

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: JANUARY 9, 2019
TO: ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION
FROM: ROCHELLE BRANCH, CULTURAL AFFAIRS MANAGER
SUBJECT: 375 E GREEN – PASEO TERRACES REPLACEMENT ARTWORK
REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SELECTED ARTIST AND CONCEPT ART PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Arts & Culture Commission:

1. Approve the selected artist Meeson Pae Yang;
2. Find that the selected artist's proposed art concept—to suspend a colorful, light-catching sculpture from the existing trellis on the street-facing south façade of the building—complies with the goals, objectives and eligible criteria outlined in the City's Public Art Guidelines as follows:
 - a) The selected artist currently works in the public realm, has demonstrated past experience and proven technical and aesthetic ability to successfully create artwork responsive to the site and community;
 - b) The selected artist is of the highest artistic merit, sensitive to the City's cultural diversity and can contribute to the aspirations and unique expressions of Pasadena's values;
 - c) The proposed art concept encourages public dialogue and interaction with art in public places, and is reflective of contemporary practice in the field of public art; and

- d) The proposed art concept supports a public art collection of varied genre, style, scale, media, form and intent, inclusive of trends that span the local, regional, national and international arts level.
3. Approve the selected artist's proposed art concept—to suspend a colorful, light-catching sculpture of durable refractive materials, inspired by Hubble telescope images of the Orion Nebula, from the existing trellis on the street-facing south façade of the building—with the following considerations:
- a) The artwork shall remain publicly accessible during normal business hours without enclosure;
 - b) The artwork shall be sited without interference from commercial signage;
 - c) The property owner shall submit structural plans for review by the City's Building and Safety Division to determine if a Building Permit is required;
 - d) The Arts and Culture Commission shall conduct a review of the Final Art Plan that will contain a detailed public art budget, Final Art Plan narrative with the selected artist's fully developed concept, refined visual materials with dimensions and true to scale rendering/s of the artwork as it would appear in situ (via a maquette and/or digital simulation), material samples, and a detailed maintenance plan;
 - e) The final artwork shall be consistent with all aspects of the approved Final Art Plan. Any proposed alterations to the Final Art Plan must be submitted for advance staff review and approval. Those proposed changes to the Final Art Plan that are not approved at the staff level must be presented to the Arts and Culture Commission for review and approval;
 - f) The artwork shall be appropriately lighted and the developer shall submit a Final Lighting Plan to be reviewed and approved by Cultural Affairs Staff for Final Signoff;
 - g) Staff shall conduct a final site inspection after project installation and plaque placement for review & approval, prior to issuance of Final Sign Off;
 - h) Staff shall review for compliance and approve all final documentation materials including a detailed budget showing all actual expenses for design, fabrication and installation; a detailed maintenance plan including product & application methods, and any applicable warranty information; a project summary; and professional documentation (a minimum of six digital image files suitable for web and print); and
 - i) The developer shall record the artwork maintenance stipulations in the OPA or DDA under covenants affecting real property at the time of installation to ensure ongoing, permanent maintenance of the artwork and provide documentation of such to Cultural Affairs Staff within a period of one year from the Final Sign Off date.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On December 12, 2018, the Arts & Culture Commission unanimously approved the Decommission Plan for an artwork at 375 E. Green Street, as presented by consultants Now Art. The sculptural fountain *Dream Stream* by Anne Marie Karlsen, initially commissioned in 2001 as a component of the property's compliance with the City's Public Art Ordinance, had fallen into disrepair and its conservation was not feasible. The property owner identified \$200,000 as a total project budget for a replacement artwork—distinct from the owner's costs to decommission *Dream Stream*—and hired Now Art to oversee its commissioning process as well.

A condition of the Commission's approval of the Decommission Plan was that Now Art return within six months to present the Concept Art Plan for the replacement artwork, per the process outlined in the City's Public Art Guidelines. Now Art has conducted an artist selection process with the property owner and the client selected artist Meeson Pae Yang. Her proposed concept is to suspend a colorful, light-catching sculpture of durable refractive materials—inspired by Hubble telescope images of the Orion Nebula—from the existing trellis on the street-facing south façade of the building. The proposed artwork would interact with sunlight, as well as architectural lighting at night, from several public vantage points. The proposed artwork is intended to activate viewers' attentive gaze and contemplation of constellations, and recognize the achievements that Pasadena—the City of Art & Science—has contributed to the field of astronomy.

BACKGROUND:

Development

The development at 375 E Green Street—The Terraces at Paseo Colorado—was initially constructed as the Post Properties portion on the southeast edge of the expansive Paseo Colorado development, a mixed-use project traversing three city blocks (bordered by Marengo Avenue, Colorado Boulevard, Los Robles Avenue and Green Street) that includes retail and residential spaces across several adjoining and adjacent multi-story buildings.

Dream Stream History

On April 12, 2000, art consultant Tamara Thomas of Fine Art Services, Inc.—on behalf of developer TrizecHahn—presented a Preliminary Public Art Concept and Short List of Artists for the Post Properties portion of Paseo Colorado and it was approved by the Arts & Culture Commission. On December 15, 2000, Post Properties entered into an agreement with artist Anne Marie Karlsen, one of the artists from the approved Short List, to design and fabricate an original artwork, per the City's Public Art Program Guidelines for New Private Development. On April 11, 2001, Tamara Thomas presented the Final Art Plan for Anne Marie Karlsen's sculptural fountain *Dream Stream* and it was approved by the Arts & Culture Commission. After its installation, the project received Final Sign Off by Cultural Affairs Staff on October 24, 2001. Post Properties sold the property in 2003, and ownership continued to change hands until 2010. Since 2010, GID/SSR Paseo Colorado LLC has served as the property owner and manager of the Terraces at Paseo Colorado.

Dream Stream was installed in the first floor courtyard of the Terraces, which was an area open to the public when the development initially opened. However, Management deemed that increasing security concerns necessitated the courtyard eventually become locked and secured. Though the artwork remained accessible to public, its access became restricted over time, requiring an escort from Paseo Terraces management staff during business hours.

Dream Stream Decommission

Over the years, the fountain increasingly fell into disrepair. GID was made aware by Cultural Affairs Staff that, because of the neglected maintenance, the artwork was not in compliance with the City's Public Art Requirement. In attempt to correct the problem, *GID* consulted two conservators—Sculpture Conservation Studio in 2016 and Rosa Lowinger & Associates in 2017—to assess the artwork. Both conservators acknowledged that, significantly, original construction of the fountain's back wall did not appear to have structural integrity, including the absence of any waterproofing. Furthermore, the neglected maintenance responsibilities over time—both cleaning the fountain and tending its mechanics—intensified the artwork's erosion. The initial construction flaws and the lack of maintenance had caused the artwork to deteriorate. The artwork's condition was determined to be so poor that repairing it would be cost prohibitive was not recommended. By July 2017, *GID* installed a temporary ivy wall around the main fountain wall as an aesthetic and practical solution; the fountain was no longer functional, tiles were increasingly deteriorating, and several had fallen.

GID worked with Anne Marie Karlsen directly for several months in attempt to create a proposal to decommission the sculptural fountain and commission a replacement artwork. However, the artist eventually declined to act as the project manager to oversee the administration of the whole endeavor. In response, GID hired the public art agency Now Art in 2018, to oversee the decommission of *Dream Stream* in accordance with the City's Guidelines, and also to serve as the art consultant in managing the development of the replacement artwork. Anne Marie worked closely with Now Art to define the Decommission Plan, but ultimately decided not to accept the commission invitation to create the replacement artwork.

Specific to the decommission of *Dream Stream*, the artist was properly notified by Now Art, on behalf of GID, per the legal requirements of both federal and California law. In addition, the artist offered parameters for how she would like her artwork to be destroyed, and Now Art, on behalf of GID, was happy to honor those parameters.

On December 12, 2018, the Arts & Culture Commission unanimously approved the Decommission Plan for *Dream Stream* with the following conditions:

- Before demolition occurs, the property owner will document that all provisions of the federal and California State laws regarding public art have been met to provide for legal removal of the artwork and submit that documentation to Staff.
- Within the next 6 months, the property owner will present a Concept Art Plan to commission a replacement artwork of equal or greater value, in accordance with provisions of the Public Art Program Guidelines for New Private Development.

Now Art has been actively working with GID and Cultural Affairs Staff to develop the Concept Art Plan for the replacement artwork. The total project budget for the replacement artwork is \$200,000, which exceeds the original artist contract with Post Properties from 2000. At that time, the artist was contracted \$91,000 for design and fabrication of the artwork, with installation and administrative fees paid separately by the developer. The \$200,000 project budget for the replacement artwork is distinct from the decommission costs for *Dream Stream*, for which the property owner is also responsible.

Artist Selection Team

The Asset Manager from GID has served as the primary representative and decision maker for the property owner, with consultation from Now Art.

Siting the Replacement Artwork

One benefit to creating a replacement artwork for this development is the opportunity to select a new site, since *Dream Stream's* accessibility to the public had become restricted over time. The team's first step was to identify a location that would maximize public impact, visibility, and accessibility, while also enhancing the development.

The proposed new site is the pre-existing trellis directly overhead the entrance to the management office, on the building's street-facing south façade. Not only does the trellis provide an existing support structure to which a new artwork may be mounted, but it's prominently visible from several vantage points—the adjacent sidewalks, streets, and the multi-level parking garage across the street. Given the high levels activity on Green, especially from the Paseo and Convention Center, the artwork at this new site will be prominently visible to the public.

Curatorial Approach

Since the new site, perched on the second floor, will have a natural interaction with the sky as the public looks up to view the artwork, Now Art and GID determined that they wanted the replacement artwork to emphasize the site's interaction with the sun. Furthermore, they were inspired to embrace Pasadena as "the City of Art & Science," and clarified the following statement to guide their consideration of artists: "Pasadena is a nurturing ground for innovation and has produced a series of cutting-edge discoveries. The artwork should incorporate the site's bold interaction with the sun to display, celebrate, and honor Pasadena's achievements in astronomy."

They additionally identified that:

- lighting elements should maintain the artwork's vibrancy at night, in absence of its material interaction with the sun
- the artwork should have a timeless appeal
- its content should evoke curiosity and imagination

Artist Selection Process

Considering the site, project goals, and budget—and with close consideration of Pasadena's Public Art Guidelines and its Public Art Master Plan—Now Art conducted research of mostly local artists to seek a strong match. They also engaged the recommendations of two curators from their board, Marisa Caichiolo and Heidi Chang. Their research culminated in a list of forty-six artists, including local, national and international artists. That list was then further narrowed down to a short list of eight:

Ball Nogues
Brad Howe
Elena Manferdini
LC Studio Tutto

Marcos Lutyens
Meeson Pae Yang
Nike Savvas
Noa Yekutelli

From those eight, the client selected initially Elena Manferdini and Meeson Pae Yang to develop concepts, and ultimately selected Meeson Pae Yang.

Selected Artist

GID and Now Art are impressed by Meeson Pae Yang's body of work, including her expertise creating site-specific sculptural projects. They appreciate the understanding she's articulated about the project goals and the enthusiasm of her approach. Furthermore, they find that her concept, aesthetic and intentions for her proposed artwork best matched their project goals.

ART CONCEPT:

Meeson's concept is to suspend a colorful, light-catching sculpture of durable refractive materials—inspired by Hubble telescope images of the Orion Nebula—from the existing trellis on the street-facing south façade of the building. The proposed artwork will interact with sunlight, as well as architectural lighting at night, from several public vantage points. It will activate viewers' attentive gaze and contemplation of constellations.

Site Responsiveness

The artist's concept is inspired by Pasadena's long history and dedication to research in space exploration. In the artist's words: "Through the lens of science and technology, I've proposed an artwork that will immerse viewers into an exploration of refractions of light, color, shadows, and the interaction of time. The work will change with shifting perspectives and time of day, as shadows and light are cast throughout the site."

Durability of Materials and Structural Soundness

The artist intends to use powder-coated stainless steel for the sculptural frame of the artwork and stainless steel cables & hardware for its anchoring elements. The artist has also been exploring the potential of different types of glass, as well as exterior resins, to achieve the desired material effects of durability, elegance, and interactivity with the sun. Now Art has communicated with the structural engineer who initially worked on the Paseo Terraces, most specifically to discuss the load bearing capacity of the trellis. The engineer believes there will be no issues with the integrity of the trellis to support the artwork concept as proposed. However, after approval of the Concept Art Plan, structural engineering specific to Meeson's concept for mounting her artwork on the trellis will occur, the results of which will directly affect her choices of artwork materials. Though tempered glass is the initial first choice, depending on what engineering reveals, there are contingencies in place to use alternate materials of lighter weight. Now Art has shared the artist's concept and rendering with three distinct fabricators, each of whom have confidence that the work may be implemented at the desired scale within the project budget.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Fiscal Impact for the City, since the \$200,000 being invested in the replacement artwork will be paid by the property owner, distinct from the costs to decommission *Dream Stream*, which are also the responsibility of the property owner.

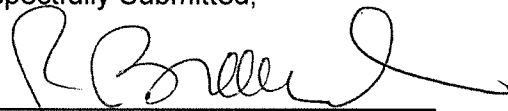
CONCLUSION:

Staff acknowledges that the federal and California state laws regarding the removal of *Dream Stream* have been followed by the property owner, and the proposed replacement artwork is of equal or greater value.

Furthermore, staff finds that the selected artist, Meeson Pae Yang, has demonstrated the ability to implement a site-responsive replacement artwork that will thoughtfully enhance the Paseo Terraces and surrounding neighborhood with a meaningful contribution to the City's Public Art Collection. Meeson's proposed artwork will complement the site's existing architecture while inspiring viewers to gaze upwards, recognizing Pasadena's achievements in space exploration.

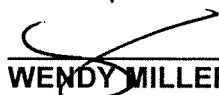
The proposed artwork is consistent with the Public Art Guidelines that are intended to "create a more unique and human city, engage our citizens and visitors, and enhance the built urban environment." Per the Guidelines, the proposed public art project by Meeson Pae Yang is "responsive to the site and community" and can contribute to the characteristics, aspirations and distinctive expressions of Pasadena. In addition, the project is in alignment with the Public Art Master Plan which supports the incorporation and integration of civic art into private development to enhance community character, reinforce local identity, and highlight qualities of place. Furthermore, it encourages dialogue through public art by "weaving together culture, people, and neighborhoods."

Respectfully Submitted,



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Prepared by,



WENDY MILLER
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Attachment A – Concept Art Plan submitted by Now Art/Meeson Pae Yang