



# Cultural Arts Programs

## *Cultural Arts & Marketing Division*

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TO: Public Art Advisory Committee  
ATTN: Judy Moran and Andrew Woodd, Co-chairs  
FROM: Steven Huss, Cultural Arts Manager  
DATE: February 4, 2013  
RE: Review and Take Action on Design Proposal by Artists Colette Crutcher and Aileen Barr for Tile Mosaic Murals at Cesar Chavez Park

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### **SUMMARY**

Staff recommends that the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) approve the design proposal presented by Colette Crutcher and Aileen Barr for tile murals at Cesar Chavez Park, to allow the artists to continue fabrication and proceed to installation of the tile elements on schedule.

### **BACKGROUND**

On December 4, 2012, the artist team of Colette Crutcher and Aileen Barr was selected by a community-based selection panel to receive the commission for public art at Cesar Chavez Park in conjunction with park improvements and expansion. The artists have collaborated on a number of public art projects using ceramic tile and mosaic. The panelists were community representatives Ricardo Fuentes and Mirian Obermeyer, and project landscape architect Hai-Ping Mo (Dillingham Associates), advised by Cultural Arts Manager Steven Huss and construction project manager Denise Louie, Public Works Agency. At its meeting on January 7, 2013, the PAAC approved the panel's selection of artists.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Cesar Chavez Park is located on Foothill Boulevard at 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Oakland's Fruitvale neighborhood. The artists have conducted two workshops to engage community members in hands-on tile making. The first workshop, held December 13, 2012, took place at the Carmen Flores Recreation Center on Fruitvale Avenue and was attended mostly by school-age children (not teens) and their parents. On January 23, 2013, a second workshop was held with high-school students at Fremont High on Foothill Blvd. At Carmen Flores, the artists led a discussion of the Fruitvale community's identity and interests as a starting point to develop themes for the mural project. In both workshops, participants learned techniques of creating art tiles for use in public places, then made sample art tiles using stamps and rollers to texture raw clay and cut out the tiles.

The community panelists Ricardo and Mirian have continued to be very supportive of and engaged with the project, assisting with scheduling and coordination of the workshops and encouraging attendance.



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### **PROPOSAL**

The artists' goals with their medium on this project are to achieve a density of richness and texture, and to reflect the visually vibrant heritage of this predominantly Latino neighborhood. They work in high-fire ceramic, a durable medium for outdoor use.

The artists have developed concepts and tile materials for three locations in the park: a new entry plaza on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, where the artists will embellish the top and street-facing side of the 32-foot-long seatwall; a 90-foot seatwall at the back of the basketball court; and a treatment for a smaller (15 foot long) seatwall at the children's play area. Inset areas for tile at these locations vary from 12-14 inches high.

The motifs at use in the proposals are all inspired by pre-Columbian designs. Please see accompanying design sketches and sample-tile images provided by the artists.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the PAAC approve the art team Colette Crutcher and Aileen Barr's proposal for tile murals at Cesar Chavez Park.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Huss, Cultural Arts Manager