

## PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** MARCH 13, 2019  
**TO:** ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION  
**FROM:** ROCHELLE BRANCH, CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION MANAGER  
**SUBJECT:** 3200 E FOOTHILL – SPACE BANK  
REVIEW & APPROVAL OF SELECTED ARTISTS AND CONCEPT ART PLANS

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Preliminary Consultation: March 25, 2016  
Concept Design Review Approval: November 20, 2018  
Final Design Review Scheduled: March 26, 2019

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Arts & Culture Commission:

1. Approve the selected artists, Ball-Nogues and Val Britton, for two on-site projects;
2. Find that the selected artists' proposed concepts—respectively, a tensioned metal membrane suspended sculptural installation & a painted layered metal mounted sculpture —comply with the goals, objectives and eligible criteria outlined in the City's Public Art Guidelines as follows:
  - a) The selected artists currently work in the public realm, and have relevant past experience with proven technical & aesthetic ability to successfully create artwork responsive to the site and community;
  - b) The selected artists are of the highest artistic merit, sensitive to the city's cultural diversity, and can contribute to the characteristics and unique expressions of Pasadena's values;
  - c) The proposed concepts encourage local artistic endeavors, public dialogue, and interaction with art in public places;
  - d) The proposed concepts support a public art collection that includes works of various genre, style, scale, media, form and intent, and are reflective of contemporary public art practice that spans the local, regional, national and international level;

- e) The proposed concepts advance the commissioning of artwork throughout geographic areas of Pasadena and among a broad distribution of artists; and
  - f) The development of the proposed concepts demonstrates a collaborative approach to the project by a design team that includes the selected artist/s, project architect/s, landscape architect/s, and other design professionals.
3. Approve the selected artists' proposed art concepts—respectively, a tensioned metal membrane suspended sculptural installation & a painted layered metal mounted sculpture—with the following considerations for each artwork:
- 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 developer 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 & 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. 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 & 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 any Certificate of Occupancy/Final Sign Off;
  - h) Staff shall review for compliance and approve all Final Documentation materials including a project summary; artwork description; artist narrative; texts reflecting the content of installed plaque & any additional signage; a detailed budget showing all actual expenses for the on-site project; a detailed maintenance plan including product & application methods, and any applicable warranty information; 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 November 20, 2018, the Design Commission reviewed and approved the Concept Design for the development at 3200 E Foothill. To fulfill the Public Art Requirement for this mixed-use project, the development team wishes to commission two on-site public artworks by selected artists Ball-Nogues and Val Britton. The artists have proposed, respectively, a tensioned metal membrane sculptural installation suspended in the urban courtyard & a painted layered metal sculpture, mounted to the exterior of the parking structure bridge. The concepts are the result of the selected artists' research in response to the curatorial approach, the site's history, its intended future uses, and specific goals of the development as outlined by the design team.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### Development Overview

The developer intends to replace the current self-storage facility—Space Bank, at 3200 E Foothill—with an expansive 8.5 acre multi-building, mixed-use development. It will include 550 apartments—a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom units—69 designated for moderate & low-income renters. Additionally, the development will feature nearly 10,000 square feet of street-level restaurant and retail space, and several areas throughout devoted to open space and a park. In total, the site will have parking for 839 vehicles, in a subterranean garage as well as an above ground parking structure that buffers the freeway. The design team for the project includes architectural firm Steinberg Hart, RELM Studio Landscape Architects, and developer Trammell Crow.

### Historic Preservation

Prior to its realization as Space Bank Storage in 1978, the location was a Naval Undersea Research and Development Center. While functioning as a military site, several advancements occurred there in the development of missile and torpedo technology, some of which have become standard elements in the inventory of the United States Navy & North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In order to survey the historic elements that remain on the property, the developer engaged Pasadena Heritage and the conservationist Jenna Snow. Together, they identified which of the historic items were most culturally and historically relevant. That informed the developer's decision to select four objects for preservation, restoration and integration into the new development: variable atmospheric tank, torpedo monument, flagpole, and anchor seal.

### Curatorial Approach & Artist Selection Team

Now Art began their research by touring the site and learning details of the developer's intent to preserve and integrate historic elements into the new construction. The artist selection team was comprised of the design team—representatives from the architectural firm Steinberg Hart, RELM Studio Landscape Architects, and developer Trammell Crow—along with the art consultants. In discussing goals for the commissioned artwork, the artist selection team reviewed the architectural style of the development, its landscape features, and the intended uses and functions of the site. With that key information in mind, the art consultants proposed to identify artists who could meaningfully enhance the context of the site with work that embraces history in an indirect, contemporary way. More specifically, they suggested commissioning artists whose work resonates with the notions of memory, time, absence of form, repetition, reflection, light & shadow, and depth. The artist selection team agreed on this curatorial

approach, in addition to the goals of the resulting commissions being accessible and durable, with timeless appeal to a broad public.

### Sites

The artist selection team studied and discussed several potential sites at the development, with a focus on areas poised to have the most public accessibility and impact. They were also sensitive to maintaining the urban park as an open space, and siting the artworks with ample proximity from the historic elements. The team identified the urban courtyard, nestled behind the solely commercial & retail building on Foothill, as a key location anticipated to have heavy pedestrian traffic. The team also identified the bridge at the parking structure as an ideal site, due to its expansive sightline across the development to the site's primary entry on Foothill.

### Artist Selection Process

After considering the artist selection team's project goals and prioritized sites, Now Art reviewed the portfolios of more than fifty diverse artists, mostly local as well as some international, who they considered in alignment with the curatorial approach. Working closely with the selection team, a short-list of fifteen artists was compiled for further assessment. Each of the artists was sent a project brief and an inquiry regarding their interest in the opportunity. After interviewing each of the nine artists who responded positively to the invitation, two were ultimately identified as the strongest matches to the curatorial approach and project goals, and were contracted to develop concepts.

### **SELECTED ARTISTS:**

#### Ball-Nogues

Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nogues lead Los Angeles-based Ball-Nogues Studio, an integrated design and fabrication practice operating in a territory between architecture, art and industrial design. Craft informs their practice, which aims to create spectacle environments that draw a viewer's attention to sensation and physical engagement.

Ball-Nogues has exhibited at major institutions, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Guggenheim Museum; PS1; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Venice Biennale; the Hong Kong/Shenzhen Biennale; and the Beijing Biennale. Their work has been recognized with numerous awards, fellowships and grants, and is in the permanent collections of both MoMA and LACMA. Permanent public art commissions are currently being developed for the General Services Administration, San Diego Airport, and Los Angeles METRO, in addition to other sites internationally. Their work has been featured in publications including *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Artforum*, *The Guardian*, *Architectural Record*, *Architectural Digest*, and *Sculpture*, among others. Ball and Nogues have also taught in the graduate architecture programs at SCI-Arc, UCLA, and USC.

#### Val Britton

Seattle-based, Val Britton creates collaged works on paper and site-specific installations that explore physical and psychological spaces. Her practice activates the language of maps to explore memory, history, and abstraction.

Britton is the recipient of many grants, fellowships, and residencies, and has exhibited in museums, galleries, art fairs and alternative spaces across the United States. She has completed a large-scale permanent public art commission for the San Francisco International Airport, and her work is in numerous collections including the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Facebook Headquarters, Menlo Park, CA; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; National September 11 Memorial & Museum, New York; New York Historical Society; New York Public Library; and the San Jose Museum of Art, among others.

## **ART CONCEPTS:**

### Ball-Nogues

In response to the site and the curatorial approach, Ball-Nogues proposes to create a tensioned metal membrane sculptural installation, suspended in the development's Urban Courtyard via cables anchored to the new buildings. The artists envision creating an immersive environment that calls attention to the passage of time due to shifting perspectives of the sun's movement. The form they have designed is intended to suggest a vortex or funnel, underlining the notion of gathering in the surrounding public space. The artists propose the shape because of its "minimal surface" structural properties that allow it to be made as thinly as possible and suspended in pure tension. Akin to the technology employed by solar clocks and sundials, the form would interact with sunlight to meaningfully reflect and refract shadows in the plaza below.

*"We imagine keying the ground-scape to the suspended artwork, linking earth and sky by way of the sun's journey throughout the course of the day and the year. The work, in this sense, would be a kind of solar observation device or sundial that could be read on the ground as a device for measuring time,"* Ball-Nogues.

### Materials and Maintenance

The suspension rigging will occur via stainless steel rope. The membrane form will be made with either CNC bent wire, or with laser cut or waterjet cut sheeting made of mineral anodized aluminum, stainless steel, or mild steel. All attachment hardware will be stainless steel and/or mild steel that is galvanized, powder coated, or wet coated with Tnemec products to assure resistance to corrosion. The precise materials and methods of fabrication will be specifically determined in the next phase of development.

### Lighting

KGM lighting will work with the artists and broader design team to develop a Lighting Plan to uplight the piece at night, highlighting the sculptural form with a distinct perspective from its daytime interaction with the sun. These discussions have already begun, and will be integrated into the lighting infrastructure of the Urban Courtyard.

### Val Britton

Val Britton's response to the curatorial approach and context of the site inspires her proposal of a three-dimensional painted metal sculpture mounted to the exterior of the Parking Structure Bridge. Her concept alludes to the layering of subconscious thought, historical shifts, topographies, perception, and imagined landscapes.

With her initial investigation of the site, the artist is intrigued by its history as a military testing facility for classified weapons research, as well as its naval relationship to the environment. Britton is interested in further exploring the technologies that were used, the historic artifacts being preserved, and, especially, the site's relationship to the sea.

*"I am curious about the traces of history that make up a place: invisible data networks, transportation lines, topography, weather, wind, ocean currents, geography, and population. Flight maps, the ocean floor, earthquake maps, bird migration maps, and road maps have provided inspiration for my ongoing body of work that uses maps to chart the psychological, emotional spaces we inhabit and how those spaces seem to be perpetually remaking themselves. Memory has long been at the core of my work. Layers and details are built-up through painting, collage, and cutting. Places are not only physical, but exist as time and memories," Val Britton.*

The artist will create the sculpture with a layered system of aluminum or stainless steel tubes, channels, and panels, painted with a combination of hand-applied patinas and flat color. Stand-offs will hold various layers proud at different depths that, together with the use of color, will accentuate the three-dimensionality of the artwork.

The artwork is intended for attachment to the walkway structure at each of the structural slab levels of the Parking Structure Bridge, engaging the dramatic sightline from the development's main entry on Foothill. The interior view from inside the bridge will be a complex, layered geometry, unified by one color that allows light and shadow to filter into the parking structure.

#### Materials and Maintenance

The materials will be combinations of lasercut and/or waterjet cut sheet metal. Some of the larger panels will be finished with a painterly patina process created by chemical reaction and oxidation, fully intended to change over time. The lattice-like panels of the composition will be painted with urethane automotive paint.

#### Lighting

KGM lighting will work with the artist and broader design team to develop a Lighting Plan that will highlight the work at night. These discussions have already begun, and will be integrated into the lighting infrastructure that surrounds the Parking Structure and adjacent Urban Park.

### **CONCLUSION**

Staff finds that the selected artists, Ball-Nogues and Val Britton, have demonstrated the ability to implement large-scale site-responsive artworks that will meaningfully enhance the project at 3200 E Foothill and make a significant contribution to the City's Public Art Collection. The proposed artworks, with their thoughtful approaches to making the notions of time and memory visible, will be strong complements to the development's design. The artworks will also activate their surrounding elements, bringing vitality to the development and enhancing a sense of place to a new community of residents, neighbors and visitors.

The proposed artworks are consistent with the Public Art Guidelines 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 projects by Ball-Nogues and Val

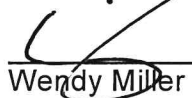
Britton are "responsive to the site and community" and can contribute to the characteristics, aspirations and distinctive expressions of Pasadena. In addition, the projects are in alignment with the Public Art Master Plan which supports the incorporation and integration of civic art into private development to enhance community character, reinforce local identity, highlight qualities of place and assist visitor orientation. Furthermore, the proposed artworks encourage dialogue through public art by "weaving together culture, people, and neighborhoods."

Respectfully Submitted,



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Cultural Affairs Division Manager

Prepared by,



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Attachment A – Concept Art Plan for Space Bank, submitted by consultant Now Art