

PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE: 6-4-2024

ITEM: VI. B. 2. b.



# Memorandum

**TO:** PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

**FROM:** MICHAEL OGILVIE

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** May 28, 2024

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**Council District: Citywide**

**SUBJECT:** Design development proposals by artists Roan Victor for Vista Park Community Center, Olivia Losee-Unger for Willow Glen Community Center, Andrew Kong Knight for Welch Park Community Center, Robert Minervini for Camden Community Center, Jolene Russell for Santa Teresa Branch Library, and Morgan Bricca for Vineland Branch Library.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and take action on the recommendation to approve the design development of murals by artists Roan Victor for Vista Park Community Center, Olivia Losee-Unger for Willow Glen Community Center, Andrew Kong Knight for Welch Park Community Center, Robert Minervini for Camden Community Center, Jolene Russell for Santa Teresa Branch Library, and Morgan Bricca for Vineland Branch Library.

**DATE OF ARTIST SELECTION:**

District 2, 6, 8, 9: October 2023

District 7: August 31, 2023

District 10: July 18, 2023

**ARTWORK BUDGET:**

District 2, 6, 8, and 9: \$250,000 total (FY 22/23 Budget Document #18)

District 7: \$30,000 total (FY 21/22 Budget Document #68)

District 10: \$42,500 total (FY 21/22 Budget Document #79)

**LOCATIONS AND ARTISTS:**

All of the artists are Bay Area-based and are part of the City's pre-qualified mural artist roster. Artists are under contract with the City for this designated work.

SITE 1: Vista Park Community Center (District 2)

ARTIST: Roan Victor

SITE 2: Willow Glen Community Center (District 6)

ARTIST: Olivia Losee-Unger

SITE 3: Welch Park Community Center (District 8)

ARTIST: Andrew Kong Knight

SITE 4: Camden Community Center (District 9)

ARTIST: Robert Minervini

SITE 5: Santa Teresa Branch Library (District 10)

ARTIST: Jolene Russell

SITE 6: Vineland Branch Library (District 10)

ARTIST: Morgan Bricca

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Murals are to be painted at six different city locations in Districts 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, and is being funded through Budget Document #18 from fiscal year 2022-2023; Budget Document #68 from fiscal year 2021-2022; and Budget Document #79 from fiscal year 2021-2022. The murals are intended to reflect the communities that these facilities serve, and to beautify the spaces with fun and imaginative artwork. Other mural projects in District 3, 5, 7, and 10, are also being funded through these Budget Documents, and are much further along in the process, and have been reported out at past Public Art Committee meetings.

Public Art staff has worked with stakeholders from the Parks Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS), the Anti-Graffiti Program, and Council Offices, to identify city hotspot sites for this project. Staff did extensive site evaluations to determine site conditions, surface texture, square footage, departmental authority, security, equitable district distribution, and traffic, ultimately settling on seven sites.

Artists commissioned for each mural project were selected from the pre-qualified mural artist roster. The Public Art Program released a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) on September 19, 2022 on Café, the online platform that is widely used for artist calls and staff actively promoted and recruited Bay Area artists. The call was open through October 24, 2022. At the time it closed, 150 eligible submittals were received. A four-member panel of artists and arts professionals was formed to review and rate all 107 applications. Staff reviewed the panel ratings and 89 artists were selected for inclusion in the 2023-2028 Mural Artists Roster. These artists represent a wide range of artistic styles. Artists already in the 2017 Mural Artists Roster were allowed to submit updated work samples and resumes and be included in this updated 2023-2028 Mural Artists Roster as they have already been vetted in a comparable jury process for the current mural roster; 43 of the artists previously juried in the 2017 roster fulfilled the submittal requirement and are also included in the updated 2023-2028 Mural Artists Roster.

From December 2023 to May 2024, eighteen (18) public meetings and five (3) internal stakeholder meetings were conducted to get feedback and input from stakeholders and the community. The artists used this feedback to tailor their designs for each mural commission.

SITE 1: Vista Park Community Center (District 2)

San José artist Roan Victor is interested in the natural history found in the neighborhood, and her mural design focuses on the values and relationships that are important to the residents and families of the Vista Park community. Drawing from her background in horticulture, Roan's design features clarkia wildflowers, a native plant that thrives under oak trees, which would have been found in this area prior to development. Clarkia's symbolic meaning is a celebration of adaptability and joy. The flowers frame a young woman hugging her dog, as they look out into a scenic view of the valley, a view inspired by Martial Cottle Park and Vista Park. Together, they symbolize the loving relationships between friends and family; and they represent the dedication and loyalty of the community, who continue to raise their families in this area, engage in athletic events at Vista Park, and organize gatherings that enrich their lives and environment."

**SITE 2: Willow Glen Community Center (District 6)**

Olivia Losec-Unger’s design seeks to transform an underused area at Willow Glen Community Center into a vibrant and welcoming gathering spot. The design features an older and younger hand against a tapestry of native morning glory blossoms. The younger hand holds a newly opened bloom, while the older hand offers a mature flower, creating a dialogue to represent the cultivation of intergenerational connections. The intertwining movement symbolizes the transmission of stories, knowledge, and cultural histories. The design is inspired by Willow Glen Community Center’s dedication to fostering a supportive environment; and reinforces the overall Willow Glen community as a hub for connection, support, and shared growth.

**SITE 3: Welch Park Community Center (District 8)**

San José artist Andrew Kong Knight met with community members during four live painting and drawing events held over two weekends in May 2024 at Welch Park. Inspired by community members that regularly visit the park with their dogs, Andrew’s mural design features a variety of dogs in different active poses. The design illustrates the uplifting positive spirit of dogs, their carefree attitude, full of love and pure joy. About his proposal, he says, “All of the people I met were so proud to introduce me to their canine family members. As a dog lover, it really made my day fun, as I played with the dogs.”

**SITE 4: Camden Community Center (District 9)**

Bay Area artist Robert Minervini’s mural design transports the viewer to a magical lake scene that is inspired by the beauty of Almaden Valley and the surrounding Santa Cruz Mountains as well as the local ecology of the Camden neighborhood. About his design, Minervini says, “The golden light of a setting sun bathes the landscape while children of all ages joyfully swim and play in the water. Based on community members’ suggestions, lush greenery and local wildlife flourish around the lake, creating a sense of wonder and excitement. This mural represents Camden’s vibrant community, their connection to nature, and depicts the joy of shared experiences.” Rather than using realistic colors, Minervini intends to paint the mural background with warmer tones, while the figures will take on cooler blue and green tones, to maximize the dreamy, serene feel of the design.

**SITE 5: Santa Teresa Branch Library (District 10)**

Jolene Russell’s design for the façade wall of the Santa Teresa Library features two children reading a book together. Behind them, two figures walk down a path in a landscape inspired by the natural beauty of the Santa Teresa foothills. Oak leaves and native California poppy flowers frame the composition, symbolizing strength, resilience, and community. Conceptually, Jolene’s design posits the library as a portal into another world, offering respite to community members in their daily lives.

**SITE 6: Vineland Branch Library (District 10)**

Morgan Bricca is a Bay Area artist that has painted over 500 murals in her career. Known best for her large-scale murals and keen sense of light, her mural design brightens up the interior children’s area at Vineland Library. A nod to Almaden Valley’s history as the “original wine country,” a tall tree stands in an idyllic vineyard landscape. The mural design addresses the architectural challenges of the site with branches of the tree growing upwards, softening the hard lines in the corner of the room. The painted environment stimulates the imagination as a natural setting for a story, and small details such as animals and flowers can be discovered throughout the design.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The initial Artist Selection Panel that met on September 20, 2017 to help create the pre-qualified mural artist roster was a diverse group of arts professionals, as follows:

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Jennifer Ahn    | Gallery Owner, Artist, City of San José Resident  |
| Tamiko Rast     | Artist, City of San José Resident   |
| Steven Huss     | Public Art Manager, City of Walnut Creek and formerly for the City of Oakland and for the County of Alameda |
| Michael Ogilvie | Public Art Director, City of San José   |

The four-person Artist Selection Panel that met on February 28, 2023, to help update the pre-qualified mural artist roster included:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Johanna Poethig | Muralist and California Legacy Artist                          |
| Jesse Hernandez | Artist, City of San José Resident                              |
| Rosa Valdez     | Sr. Public Art Project Manager, Alameda County Arts Commission |
| Haley Cardamon  | Project Manager, Local Color San Jose                          |

**Districts 2, 6, 8, 9: Vista Park Community Center, Willow Glen Community Center, Welch Park Community Center, and Camden Community Center**

A Public Art Core Team comprised of community members, artists, and arts professionals. The Team includes:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Heidi Racherla     | Vice President, Vista Park Neighborhood Center  |
| De Anna Mirzadegan | President, Willow Glen Neighborhood Association |
| Laura Arechiga     | District 8 Resident                             |
| Christopher Sicat  | Artist and City of San José Resident            |
| Ray Hidalgo        | Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Supervisor    |

Staff from the District 2, 6, 8, and 9 Council Office have been engaged in the project development since its inception. These include Vanessa Sandoval, Chief of Staff (D2); Mary Anne Groen, Chief of Staff (D6); Teddy Adera, Chief of Staff (D8); Jonathan Perez, Community Outreach and Policy Advisor (D8); and Scott Hughes, Chief of Staff (D9).

**District 10: Santa Teresa Branch Library and Vineland Branch Library**

A Public Art Core Team comprised of community members, artists, and arts professionals. The Team includes:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Joan Bowlby      | (former) Branch Manager, Santa Teresa Branch Library        |
| Emilio Banuelos  | Studio Arts Educator, San Jose Museum of Art                |
| Eric DeBold      | Library Clerk, Vineland Branch Library                      |
| Ruben Magos      | D10 resident  |
| Ruth Perez       | Parks, Rec, Facilities Supervisor, Almaden Community Center |
| Suhita Shirodkar | Artist  |
| Donna Smith      | Almaden Senior Association; D10 resident                    |
| Tiffany Garcia   | Acting Branch Manager, Santa Teresa Branch Library          |

Staff from the District 10 Council Office have been engaged in the project development since its inception. These include Michele Dexter, Chief of Staff, and Tiffany Dang, (former) Communications Director.

Meetings held in conjunction with these projects:

| Date       | What                                 | Purpose  | Location  | Convener     |
|------------|--------------------------------------|--|-----------|--------------|
| 9/20/17    | Pre-Qualified Artist Selection Panel | Artist selection   | City Hall | SJPA         |
| 06/21/2021 | City Council                         | Project was approved as FY21/22 Budget Document #68 submitted by Councilmember Esparza | City Hall | City Council |

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| 05/27/2022 | City Council                         | Project was approved as FY21/22 Budget Document #79 submitted by Councilmember Mahan                                      | City Hall                              | City Council |
| 05/25/2022 | City Council                         | Project was approved as FY22/23 Budget Document #18 submitted by Councilmember Peralez                                    | City Hall                              | City Council |
| 02/28/23   | Pre-Qualified Artist Selection Panel | Artist Selection  | Online via Zoom                        | SJPA         |
| 7/18/2023  | Public Art Core Team meeting         | Selection of artists Jolene Russell, and Morgan Bricca for the projects   | Online via Zoom                        | SJPA         |
| 10/1/2023  | Key stakeholder meeting              | Artists assigned for mural projects: Roan Victor, Morgan Bricca, Olivia Losee-Unger, Andrew Kong Knight, Robert Minervini | City Hall                              | SJPA         |
| 12/2/2023  | Community Outreach Meeting           | “Meet the Artist” visioning meeting with Elba Raquel Martinez-Romo  | On site at Tully Branch Library        | SJPA         |
| 12/14/2024 | Community Outreach Meeting           | “Meet the Artist” visioning meeting with Jolene Russell   | On site at Santa Teresa Branch Library | SJPA         |
| 1/23/2024  | Community Outreach Meeting           | "Meet the Artist" community outreach with Robert Minervini  | On site at Camden Community Center     | SJPA         |
| 1/30/2024  | Community Outreach Meeting           | “Meet the Artist” community outreach with Morgan Bricca   | On site at Vineland Branch Library     | SJPA         |
| 3/11/2024  | Public Art Core Team meeting         | Input on District 10 mural design concepts  | Online via Zoom                        | SJPA         |
| 3/19/2024  | Key stakeholder meeting              | Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) input on mural designs  | Online via Zoom                        | SJPA         |
| 3/19/2024  | Key stakeholder meeting              | San José Public Library (SJPL) input on mural designs   | Online via Zoom                        | SJPA         |

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| 3/27/2024               | Community Outreach Meeting   | "Meet the Artist" community outreach with Olivia Losee-Unger             | On site at Willow Glen Community Center | SJPA |
| 3/27/2024               | Community Outreach Meeting   | "Meet the Artist" community outreach with Roan Victor                    | On site at Vista Park Community Center  | SJPA |
| 4/16/2024               | Key stakeholder meeting      | Follow-up meeting: San José Public Library (SJPL) input on mural designs | Online via Zoom                         | SJPA |
| 5/16/2024               | Key stakeholder meeting      | Follow-up meeting: San José Public Library (SJPL) input on mural designs | Online via Zoom                         | SJPA |
| 4/27/2024 and 4/28/2024 | Community Outreach Meeting   | "Meet the Artist" visioning meeting with Andrew Kong Knight              | On site at Welch Park Community Center  | SJPA |
| 5/21/2024               | Public Art Core Team meeting | Input on District 2, 6, 8, and 9 mural design concepts                   | Online via Zoom                         | SJPA |
| 5/22/2024 – 5/30/2024   | Community Outreach           | Community input on District 2, 6, 8, and 9 mural design concepts         | Posted flyers on site at each location  | SJPA |

/s/  
 MICHAEL OGILVIE  
 Public Art Director