



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 19-0239, **Version:** 1

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**TO:**

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**THROUGH:**

Bruce Moe, City Manager

**FROM:**

Mark Leyman, Director of Parks and Recreation

Martin Betz, Cultural Arts Manager

**SUBJECT:**

City Hall Lobby Public Art Project, Approval of Semifinalists (Parks and Recreation Director Mark Leyman).

a) **APPROVE**

b) **APPROPRIATE FUNDS**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the City Hall Lobby Public Art Project semifinalists; Nancy Hou, Susan Zoccola, Kipp Kobayashi and Monika Bravo.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

At the November 6, 2018, City Council approved the City Hall Lobby Public Art Project. The project is supported through the Public Arts Trust Fund with \$250,000 allocated to produce the artwork, \$50,000 allocated as a contingency fund, and \$16,000 allocated for stipends to the finalists (4 X \$4,000). An additional \$1,500 will be allocated and awarded if the chosen artist also proposes and incorporates an educational component to their project. The total cost of the project is \$317,500.

The four semifinalists will receive \$4,000 each to develop a specific proposal for the lobby Public Art Project.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 1975, Manhattan Beach's Sister City, Culiacan, in the State of Sinaloa, Mexico presented to the City, a mural by artist Miguel Angel Vasquez as part of the dedication of the new City Hall. The artwork titled "The Men of the World Join Together to Create the New Man," installed in the City Hall lobby, was made up of lacquers and epoxy on 16 plywood panels. In 2003, the mural was covered with a temporary wall and drape system due to public complaints regarding the imagery. In November of 2018, after decommissioning, the mural was removed from the lobby and placed into storage. The family of the artist was contacted for possible transfer of the mural back to Mexico.

On September 19, 2018, City Council directed staff to follow procedures defined in the Cultural Arts Master Plan and requested the Cultural Arts Commission establish an Ad-Hoc Arts in Public Places Committee (APPC). The APPC was charged with developing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), reviewing proposals and selecting top candidates to present to the Cultural Arts Commission. After the APPC's final review, the Cultural Arts Commission recommended the top four finalists (with two alternates) to the City Council.

In addition to the RFQ, the City Council approved the decommissioning of the Miguel Angel Vasquez mural while following State and Federal guidelines regarding the decommissioning of art. Though not required by the guidelines, due to the installation date of the artwork, the artist's heirs were notified of the City's intent to decommission the mural. They requested comprehensive photographic documentation and are investigating the possibility of taking possession of the artwork.

On August 13, 2018, the APPC approved the final version of the RFQ for the Lobby Public Art Project, which was approved by the Cultural Arts Commission for recommendation to the City Council for approval and funding at their August 20, 2018, meeting. At the November 6, 2018, meeting of the City Council, \$317,000 was approved for the project. The APPC reviewed more than 90 RFQ submissions and recommended four semifinalists to the Cultural Arts Commission for approval. At their April 15, 2019, meeting, the Cultural Arts Commission approved the four semifinalists for recommendation to the City Council.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Four artists and two alternates were chosen from the initial 100 RFQ submissions to develop a specific proposal for an artwork in the lobby of City Hall. The semifinalists are summarized below and in an attachment.

### **Nancy Hou**

Hou De Sousa is a New York based design studio whose projects span between architecture and public art. Some of the studio's recent honors include the winning proposal for the Architectural League of New York's 2016 Folly/Function competition to design and build an open-air educational space at Socrates Sculpture Park. That same year, the office won the Re-ball! International Design competition, and built an installation titled "Raise/Raze" within Dupont Underground in Washington DC. Hou de Sousa was awarded Second Prize for their first large-scale competition proposal in 2017; the Museum of World Writing in Songdo, South Korea.

Prior to founding Hou de Sousa, Hou worked at Kohn Pedersen Fox and Slade Architecture. Hou is the Creative Director of HAAUS (Harvard Alumni Architectural and Urban Society) and a professor at Parsons School of Design.

Hou de Sousa has been featured as a "Firm to Watch" in Architectural Record and has been published domestically and internationally in media outlets such as Architectural Review, Domus, Dwell, Interior Design, Metropolis, NBC, and The Washington Post.

### **Susan Zoccola**

Susan Zoccola resides in Seattle, Washington, and has been a practicing artist for over 25 years. She studied at the San Francisco Art Institute and at the University of Washington in Seattle. Susan has completed several major public and private art commissions, including "Grassblades," a 150-foot long screen wall that stands at the east entrance to the Seattle Center, which was awarded (with collaborator John Fleming) an AIA Design Award. Other notable public commissions include the

Seattle Aquarium, a five-story wall piece for the King County Metro Transit, Kenmore City Hall, Lynnwood Recreation Center, and a recent series of eleven light sculptures along five city blocks of Everett, Washington. Her work can be found in many private and public collections, including the UW Medical Center, Valley Medical Center, and Overlake Medical Center. She has also exhibited her studio work in many venues both locally, including Winston Wächter Fine Art and Soil Gallery in Seattle, and nationally, at the O'Kane Gallery in Houston, Texas and the Brooklyn Art Library in Brooklyn, New York.

Throughout her career, Susan has received numerous awards and residencies, such as the Sculpture Space residency in Utica, New York, the Pilchuck Glass School, and a GAP Grant from Artist Trust in Seattle.

### **Kipp Kobayashi**

As an artist and urban designer, Kipp Kobayashi has a keen interest in the nature of human interaction in our public environments and is in constant search for ways to initiate dialogue and to promote sociability within these spaces. His work explores how these overlapping narrative threads merge with the physical characteristics of a specific environment, transforming them into living and unique entities composed of our thoughts, actions, and experiences.

In a career spanning nearly two decades, Kobayashi has created projects and presented ideas for cities across the nation and for such organizations as the Getty Museum, the Bay Area Rapid Transit District, Sound Transit and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority. In addition, he is an elected member of the Public Art Network Advisory Council, which provides recommendations and insight to Americans for the Arts for the development and execution of public art services and resources. Based in Los Angeles, he received a BA from the University of California at Berkeley, an MFA from the University of Southern California, and is an Assistant Professor in the Urban and Regional Planning Department at the Cal Poly Pomona School of Environmental Design.

### **Monika Bravo**

Monika Bravo is a multi-disciplinary artist born in Bogotá, Colombia, who lives and works in New York City, New York. Her work has been internationally exhibited, including at Stenersen Museum in Oslo; Seoul's International Biennial of New Media Art; Bank of the Republic in Bogotá; New Museum and El Museo del Barrio in New York City and Site Santa Fe. Her work has received acclaim including a 1999 New York Times review, which called her piece "Synchronicity" (from a group exhibition at El Museo del Barrio) a "standout...small, beautifully blurry video images of boats plowing through New York Harbor." In 1982, Bravo left Bogotá, moving to Rome to study fashion design, which she continued in Paris at Esmod, before traveling to London to study photography. In 1994 she moved to New York where she is currently still based.

In 2010, Bravo was one of four winning artists in New York City's "urbancanvas" design competition with her work "Breathing Wall UC."

Most recently, Bravo represented the Vatican City in the Pavilion of the Holy See at the 56th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennial with her work "ARCHE-TYPES: The sound of the word is beyond sense." With this new work, she continues with her interest in coding and decoding information, the interest in the language of abstraction and an ongoing pursuit to decipher reality by means of perception. She created a parallel between the prologue of the Gospel of John, "In the Beginning," Malevich's ideas behind Suprematism, and the definition of Zaum by the avant garde

Poet Aleksei Kruchenykh.

### **Alternates:**

If the City Council determines that one of the four recommended semifinalists is not a good fit for this project, staff has provided two alternative artists for consideration:

### **Clif Garten**

Cliff Garten creates highly contextual sculpture that intersects with everyday activity and reframes private and public experiences. Use of light, materials and forms result in an environmental solution that reflects subtly rendered narratives of a community's desires.

Garten received his MFA from Rhode Island School of Design and MA in Landscape Architecture with Distinction from Harvard University Graduate School of Design. He received the Americans for the Arts 2010 Public Art Year in Review Award, the American Institute of Architects Artisan Award, American Society of Landscape Architects, Northern California Chapter Merit Award, and has participated in civic art master planning for Saint Paul, Minnesota; Sunnyvale, California; Calgary, Alberta, Canada; and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority.

### **Rob Ley**

Rob Ley's studio's history of experimental work includes installations at the Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York and the Taubman Museum of Art. Ley has also created works for various public art commissions including the cities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Seattle, Portland, and Kansas City, as well as numerous private organizations throughout the country.

Ley has been awarded several notable awards and grants including the 2015 American's for the Arts - Public Art Network Year in Review award, a Graham Foundation grant, multiple AIA research grants, and an IDEC Special Projects grant.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH:**

The RFQ was developed by the APPC, consisting of community members and arts professionals. It was presented and approved for recommendation to the City Council at a public meeting of the Cultural Arts Commission on August 20, 2018. The APPC selected the four semifinalists at the April 10, 2019, meeting. The Cultural Arts Commission approved to recommend the semifinalists to the City Council for consideration at the April 15, 2019, meeting. Public input was considered at both meetings. The RFQ was published with the Americans for Arts, Public Art.org, California Arts Council, Sculpture Magazine, CODA/WORX, Los Angeles County Commission of the Arts, Artist List for Manhattan Beach Centennial Art work competition, and the Public Art Coalition of Southern California. The RFQ was available for review and download on the City website.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

The City has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment; therefore, pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines the activity is not subject to CEQA. Thus, no environmental review is necessary.

### **LEGAL REVIEW:**

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal analysis is

necessary.

**ATTACHMENT:**

1. PowerPoint Presentation