and has served as the officially designated arts agency and state-local partner of the County of Orange since its inception. The Arts OC project team successfully managed all previous phases of the exhibition and has strong working relationships with the City Arts Commission and City staff.

Private Funding

As in previous phases, private funds will be used to augment the total cost of Phase IX. The Newport Beach Arts Foundation, the City-designated support group for the City Arts Commission, donated \$10,000 toward the project. These donated funds will be used to pay a portion of the artist honorariums.

Community Input

Since the Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park’s inception, the City Arts Commission has increased public engagement by offering residents opportunities to become part of the selection process. For Phase IX, the City Arts Commission included the following elements in the process:

- a) As in previous phases, the City Arts Commission did not utilize an ad hoc subcommittee for Phase IX. The entire City Arts Commission reviewed the submitted pieces for inclusion in the Phase IX Sculpture Exhibition online survey, during City Arts Commission regular meetings.
- b) For Phase IX, the City Arts Commission turned the selection process over to the public. Through an online survey, Newport Beach residents voted for their favorite sculptures for inclusion in Phase IX. There were 10 sculptures and four alternates selected by the public.

Prior to launching the public survey, the City Arts Commission, along with a curatorial panel, consisting of arts professionals Ms. Tram Le and Mr. Alejandro “Man One” Poli, Jr., evaluated all submissions for Phase IX at the February 8, 2024, regular City Arts Commission meeting. Pieces that met the following criteria were included in the public survey:

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.

Using these criteria, the City Arts Commission approved 28 submitted pieces for the public survey.

The online public survey opened on February 12, 2024, and closed on March 11, 2024. The survey was publicized through Stu News on multiple occasions, included in the City Manager’s Week in Review, and posted to social media and on Arts OC’s website, SparkOC.com. In addition, the poll was disseminated to the 30,000+ subscribers to the Library and Cultural Arts email distribution list and the City’s email subscribers for current news and topics of interest. Survey flyers and Library website banner advertisements rounded out the survey marketing.

Survey participants were required to provide a valid email address, report the ZIP code of their residence, and complete a CAPTCHA security step to affirm that they were not a bot.

Arts OC deleted any entries that did not provide a Newport Beach ZIP code. The poll also captured the IP address, time of voting, and type of device used to vote. Arts OC used these tools to identify potential cases of double-votes. For example, if two votes from the same IP address happened within minutes, voted for the same works, and had similar enough email addresses, Arts OC deleted one of them. If the email addresses were different enough, Arts OC deferred on the side of permitting them, since it could have been the product of multiple people voting on the same computer from the same household.

After these steps were completed, the City Arts Commission had a validated total of 239 voters, casting 1,873 votes. The results are ranked in the following table.

Artist	Work	Votes	Public Ranking	CAC Ranking
Ten Final Selections:				
Snider, Doug	<i>Gecko</i>	120	1	14t
Ambrosio, Peter	<i>Interplay</i>	111	2	14t
DeBruyne, Hilde	<i>Growing Wings</i>	96	3	14t
Blazejovsky, Vojtech	<i>Heavy Landing</i>	88	7	8t
Moushey Dale, Michele	<i>Natural Wonders</i>	86	8	4
Debold, Cindy	<i>Glee</i>	71	9	6t
Cartwright, Matt	<i>Trillium Bus Stop Bench</i>	70	10t	5
Palumbo, Giuseppe	<i>Duality</i>	70	10t	14t
Whitacre, Ron	<i>Reaching Man</i>	70	10t	22t
Daley, Catherine	<i>Millefolium</i>	69	13t	2t
Two Alternate Selections:				
Hassen, Peter	<i>Cycles 3: Frogs, Bees, Birds</i>	69	13t	14t
Wright, D. Yoshikawa	<i>Time and Awareness</i>	69	13t	22t
Worsham, Catherine	<i>Catalyst Compass</i>	93	4	26t
Dallal, Joyce	<i>Shout it to the Wind</i>	91	5t	8t
uckiood - Douglas, Missy & Rask, Kim	<i>BIG PUFFA (The Generator)</i>	91	5t	2t
Burmood, Jacob	<i>Depth of Form</i>	43	23	1
Saviskas, Paul	<i>Natures Theater</i>	69	13t	26t
Rench, Chris	<i>Caught Up II</i>	68	17	12t
Ghosh, Shohini	<i>Days Catch</i>	61	18	14t
Sackett, Joe Forrest	<i>Hypersonic</i>	59	19	12t
Alderman, J. Aaron	<i>Mind the Gap</i>	56	20	14t
Carollo, Reno	<i>Expression 3</i>	54	21	26t
Satow, Heath	<i>Ligeia</i>	53	22	22t
Lai, Mary	<i>Dream Portal</i>	41	24	14t
Susnea Litman, Adrian	<i>Frutti di Mare</i>	38	25	8t
Schader, Brian	<i>Convergence III</i>	30	26	6t
Kizziar, David	<i>Cubescape</i>	23	27	8t
Gornushkin, Sergey	<i>RybaFish</i>	14	28	22t

At its March 14, 2024, regular meeting, the City Arts Commission received the public survey results. Catherine Worsham’s *Catalyst Compass* and Joyce Dallal’s *Shout it to the Wind* ranked fourth and tied for fifth respectively in the public survey. However, with guidance from Arts OC, the City Arts Commission agreed to exclude these two pieces from the Phase IX selections due to durability concerns of the pieces withstanding the two-year exhibition timeline.

The City Arts Commission also approved including Jacob Burmood's *Depth of Form* as the first alternate selection because of its first-place ranking among the City Arts Commission and Guest Juror scores.

After the City Arts Commission approved the slate of 10 sculptures and four alternates, *BIG PUFFA (The Generator)* by artists uckiood, was withdrawn from the exhibition because the artists could not meet the scheduling, prep time, financial and delivery timeline requirements for Phase IX of the Sculpture Exhibition. Following that change, Arts OC learned and informed City staff that Jacob Burmood's *Depth of Form* had been committed to a different show and was no longer available for the Sculpture Exhibition. The withdrawal of these two pieces moves *Millefolium*, by artist Catherine Daley, into the exhibition.

Pending City Council approval, installation at the proposed sites will commence on June 10, 2024, and will continue through June 27, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The adopted budget includes sufficient funding for Phase IX installation. It will be expensed to the Sculpture Garden Phase IX Project Account No. 01060603-811059-L2401 in the budget for the Cultural Arts Division of the Library Services Department.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTICING:

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

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A – Selected Works