



Cultural Arts Programs

Cultural Arts & Marketing Division

TO: Public Art Advisory Committee
ATTN: Deborah Lozier and Andrew Woodd, Co-chairs
FROM: Steven Huss, Cultural Arts Manager
Christin Hablewitz, Measure DD Public Art Project Manager
DATE: May 3, 2010
RE: Artist Selection for Entrance Gates for the Gardens at Lake Merritt - Public Art Project

SUMMARY

Staff recommends that the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) accept the selection panel's recommendation of **Shawn Lovell** as the artist to receive a total of eighty-six thousand dollars (\$86,000) to design, fabricate and install two public art entrance gates for the Gardens at Lake Merritt. The panel further recommends the team of Adrienne Colburn and Kevin Binkert as the alternate for the project.

SELECTION PROCESS

Bay Area artists were eligible to submit their qualifications to design, fabricate and install two public art entrance gates at the Gardens at Lake Merritt in Oakland, California. The project goal is to create beautiful and inviting entryways that identify and celebrate the gardens.

The City received a total of 71 applications to the project. Staff reviewed all applications and forwarded the 65 eligible applications to the selection panel. The panel met to review applications on March 19, 2010, in Hearing Room 4 of Oakland City Hall, 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza. Criteria for the selection of finalists are found in the Entrance Gates for the Gardens at Lake Merritt Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The panel selected the following finalists to be interviewed:

- 1) Adriane Colburn and Kevin Binkert (San Francisco)
- 2) Shawn Lovell (Oakland)
- 3) Sean Orlando, Alan Rorie, David Shulman & Jamie Vaida (Oakland)
- 4) Eric Powell (Berkeley)
- 5) Victoria Reynolds & Randy Tuell (Cloverdale)

Prior to being interviewed, the finalists attended a site visit and orientation meeting on April 8, 2010, to become familiar with aspects of the project site and to meet with City representatives. The selection panel met again on April 16, 2010, in Hearing Room 4 of Oakland City Hall, for second-phase interviews of the five eligible finalists before making a final recommendation.

Voting members of the selection panel were local artists/arts professionals Jay van Arsdale, Carla Hall and Fan Lee Warren. Chairing the meeting (a non-voting function) was Public Art Advisory Committee member Joyce Hsu. The other non-voting advisors to the panel were Bruce



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Cobbledick, board member of the Gardens at Lake Merritt volunteer organization, landscape architect Tricia Christopher and Public Art Program project manager Christin Hablewitz.

The panelist selected metal artist Shawn Lovell for multiple reasons. The thoughtfulness of Ms. Lovell's designs, the quality and integrity of her artwork execution, and her passion for continuing the evolution of traditional blacksmith techniques convinced the panel to recommend her. The panel felt Ms. Lovell's aesthetics and vision for the project would result in excellent gates that will withstand time and the evolution of the gardens. The panel was also pleased to support an Oakland-based artist new to the public art realm.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The Entrance Gates for the Gardens at Lake Merritt public art project is fully funded through City of Oakland percent for art funds (per Ordinance Number 11066 C.M.S.) through the Measure DD Oakland Trust for Clean Water & Safe Parks. Once approved by PAAC, the Cultural Affairs Commission and City Council, the selected artist will be contracted for design, fabrication and installation of the final artwork in an amount not to exceed eighty-six thousand dollars (\$86,000).

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Situated in the heart of Oakland as a part of Lakeside Park, the serene Gardens at Lake Merritt provide a horticultural oasis accessible to a large urban population. Opened in the 1950's, the gardens were originally maintained by City staff gardeners with the resources to draw crowds for such seasonal events as chrysanthemum and dahlia displays. The gardens have continued to develop and transform over time to their current configuration, consisting of a collection of smaller theme gardens including the Japanese Gardens and Koi Pond, the Golden State Bonsai Garden, the Show Gardens, the Flower and Herb Garden and the Vegetable and Fruit Demonstration Garden. Open to the public during park hours, the Gardens are a unique urban setting in which to learn about and enjoy hundreds of varieties of trees, shrubs, and plants.

To enhance the historic, cultural, aesthetic and interpretive potential of the often-overlooked Gardens at Lake Merritt, a total of \$86,000 has been allocated through Measure DD to commission an artist or artist team to design, fabricate and install two entryway gates that identify and celebrate the gardens. The entrance gates are located along Lake Merritt inside Lakeside Park. Gate 1 is located adjacent to the Lakeside Park Garden Center at 666 Bellevue Avenue and across from Children's Fairyland and the Lake Merritt Bandshell. Gate 2 is located across from the Lake Merritt Boating Center at 568 Bellevue Avenue and leads the visitor into the Sensory Garden and Edible Demonstration Garden.

The new, custom-made gates will be double-opening. They will attach to an existing chain-link fence and will replace the existing standard gates. The public art gates must be extremely durable, low maintenance and be able to withstand the wear and tear of daily use such as opening and closing by City staff.



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RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the PAAC accept this report and the panel's selection of Oakland metal artist **Shawn Lovell** to receive the commission for the Measure DD: Entrance Gates for the Gardens at Lake Merritt public art project. The panel further recommends the team of Adrienne Colburn and Kevin Binkert as the alternate for the project.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Huss, Cultural Arts Manager