



City of Emeryville

CALIFORNIA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 15, 2019

TO: Christine Daniel, City Manager

FROM: Charles S. Bryant, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: **Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Emeryville Approving The Purchase Of Art Work For The City's Annual Purchase Award Program Entitled "Betty, Dave, Myra, and Ruth" By Emeryville Artist Susan Avila With Funding Of Up To \$8,600 From The Public Art Fund (Fund 243) For The Purchase And Installation Of The Art Work**

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolution to purchase an art work for the City's Annual Purchase Award Program. The four-part art work is entitled "Betty, Dave, Myra and Ruth" by Emeryville artist Susan Avila. The estimated cost to purchase and install the art work is \$8,600 including a purchase price of \$5,600 and up to \$3,000 for installation, which is available in the budget of the Public Art Fund (Fund 243) for Fiscal Year 2019-2020, previously approved by the City Council.

BACKGROUND

The 33rd Annual Emeryville Celebration of the Arts Exhibition (Exhibition) opened on October 4, 2019 and will run through October 27, 2019. For the past thirteen years, the City's Purchase Award Program has supported the Exhibition through the purchase of artwork for display in City facilities. The intent of the City's Purchase Award Program is to build the City's permanent art collection through acquisition of art works on an annual basis from the Emeryville Celebration of the Arts Exhibition. The program is also intended to highlight the City's commitment to the arts and its local artistic community and improve visitors' experiences in public facilities. Potential sites for this year's Purchase Award art work include City Hall and the Senior Center. As participants in the Exhibition are either residents or employees working in Emeryville, the Purchase Award reflects the talents and abilities of those within Emeryville.

Selection Panel

The City Manager appointed a five-person Selection Panel, with an alternate for each panelist, based on the September 12, 2019 recommendation of the Public Art Committee (PAC). The members of the Selection Panel were: 1) Emily McPartlon as the PAC member; 2) Harley Jensen as a community member; 3) Joyce Gordon as outside arts professional; 4) Frances Gaston as Emeryville Celebration of the Arts (ECA) Board Representative; and 5) Ryan O'Connell as City staff representative. The Selection Panel alternates were: 1) Edythe Bresnahan, PAC member; 2) Tobey Klein, community

member; 3) Christie Hajela, outside arts professional; 4) Ken Schmier, ECA, and 5) Joseph Aguilera, City staff representative. The Selection Panel convened on October 3, 2019 to review the art works being shown at the Exhibition and to make a recommendation of art work to be purchased by the City.

Selection Process

As in prior years, the City retained public art consultant Regina Almaguer to facilitate the art work selection process. Regina Almaguer has over 20 years of experience in public art program management. Ms. Almaguer developed a process that the Selection Panel followed in its review and selection of an art work for the 2019 Purchase Award Program, as done in prior years. This is her last year supporting the program, as she is retiring.

The Selection Panel began the day by meeting at City Hall to observe the City's existing collection of art work and to review potential sites for art, including photos of locations at additional sites. Additional sites are available in the Senior Center. Potential sites at each facility include:

- City Hall
 - Two lobby area floor spaces, appropriate for a stand-alone sculpture or an art work in a covered vitrine (Site 1: nearest entry door; Site 2: nearest entry to link to Old Town Hall).
 - Lobby ceiling area, potential site for banners or a kinetic or mobile art work.
 - Exterior rear courtyard, appropriate for a three-dimensional sculpture in permanent materials with safety and durability considered.
 - Landscaped area outside City Hall, appropriate for a three-dimensional sculpture in permanent materials, with safety and durability considered.
 - Entries from east to Old Town Hall on 1st and 2nd floor (small wall on western end of link); however, utilizing either of these spaces would require that a donated piece be relocated.
 - Wall adjacent to the stairwell from 1st to 2nd floor in City administration building under a south-facing window.
 - The wall above the drinking fountain in the first-floor lobby
- Senior Center
 - First floor ballroom wall niche
 - Wall area to the north of the entry lobby (a small niche)
 - West wall of the second-floor multi-purpose room.

The Selection Panel proceeded to the Exhibition site and each panelist was given a score sheet listing each art work that was available for consideration. To avoid conflicts of interest, works being shown by current members of the PAC, City Council, and City staff

or consultants were not considered for the 2019 Purchase Award. Other art not considered for purchase included works that were not available for sale, works created by artists whose work has been purchased through the Purchase Award Program in the last five years, and art work whose dimensions would not fit into the potentially available locations.

In the first round of selection, the panelists individually viewed all of the 123 art works that were available for purchase and selected their top five choices. This process resulted in a short list of 19 art works. In the second round, the Selection Panel reviewed and discussed the short-listed art works. Art works were further short-listed if a majority of selection panel members voted to include them in the third round of ranking. After the second round, 12 art works remained under consideration.

The panel members then proceeded to individually rank the remaining art works on the following criteria: aesthetic quality, public appeal, longevity, and curatorial focus, assigning a score from 1 to 5 for each criterion. Each of the five panelists' points was then added together to determine a final score for each art work. A perfect score was 100 (20 points each x 5 panelists). The art work by Susan Avila received 93 points, and Mark Galt's work received 80 points.

Susan Avila's work received the highest score and was recommended by the Selection Panel for purchase, for placement in the Emeryville Senior Center. Mark Galt's work received the second highest score and was recommended as an alternate art work for placement in City Hall. The alternate is recommended as a back-up only if the first-choice artist decides against selling her art work or if installation of the recommended piece is infeasible.

DISCUSSION

At its meeting held on October 3, 2019, the PAC discussed the Selection Panel's recommendations and unanimously voted to accept its recommendations and to forward them to the City Council for approval.

Art Work Description

Susan Avila's art work, entitled "Betty, Dave, Myra and Ruth" is a series of four portraits made of hand-dyed and repurposed fabric and embroidery. Each portrait measures 26" x 26" and was completed in 2019. The purchase price of the art work is \$5,600.

The second highest scoring art work is by artist Mark Galt and is entitled "Petit Mal". The work, done in 2019, is a kinetic sculpture of walking robot made of brass, aluminum, steel, a cold cathode numerical display tube, and electronics. The work measures 16" x 7" x 7". The purchase price of the art work is \$900.00.

Next Steps

Following the purchase of the work by the City and the conclusion of the Exhibition, staff will work with Ms. Almaguer and the artist to install the art work. Plaques will be installed near the art work naming the artist, art work title, and medium, and indicating its inclusion in Emeryville's permanent art collection. A reception for the artist is tentatively planned for December 12, 2019 to showcase the work, pending the artist's availability.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds from the Public Art Fund (Fund 243) have been utilized for the project's administrative expenses and are proposed for the remainder of the purchase's costs. The cost of purchase of Susan Avila's art work is \$5,600. Installation costs are anticipated to be no more than \$3,000 for a total of up to \$8,600.

If the City Council approves the recommendation to purchase this art work, the total project cost for administration, purchase and installation will be \$8,600 plus approximately \$7,000 in consulting, plaque, reception, and stipend costs, for a total of about \$15,600. The Public Art Fund's operating budget of \$25,000 for Fiscal Year 2019-20 is adequate to cover these costs.

STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

As noted above, on October 3, 2019 the PAC reviewed and unanimously approved the Selection Panel's recommendation to purchase Susan Avila's art work for installation at the Senior Center.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

City staff and PAC and City Council members and their spouses are precluded from consideration in the Purchase Award Program, as are artists whose work was purchased through the Purchase Award Program from 2014 through 2018.

CONCLUSION

The Purchase Award of 2019 will continue a fourteen-year tradition of supporting local artists through purchase by the City. This program and the Bus Shelter Temporary Art Program are the City's only art programs specifically supporting Emeryville residents and workers. The support for local artists was confirmed as a top goal in the Public Art Master Plan approved by the City Council in 2016.

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

REVIEWED BY: Chadrick Smalley, Economic Development and Housing Manager

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



Christine Daniel, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

- 1: Art Work Images
- 2: Artist Biographies
- Draft Resolution