



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE
SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

FROM: MICHAEL OGILVIE
DATE: March 27, 2023

Council District: 3

SUBJECT: Concept proposal by artist Mark Reigelman for public art at St. James Park.

DATE OF ARTIST SELECTION: December 19, 2018

ARTWORK BUDGET: \$315,000

LOCATION: St. James Park, San José, CA.

RECOMMENDATION: Review and take action on the recommendation to approve the Schematic Design Proposal by Mark Reigelman for a public art project at St. James Park.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

For well over a century St. James Park has served as a significant public landscape and urban refuge in the center of San José. Through San José's remarkable evolution from a Spanish pueblo to the seat of Silicon Valley, St. James Park has adapted to meet the changing needs and aspirations of San José's citizens. A complex and multi-layered urban space, St. James Park continues to convey the historical, aesthetic, and civic values defining a city experiencing constant transformation.

While St. James Park has proven to be an adaptive urban space throughout the city's successive historic eras, it has also encountered inherent challenges in a city experiencing rapid growth and transformation. Planned changes in downtown land use, and demographic changes in the vicinity of the Park prompted an important design competition to re-envision the Park as a safe, fun, and desirable location that complements the local neighborhood as well as the broader San José community. In October 2016 the design competition finalists were showcased and in March 2017, CMG Landscape Architecture (CMG) was selected as the winning team to advance the design for St. James Park.

The opportunity for public art is primarily a design collaboration between CMG Landscape Architects and a public artist. In response to the specialized nature of this collaborative opportunity, an invitational RFQ was released in October 2017. Nominations were solicited from arts professionals nationally and Public Art staff reached out directly to over 50 individual artists regarding the opportunity.

When the RFQ closed on November 28, 2017, a total of 16 eligible submissions had been received. A review panel consisting of artists, community members, and arts professionals met on December 8, 2017 to review the qualifications submitted. Based on past work the panel recommended 3 artists for interviews via Skype on December 19, 2017. After interviews were conducted, the review panel selected New York-based artist Mark Reigelman to be recommended for the commission.

In 2020, with the advancement of the base project master planning, a budget was identified to design a public artwork. The full budget for the fabrication and installation of the artwork is contingent upon the park being fully funded through the City's Capital Improvement Project budget process, which has yet to occur. Based on Mr. Reigelman's familiarity with the park site, history, revitalization planning, and community, and that he was previously selected through an RFQ process, artist Mark Reigelman was contracted for this design commission.

In 2018, the artist developed several enhancement strategies based on historical research, site analysis, conversations with community members, and two public meetings. After further collaboration with the design team, the landscape architects incorporated two strategies into the base project construction documents. In 2022, the artist resumed his work with CMG to further investigate opportunities for public art. These discussions focused mainly on developing an artwork for the "Monument Walk," the location of several existing memorials commemorating significant speeches and individuals associated with the Park's history, specifically the McKinley Memorial (1903), Naglee Memorial (1915), Robert F. Kennedy Memorial (1968), and Fireman's Memorial (relocated in 1994).

With the Monument Walkway in mind, Mr. Reigelman engaged Cate Mills at San Jose History Museum for additional historical context. She sourced newspaper accounts of park events, including the tragic circumstances of the Brook Hart kidnaping which resulted in mob violence that culminated with the last lynching in California and the 1901 community designed tribute to welcome President William that included a giant bouquet of cut flowers 30 feet tall and 90 feet in circumference at the western entrance to St. James Park, billed as the largest bouquet ever made. Seeking additional interpretations of the Park's significance and history, the artist commissioned local poet and 2022 Creative Ambassador Brandon Luu to analyze the Park resulting in three poems, *The Trees of St. James Park*, *The Ghosts of St. James Park*, *The People of St. James Park*.

ARTWORK CONCEPT

"A DAISY"

Juxtaposed to the Park's traditional monuments, Mr. Reigelman proposes a meditation on the concept of "memorial" paying homage to how we pay tribute.

Flowers are one of our oldest symbols of tribute. In human history, the daisy is a symbol of innocence, purity, and love. It is also associated with simplicity, childhood, and the arrival of spring. In literature and art, daisies are often depicted as a symbol of the beauty and fleeting nature of youth. In Norse paganism, the daisy belongs to Freya, the goddess who represents love, beauty and fertility, as well as war, sorcery and death. Daisies have been used as a way of expressing love, gratitude, and admiration and have been used as tributes to remember the deceased and to celebrate their life.

This simple daisy, carefully placed in the center of James Park, acts as a monumental tribute to both life and loss. In the heart of the park, this single daisy is raised on a plinth, juxtaposing the park’s existing monuments to McKinley, Naglee and Kennedy. Calling on the flower’s variegated symbolism, the sculpture honors love, remembrance and a celebration of life. Its colossal blossom tilts toward the sky in a jubilant burst of petals, while the narrow stem appears almost weightless. The flower’s horizontal position divides the space, an urge to bring together the metaphorical sides of the park’s canvas, to merge the light and the dark.

The 36” Sierra White Stone plinth on which the single daisy rests will incorporate dimensional and etched poetry that will wrap the stone pedestal surface. This poetry will interpret the site history and aims of the public artwork in a manner that is thoughtful and engaging to park visitors while encouraging them to walk around the artwork.

Public Outreach

The Artist Selection Panel was a diverse group of stakeholders representing the local community, Friends of the Levitt Pavilion, local and regional artists and arts professionals as follows:

- Richard Deutsch Artist
- Dianna Pumpelly-Bates Artist and Community Stakeholder
- Rick Holden Friends of Levitt Pavilion, Chair and Community Stakeholder
- Trena Noval Artist
- Haley Waterson CMG Landscape Architecture, Project Manager

Also in attendance in an advisory role was Willett Moss, Partner at CMG Landscape Architecture.

Public meetings held in conjunction with the artist’s previous engagement included:

<u>Date</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Convener</u>
2/6/18	PAC Meeting	Update on artist selection	City Hall	SJPA
2/12/18	Community Meeting (afternoon)	Introduce the artist to community and gather input	City Hall	SJPA

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2/12/18	Community Meeting (evening)	Introduce the artist to community and gather input	City Hall	SJPA
4/3/18	Community Meeting	Artist presentation soliciting feedback on proposed concepts.	City Hall	SJPA
4/3/18	PAC Meeting	Conceptual review	City Hall	SJPA
4/18/18	SPUR Meeting	Public presentation of base project and aesthetic enhancement concepts.	SPUR, San Jose Office	SPUR

During the Design Development process the Artist will continue to engage local poets and commission poetry to be incorporated into the final artwork.

/s/

MICHAEL OGILVIE
Public Art Director