



## PROCESS SUMMARY

### Republic Square Park Phase II Improvements ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PROJECT

#### PROJECT SUMMARY

The City of Austin Art in Public Places (AIPP) program of the Cultural Arts Division, Economic Development Department seeks to commission a professional visual artist or artist team to create artwork for Republic Square Park. It is located at 422 Guadalupe Street in central Austin.

#### ARTWORK GOALS

- Responds to the historical and cultural significance of Republic Square Park;
- Complements the goals of the Republic Square Master Plan;
- Contributes to a family-friendly experience of the park;
- Creates a vibrant and contemporary artwork that lends identity to the park;
- Presents low maintenance needs through the use of appropriate and durable materials.

#### BUDGET

The total budget available for this project is \$105,000.00 funded by the 2012 bond and parkland acquisition funds. Budget was revised to \$118,500 in July 2015 after administrative back charges were reversed.

#### SELECTION PANEL

- Roy Watson, Principal, Dyal and Partners
- Sylvia Orozco, Executive Director, Mexic-Arte Museum
- Steven Spears, ASLA, PKA, AICP, Partner and Principal at Design Workshop

#### PROJECT ADVISORS

- Susan Benz, The Benz Resource Group
- Rey Hernandez, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department
- Melissa Barry, Downtown Austin Alliance
- Colin Wallis, Austin Parks Foundation
- Meredith Powell, Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association and Republic Square Partners Group
- Emily Little, AIPP Panel Liaison

#### SELECTION PROCESS

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was released on March 17, 2015 to professional visual artists and artist teams, at least 18 years of age, who live and work in TEXAS. Artists were required to submit qualifications via [www.publicartist.org](http://www.publicartist.org) to include 10 images of past work, resume, letter of interest and references. Deadline for the applications was 5pm May 21, 2015.

RFQ announcement outreach:

- » Announcement and pdf of the RFQ was emailed to artists on the AIPP Texas database mailing list, the Project Advisors and to the AIPP Panel.
- » The AIPP website featured the opportunity for the duration of the RFQ period.
- » Notice was included in multiple AIPP e-newsletters.
- » Announcement of RFQ was posted on the AIPP and CAD Facebook pages. A Facebook event was created for the Artist Information Meeting held on.
- » Announcement and pdf of the RFQ was emailed to various local artists/landscape architects/non-profit organizations that specialize in similar type of work.
- » Slide announcing the RFQ and Artist Information Meeting was placed on Channel 6.
- » Facebook postings on to pages: Glass Tire, Up Collective, Austin Creative Alliance, Pump Project, Big Medium, Canopy, Texas Biennial, Art Lies, Landmarks at UT, Art Alliance Austin, Women.Design.Build, Co-Lab project, Texas Sculpture Group
- » Austin Chronical advertisement

An Artist Information Meeting was held on April 16, 2015 at the Cultural Arts Division Training Room, presented by AIPP staff, Rey Hernandez, PARD Project Manager.

The Selection Panel met with Advisors on Wednesday, June 3, 2015 to review the 33 eligible applications submitted, including images of past work, resume and letters of interest. The Selection Panel selected five finalist teams for interviews: (1) Norberto Dominguez, Val Mayerik and Helen Howell Graves; (2) Fidencio Duran and Alan Barber; (3) Joseph and Holly Kincannon; (4) Norman Lee, Shane Allbritton and Joseph Meppelink; and (5) Michelle Tarsney and Dann Cheetham.

The Selection Panel conducted interviews on July 2, 2015 and could not come to a recommendation at the end of the day. The Selection Panel agreed to meet on Monday, July 6 and made the recommendation for the team of Michelle Tarsney and Dan Cheetham as the finalist, and the team of Joseph and Holly Kincannon as the alternate. The vote was 2 for Michelle Tarsney and Dan Cheetham as the finalist; 2 for Joseph and Holly Kincannon as the alternate; and 1 for Fidencio Duran and Alan Barber as the finalist.

#### **Selection Panel Comments:**

##### Michelle Tarsney and Dan Cheetham

“Variety use in media; Allows site specificity to inform media, not other way around; team/collaboration.”

“This was by far the most prepared and competent of all the artist groups interviewed. The work they presented is thoughtful, high quality, responsive, site specific and well researched. This group has a history of working together on successful installations. This team communicates well together and offers

energy and enthusiasm into this project. I have all confidence that this group can deliver an art piece that is professionally coordinated with the design team and exceed all of the requirements set by the competition. I feel the character and nature their work offers can be enjoyed by a wider range of park visitors that all of the other artists interviewed.”

Joseph and Holly Kincannon

“Use of stone, collaboration, intense artistry.”

“This team exhibited a great sense of enthusiasm for the opportunity this contest offers. They had a local’s interest in the park and had complimentary skills to some of the elements within the park redevelopment. The art of the Kincannon’s seem subdued and would possibly be a quieter approach than other artists. This subdued nature may not translate to a broad range of park visitors. The example elements that were presented in the artist interviews were beautiful, but very limited, because of that I felt that they would be a bit ill-equipped to deal with the undefined needs of the project site.”

Fidencio Duran and Alan Barber

Feels that public art in Austin is decorative; feels that he (Fidencio) can execute the Mexican/Hispanic aspect better.

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**Artist Proposal Phase:**

The three top finalist teams of Michelle Tarsney and Dan Cheetham, Joseph and Holly Kincannon, Fidencio Duran and Alan Barber were recommended by the AIPP Panel Working Group to present design proposals. The three artist teams met on September 11, 2015 for a pre-proposal meeting and were presented with a historical presentation of the Republic Square by Kate Singleton of Preservation Austin, a current project status update by Susan Benz of The Benz Resource Group and a design update by Philip Koske of Design Workshop.

The Selection Panel and Advisors met on October 22, 2015 to review the three finalist team’s proposals. The vote was 2 for Joseph and Holly Kincannon as the recommended artists; 2 for Michelle Tarsney and Dan Cheetham as the alternate; and 1 for Fidencio Duran and Alan Barber as the finalist.

**Selection Panel Comments:**

Joseph and Holly Kincannon

“Kincannon “Black Bird”: pleased to say that the “Black Bird” be the preferred selection. The base design is really fun and interesting as well as witty and right for the park. I do question the site placement of the proposed concept and would like for the sculpture to be more visible to not just the park visitors but also passing cars and pedestrians. The other aspect is how the ground plane is treated, perhaps this is a way to integrate with the park design.”

“Grackle is playful! It, as a species, has been in around Republic Square longer. I appreciate that it is not tan color. The bird can become an iconic element in the park that helps to ground that part of downtown. Alternative locations should be explored in park. Base could have a carved in narrative. Look at precedents: Cardinal in Indianapolis.”

Michelle Tarsney and Dan Cheetham

“The Michell Tarsney and Dan Cheetham sculpture is the alternate choice for the park. This is a strong concept and I like how it creates a sense of place with its presence. Some suggestions; look for another location option, maybe one on 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Another is to find a way with the concept to more directly tie the sculpture to the history and culture of the park. The tree idea is strong, but it could also have another layering.”

“Appreciate the beacon, iconic quality. Story is a bit lost. Appreciate the use of light.”

Fidencio Duran and Alan Barber

“Excellent research and interpretation. Great theme –“Park is For Everyone.” Family images – teaches history of park., teaches about the Cultural exchange and story of culture. Connects us with past. This is the only project that responds to the historical and cultural significance of Republic Square Parl. The other projects are decorative and unrelated to the cultural history of Austin.”

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**ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PANEL (Prospectus + Presentation)**

On March 2, 2015 this project was first presented to the AIPP Panel for discussion of artwork opportunities. Panel Member Little made a motion to approve the prospectus and a prioritized selection panel list. Panel Member Frank seconded the motion. Motion approved (4-0-0). Panel Members Daigle, Hammonds, and McCray were absent.

**AUSTIN ARTS COMMISSION (Prospectus)**

On March 16, 2015, Commissioner Flores made a motion to approve the AIPP Panel’s recommendation for the prospectus and selection panel for the Republic Square Phase II Improvements Art in Public Places Project. Commissioner Willenzik seconded the motion. Motion approved (5-0-0). Commissioners Barnes and Tinnon were absent.

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**ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PANEL (Artist Selection)**

On July 6, 2015, the recommendation for the team of Michelle Tarsney and Dan Cheetham as the finalist, and the team of Joseph and Holly Kincannon as the alternate was presented to the Panel. Selection Panelist Sylvia Orozco read a dissenting opinion referring to the goals of the project; she also made suggestions for improvements to the AIPP selection process. After discussion, Panel Member McCray made a motion to form an expedited Working Group – including Emily Little, Jaime Castillo, and Chris McCray – to meet before the end of the month to discuss a resolution. Panel Member Hammonds seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0-0. Panel Member Little was absent.

**ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PANEL (Artist Selection)**

On August 3, 2015, the Panel was presented with recommendations from the Working Group (made up of AIPP Panel members Emily Little and Chris McCray and Arts Commissioner Jaime Castillo) from a meeting held on July 24, 2015. The Working Group recommended that the three top-voted artist teams

of Fidencio Duran and Allan Barber; Joseph and Holly Kincannon; and Michelle Tarsney and Dan Cheetham will be invited to present a design proposal for the AIPP artwork opportunity. The three artist teams will each be paid a stipend of \$1500 and allowed six weeks to research, develop and prepare a proposal for an artwork that addresses the project goals. The voting selection panel and project advisers will remain the same with the addition of the two Working Group members (Chris McCray and Jaime Castillo), to attend as Advisors if they are available. Panel Member Frank made a motion to approve the proposal phase recommendation. Panel member Patel seconded. Motion passed 4-0-0. Panel members McCray and Walker were absent.

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#### **ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PANEL (Artist Selection)**

On November 2, 2015, the recommendation for the team of Joseph and Holly Kincannon as the finalist, and the team of Michelle Tarsney and Dan Cheetham as the alternate was presented to the Panel. Panel Member Frank made a motion to approve the Selection Process. Panel Member Little seconded the motion. Motion approved (6-0-0). Panel Member Barnes was absent.

#### **AUSTIN ARTS COMMISSION (Artist Selection)**

On November 16, 2015, Commissioner Barnes made a motion to approve the AIPP Panel's recommendation for the selection process for the Republic Square Phase II Improvements Art in Public Places Project. Commissioner Mok seconded the motion. Motion passed (7-2-0); Commissioner Willenzik and Chair Flores against; Commissioners Stillwell and Taormina were absent.

#### **AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL (Artist Contract)**

On December 17, 2015 meeting, Council voted to authorize negotiation and execution of a design and commission agreement with Kincannon Studios in an amount not to exceed \$118,500 for artwork for the Republic Square Park Phase II Improvement Project. Motion passed (9-2), (Item 13).

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#### **ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PANEL (Process)**

On April 4, 2016, the AIPP Panel approved the Final Design for the Republic Square Phase II Improvements Art in Public Places Project by Kincannon Studios, LLC. Panel Member Frank made a motion to approve. Panel Member Little seconded. Motion approved (5-0-0). Panel Members Hammonds and Walker were absent.