



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

FROM: MICHAEL OGILVIE

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: December 2, 2020

Council District: City Wide

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF ACQUISITION OF AN ARTWORK FOR PERMANENT DISPLAY AT THE NORMAN Y. MINETA SAN JOSE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and take action on an acquisition of "XO" an artwork by artists Laura Kimpton and Jeff Schomberg for permanent display at the Norman Y. Mineta San José International Airport

DATE OF ARTIST/ARTWORK SELECTION: Direct selection

ARTWORK BUDGET: \$175,000

LOCATION: Norman Y. Mineta San José International Airport Terminal B

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

San José Airport's new long-term parking garage located at the north end of the airport includes an opportunity for a discrete public artwork to mark its entrance. Because the project completion was expected November 2020, staff pursued options for direct purchase of a ready-made sculpture to meet the airport's expedited schedule. Criteria included thematic appropriateness, landmark scale, and potential of providing both a day and night identity. Local artist preference was also a consideration.

Based on the popular installation of the "XO" sculpture at City Hall from October 20, 2018 through February 28, 2019, staff approached Bay Area artists Laura Kimpton and Jeff Schomberg regarding the sculpture's availability for purchase.

"XO" is from Kimpton's sculptural series "Monumental Word" that has been widely exhibited. Several municipalities have installed pieces from this series to capture the essence of their cities. The City of West Palm Beach, Florida purchased BE ART, their first large-scale art purchase in over two decades. The City of Arlington, Texas purchased DREAM, which was installed at the Dream Park located near the Dallas Cowboys Football Stadium. The City of Reno, Nevada purchased BELIEVE as a tribute to the city's revitalization, it's "Renossaince."

Kimpton's Monumental Words have been displayed at the Sundance Film Festival, the Life is Beautiful festival, the TED Conference, and the University of California Riverside. The Venetian in Las Vegas

purchased a LOVE sculpture for their two-story waterfall atrium. The Monumental Word installations have also been purchased by the Paradise Ridge Winery in Santa Rosa, California as part of their permanent collection, and have been purchased for several prominent private collections across the country.

“XO” was selected as part of the Renwick Gallery (Smithsonian) *No Spectators* exhibition from March 30, 2018 – January 21, 2019 in Washington D.C.

Proposal

Composed of large-scale aluminum letters, “XO” has the potential to be a significant landmark at the Airport. Thematically the letters “XO” stand as a contemporary communication for “hugs” and “kisses” with the “X” representing kisses and the “O” representing hugs. The symbols are used as a lighthearted way of expressing affection, sincerity, and deep friendship.

Each letter of the “XO” sculpture is 12 feet tall and 4 feet wide. The footprint of the entire artwork will span between 20 - 30 feet, depending on the spacing of the letters. The sculptural letterforms are perforated with bird cutouts. The birds, a key aspect of Kimpton and Schomberg’s work, are visual symbols meant to free viewers from their neuroses, fears, and self-doubt -- an appropriate gesture supporting safe air travel.

Based on the sculptures availability, the proposal for a direct acquisition of the sculpture was presented to the Airport’s Senior Staff. There was such enthusiasm for the artwork that the Airport Director requested staff explore more publicly prominent sites. After an extensive investigation of six options by airport staff, the Airport selected a site in just north of the entrance to Terminal B near the curbside passenger drop off area. Here the artwork will be fully visible to both vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Nestled in a landscaped area, the sculpture is accessible to travellers as a photographic opportunity memorializing their journey. The perforated metal sculpture material is compatible with the materials of the terminal building’s façade. During the day the aluminum sculpture will shine in the sun, while at night, internal lighting will “glow” out from the bird cutouts. It will brighten up the surrounding area at night, improving safety.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Artist Selection Panel for the temporary installation of “XO” was a diverse group of stakeholders representing the local community, local and regional artists and arts professionals including: Chris Morrish, former Arts Commissioner and Public Art Committee member; Connie Martinez, CEO of SV Creates; Teresa Alvarado, Executive Director of SPUR San José; and Mark Ritchie of Ritchie Commercial.

During the four months the sculpture was displayed at San José City Hall in 2019 – 2020 it was a tremendously popular, including as a site for everyday selfies as well as special Valentine’s Day photo shoots.

/s/

MICHAEL OGILVIE
Public Art Director