



City of Emeryville

CALIFORNIA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 6, 2023

TO: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

FROM: Charles S. Bryant, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Emeryville Approving Artists Naomi VanDoren, Michele Théberge, Jess Cook, Lisa Rock, Grégoire Vion And Erin Fong And Alternates Salma Arastu And Muna Abdulahi For The *Sharon Wilchar Bus Shelter Art Program – Phase VII* And Authorizing The City Manager To Execute Agreements With The Approved Artists For Final Design Of The Art Works In Amounts Not To Exceed \$5,000 For Each Artist

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolution approving artists Naomi VanDoren, Michele Théberge, Jess Cook, Lisa Rock, Grégoire Vion and Erin Fong, and alternates Salma Arastu and Muna Abdulahi, for the *Sharon Wilchar Bus Shelter Art Program – Phase VII*, and authorize the City Manager to execute Agreements with the approved artists for final design of the art works in amounts not to exceed \$5,000 for each artist.

BACKGROUND

In 2009, the City Council authorized the Bus Shelter Temporary Art Program (“Program”) to place two-dimensional works by local artists in four bus shelters throughout the City. That year, the work of nine artists were selected for exhibition. As a result of the success of the Program, it has continued through 2023, with the works of six artists exhibited over each two-year exhibition cycle. The Program is now in its seventh phase.

DISCUSSION

At its February 9, 2023 meeting, the Public Art Committee (“PAC”) unanimously confirmed continuing the program’s theme “*FROM FERTILE GROUND: ART AND INNOVATION*” and approved a Request for Proposals (RFP) based on this theme. Artists were encouraged to submit work that expresses an expansive view of “Fertile Ground” to include literal images related to flora and fauna; imagery tied to local or regional ecological systems and biodiversity; human impact on the environment; ecosystems related to the City’s regional shoreline; science and genetics, etc.; as well as more traditional interpretations. The theme also allows for a metaphorical interpretation of

the artistic, cultural, scientific and technologic innovations based in or founded in Emeryville.

In February 2023, staff and consultant Art is Luv, with support from Sharon Wilchar of the Emeryville Celebration of the Arts, distributed the RFP for Phase VII of the *Sharon Wilchar Bus Shelter Art Program*. Responses were due April 18, 2023. The project was open to artists over the age of 18 who live, work or attend school in Emeryville. Artists whose work was exhibited in the Program prior to 2019 were eligible to apply if the work they submitted was substantially different from the work exhibited in prior phases, or if they submitted as a team with another artist or professional in another discipline with a substantively different proposal. Artists were eligible to apply as individuals or as a team, but each applicant was required to provide evidence that they live, work or study in Emeryville. Distribution of the RFP included direct mailing of post card announcements, web posting, and email distribution. By the application deadline of April 18, 2023, twenty-one applications had been received, eighteen of which were deemed eligible.

On April 25, 2023, a five-member Selection Panel reviewed the qualifying applications. The panel consisted of Jean Goldman, representing the PAC; Jean Johnstone and Mario Navasero, as outside art professionals; Sharon Wilchar, representing the community; and Nancy Humphrey, Environmental Programs Manager, representing the City.

During the first round of reviews, the Selection Panel individually reviewed the artists' submissions according to the following criteria:

- Artistic excellence, including the quality and creativity of the artist's work.
- Appropriateness of images relative to the theme of "*From Fertile Ground: Art and Innovation*".
- Potential of the artist's work to spark viewers' interest in public art.

The Selection Panel scored each qualifying artist in the categories indicated above with a score of 1-5, with five being the highest score. The panelists individually scored each applicant and then gathered to review the top ten scoring applicants. During a facilitated discussion, panelists were then asked to give a "yes" or "no" vote to indicate whether they wanted an artist to remain under consideration. Artists who received a majority of yes votes remained under consideration; those who received a majority of no votes were eliminated from further consideration. After the first round of voting, five artists were shortlisted and remained under consideration.

Finally, the Selection Panel considered those applicants next in numeric ranking and/or nominated for consideration by a panelist, to identify a sixth finalist and alternates.

The final round of discussion resulted in six artists being selected as finalists, and two artists selected as alternates, as follows:

Finalists: The following list indicates the results of the scoring, in descending order.

- Naomi VanDoren - 67 points
- Michele Th  berge - 64 points
- Jess Cook 55 - Points
- Lisa Rock - 55 points
- Gr  goire Vion - 54 points
- Erin Fong - 47 points

Alternates:

- Salma Arastu
- Muna Abdulahi

At its May 11, 2023 meeting, the PAC reviewed the Selection Panel's recommendations and recommended that the City Council approve selecting the six finalists and two alternates listed above.

FISCAL IMPACT

The City's Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2023 -2024 includes sufficient funds from the Public Art Fund (Fund 243) to support the *Sharon Wilchar Bus Shelter Art Program* artist contracts as well as professional services required to administer the program.

Expenses will be paid in the year incurred, with three of the artists' works scheduled to be printed and installed in Fiscal Year 2023-2024, and three in Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

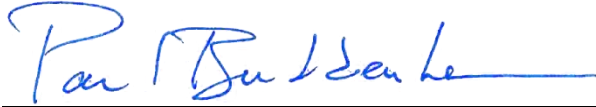
STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

As noted above, on May 11, 2023 the PAC unanimously recommended that the City Council approve the selection of artists Naomi VanDoren, Michele Th  berge, Jess Cook, Lisa Rock, Gr  goire Vion, and Erin Fong, and alternates Salma Arastu and Muna Abdulahi, and authorize the City Manager to execute agreements with the artists in amounts not-to-exceed \$5,000 per agreement.

PREPARED BY: Amber Evans, Community and Economic Development Coordinator II

REVIEWED BY: Chadrick Smalley, Deputy Director of Community Development

**APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EMERYVILLE:**



Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1. Art Work Imagery by Proposed Artists:
 - Naomi VanDoren
 - Michele Théberge
 - Jess Cook
 - Lisa Rock
 - Grégoire Vion
 - Erin Fong
- Draft Resolution