



Cultural Arts Programs

Cultural Arts & Marketing Division

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 Trust Your Struggle / True Colors Artist Team for Tile Murals at West Oakland Youth Center

SUMMARY

Staff recommends that the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) approve the design proposal presented by the artist team of Trust Your Struggle Collective and True Colors for tile murals on the exterior of the West Oakland Youth Center, to allow the artists to begin fabrication and proceed to installation of the tile elements on schedule.

BACKGROUND

The new West Oakland Youth Center is under construction at the corner of Market and Brockhurst streets. A group of local youth coordinators were deeply engaged in the planning and design of the Youth Center. From the start, the project team has asserted it is essential that community youth have a significant level of engagement and a sense of ownership over the exterior tile mural, in keeping with the level of youth involvement in the development of the facility as a whole.

On September 14, 2012, a artist team combined from the Trust Your Struggle Collective and True Colors murals program at Berkeley City College was chosen by a community-based selection panel to receive the commission for exterior tile artwork at the new West Oakland Youth Center. The panelists were community representatives Diana Alonzo and Anthony J. Hall, advised by Cultural Arts Manager Steven Huss and construction project manager Sandra Ousley. At its meeting on September 17, 2012, the PAAC approved the panel's selection of artists.

The team of artists has extensive collective experience in community-based murals and in working with youth in the development of public art projects, as well as relevant experience with exterior art tile. Members of the team have stated they have a strong connection to contemporary street art as well as traditional mural painting, seeing themselves as a "next generation" of socially conscious public artists.

Juana Alicia Araiza and Erin Yoshi were identified as the project team leaders. Juana Alicia's True Colors murals class provided a schedule structure for development of the project. The True Colors students class as well as the Trust Your Struggle artists would work on mural composition and community outreach. The team utilizes social networks to engage and expand their projects for other community members and to provide updates.



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Construction of the new facility is scheduled to be completed in mid-April, 2013. Public art staff determined with the project delivery team that the tile mural would be completed toward the end of the building's construction schedule. Staff established an agreement that the General Contractor would install the finished tiles; this is now a matter of negotiation as the artwork development schedule has lengthened, primarily due to the iterative and inclusive development process.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Upon approval by PAAC, the artist team began rigorous and comprehensive outreach efforts in West Oakland through extensive contacts with nonprofit leaders and the artists' customary workshopping process with community. They held workshops at McClymonds High School and the St. Mary's community center in fall 2012. The artists then partnered with Attitudinal Healing Connection (AHC), a key community organization located a few blocks from the Youth Center, to conduct hyperlocal outreach to the neighborhood, in particular the youth that will be the front-line beneficiaries of the new center's programs. This has resulted in two effective workshops. At the first workshop, held at the West Oakland YMCA on December 12, 2012, the mural team led a room full of youth and older members of the community brought together by AHC in an exploration of community needs, themes and priorities. A follow-up presentation of the resulting sketches and a refinement of the content took place at AHC on January 15, 2013.

PROPOSAL

The artists have developed a concept proposal for the entryway façade and under-window spaces on the Market Street (main entrance) side of the building, and for the spaces above the entrance and under the first-floor windows on the Brockhurst Street side, though the spaces are subject to change. The project tile area has been estimated at approximately 500 square feet.

The medium will be high-fired six-by-six-inch ceramic tiles. The artists will work in what they characterize as "a painterly style" on tile, rather than a use of mosaic. Images and themes employed in the proposal have been inspired by and reflect input from the community workshopping process. The images have been further developed and made more specific to the constituent community through refinement at the 12/12/12 and 1/15/13 workshops. [Please refer to the design sketches to be provided by the artists.]

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the PAAC approve the design proposal by the artist team of Trust Your Struggle Collective and True Colors mural program for tile murals on the exterior of West Oakland Youth Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Huss, Cultural Arts Manager