

ERIN MENDENHALL
Mayor



DEPARTMENT of COMMUNITY
and NEIGHBORHOODS
TAMMY HUNSAKER
Director

Salt Lake Art Design Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 5th, 2025

5:00 – 6:35 pm

PRESENT: Nate King Wisam Khudhair Tiffini Porter
Michael Mejia Colour Maisch

STAFF MEMBERS: Felicia Baca, Executive Director, Arts Council
Laurel Cannon-Alder, Deputy Director, Arts Council
Renato Olmedo-González, Public Art Program Manager, Arts Council
Amy Childress, Public Art Program Coordinator, Arts Council

EXCUSED: Amanda Stewart
Michelle Buhler

GUESTS: Garth Franklin (Artist, *Kosmo*)

Mission: To amplify art in Salt Lake City to enrich, enhance, and build a dynamic city where art and artists thrive.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Mr. Nate King welcomed everyone to the meeting and read the mission of the Art Design Board.

II. Approval of October 1st, 2025 meeting minutes

Mr. Michael Mejia made a motion to approve the minutes pending correction of the spelling of his name. Mr. King seconded. All board members in attendance voted in favor.

III. FY26 CIP Site Selection

Mr. Renato Olmedo-González introduced artist Garth Franklin, who is based in the Granary District and created *Kosmo*, a sculpture currently under consideration for donation to Salt Lake City. Mr. Olmedo-González noted that the Art Design Board would be voting on two key items during this section of the meeting. The first vote concerns formalizing the Public Art Program's Percent-for-Art site selection and funding plan for the upcoming fiscal year. The second vote concerns the donation of the sculpture *Kosmo* into the Public Art Collection.

Mr. Olmedo-González reviewed the proposed Percent-for-Art budget for FY 2025–26, which totals \$167,378. Per ordinance, 20% of our total \$33,475 can be allocated to the public art maintenance fund, and up to 10% of our total \$16,737 may be used for administrative support to help oversee ongoing public art administrative efforts. This leaves \$117,166 available for new artwork. Of that amount, \$75,000 was already approved by the Board during their September 3, 2025, meeting to be used towards the West Side public art commission by Matthew Mazzotta at Glendale Park. The remaining funds are proposed to be split between two projects: \$25,000 for

a new mural for *Out of the Blue*, scheduled for next summer with a call for artists in the coming weeks, and \$15,000 for the acquisition and installation of *Kosmo* at the 700 South and 1000 West roundabout in Poplar Grove.

Mr. Wisam Khudhair asked for clarification on the 20% maintenance allocation. Mr. Olmedo-González explained that this funding supports upkeep of existing artworks in the City's collection. Over the past four years, with assistance from Ms. Amy Childress, the Public Art Program has been working through maintenance needs identified in a 2020 conservation report, addressing repairs from most urgent to routine tasks such as cleaning and waxing. The maintenance allocation is used annually to ensure all artworks in the collection receive necessary care.

Mr. Garth Franklin introduced himself to the Board. He is a custom woodworker and metal fabricator who has worked in the Granary District for over a decade. He provided an overview of his work and the origins of *Kosmo*, his sculpture of a Utah-native dinosaur, Kosmocerotops. Mr. Franklin previously created *Hooda*, a wooden troll commissioned by the Granary District Alliance, which later inspired the annual Hooda Fest Block Party. In 2024, the City's Open Streets program approached him to create a new public art piece, and he set out to design something uniquely tied to Utah's history. After consulting with paleontologist Dr. Mark Lowen and touring the Natural History Museum of Utah, he chose Kosmocerotops, a dinosaur species found only in Utah.

Working with designer Alex Gonos of Iron Mesa Design, Mr. Franklin developed a fully engineered steel sculpture constructed from laser-cut plate steel and structural tubing. He incorporated reclaimed industrial materials like saw blades and an old dust collector for sustainability and to honor the Granary District's industrial identity. *Kosmo* stands roughly 20 feet long and 14 feet tall and is filled with artificial plants meant to evoke Utah's prehistoric, swamp-like landscape. Mr. Franklin completed the sculpture for 2024 Open Streets, where *Kosmo* was first displayed on private property owned by Blazer Industries. When that site recently began redevelopment, he relocated the approximately 2,000-pound sculpture to the front of his studio in the Granary District. He explained that, based on recent transport logistics, moving *Kosmo* to the proposed Poplar Grove location, about six blocks away, would be feasible as a semi-permanent placement. Mr. Olmedo-González confirmed the feasibility of moving *Kosmo*. The City's Engineering Division has reviewed the proposed relocation site and deemed it large enough and structurally sound. The Community & Neighborhood Department, where Transportation, Engineering, and the Arts Council are housed within, is very supportive of this potential move. Mr. Olmedo-González has also been working with the Poplar Grove Community Council, which stewards the site of the roundabout, and is very supportive of the relocation of the sculpture to the roundabout.

The allocated Percent-for-Art funds will support the relocation of the artwork, including crane placement and installation. Additionally, the funds will cover structural engineering to produce stamped drawings for the sculpture and its base, ensuring both are safe and feasible. Mr. Franklin will also provide a budget estimate for any additional work needed on the artwork before it is accepted into the City's collection, and he will construct the steel base for the sculpture's feet. The total budget for *Kosmo* is \$15,000, with an additional contingency from the general budget in case of unforeseen expenses. Estimated costs include \$1,200 for transportation, \$1,000 for on-site labor and installation logistics, \$7,800 for Mr. Franklin's fabrication of the steel base, up

to \$5,000 for structural engineering or VR work, and a contingency of \$2,166. This brings the potential total to approximately \$17,166.

Board members discussed community engagement related to the donation of *Kosmo*. Mr. Khudhair asked whether community input was incorporated into the artwork's development. Mr. Franklin explained that he worked with Mr. Tim Sullivan from the Open Streets program, which provided creative freedom to pitch the concept, and that no additional approvals were required. Ms. Felicia Baca noted that because this is a donation rather than a City-commissioned project, the usual community engagement process does not apply, though there was some involvement through City events. Mr. Olmedo-González added that conversations with the Poplar Grove Community Council helped connect the artwork with a potential City site, and Mr. Franklin noted that the Granary District Alliance also supported the sculpture.

The discussion also addressed design features. Ms. Maisch asked about the artificial plants in the sculpture, and Franklin confirmed they have remained in good condition and could be replaced with live plants if feasible. He also agreed that the artificial plants could be removed in the future without affecting the steel sculpture. Mr. Mejia asked about lighting in the rib cage, and Mr. Franklin clarified that the lights were temporary for Huda Fest and are not part of the permanent installation.

Ms. Maisch made a motion to approve the budget and Mr. Khudhair seconded. All members in attendance voted in favor.

IV. Artwork Donation – *Kosmo*

Ms. Maisch made a motion to conditionally accept *Kosmo* into the Public Art Collection upon full installation of the artwork at 700 South and 100 West. Mr. Mejia seconded. All members in attendance voted in favor.

V. 2026 – 2028 Pre-Qualified Artist Pool

The Board will be scoring applications for two projects. The 2026 – 2028 Pre-Qualified Artist Pool and the 9-Line Trail / West Side Request for Qualifications. Ms. Amy Childress gave an overview of the Artist Selection and scoring process for the 2026 – 2028 Pre-Qualified Artist Pool. This included background on the purpose of the Pool, which is to support Utah-based public artists, streamline artist selection for time-sensitive City projects, and offer a vetted roster for developers, businesses, and organizations. Ms. Childress noted that the Request for Qualifications received 143 eligible applications, with a majority from Salt Lake City and the remainder from across Utah.

Board members were briefed on the upcoming scoring timeline. Instructions and Submittable access will be sent the following day, and members will have until December 8, 2025, to review materials and complete their scoring sheets. Finalist discussion and selection will occur during the December Art Design Board meeting, with selected artists notified later that month and the final roster published in January. Eligibility for this call is open to emerging, mid-career, and established Utah artists or artist teams in all styles and backgrounds.

Ms. Childress provided a walk-through of the Submittable website, noting that members will use the platform only to view applications, while scoring will be completed separately using an Excel or Google Sheet scoring document. Tips were shared to make the reviewing process easier,

including prioritizing image review before reading written materials. Submittable navigation quirks were highlighted, and staff encouraged board members to reach out for help with access or technical issues.

The scoring rubric was presented, structured around three weighted criteria: Artistic Merit (60%), Experience and Qualifications (30%), and Community Engagement (10%). Each criterion is rated as above average, average, or below average. Artists are evaluated against their own materials—not against each other—ensuring a more equitable process for both emerging and experienced artists. It was acknowledged that there is no target number of artists for the pool; all applicants who meet the standards may be included. Board members expressed appreciation for the equitable approach and the clarity of the scoring tools.

VI. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

VII. Other Business / Adjourn

For Public Art Program updates, the December Art Design Board meeting will be moved from December 3rd to December 10th. Mr. Olmedo-González reminded the Board that today's meeting was the final virtual meeting. Beginning next month, meetings will return to in-person. In early December, Board members will receive qualifications for the Fairmont Park and McClelland Shared Street project, a Utah-only RFQ with a \$230,000 budget, which will require approximately three weeks of review over the holidays. Qualifications for the 9-Line Trail project will also be sent following the November 18 application deadline. Mr. Olmedo-González announced that Amanda Stewart was confirmed as the newest Board member and will attend her first meeting in person in December. Two additional Requests for Qualifications (A New Mural *Out of the Blue* and the Fleet Block Open Space project) will be shared with the Board for review of key sections once they complete internal City approval.

Mr. Olmedo-González also shared updates on several recently completed and ongoing projects. The *Foothills Trailheads Bike Rack Murals* project is now fully installed, with the final four bike racks installed at Popperton Park. He also highlighted the recent opening of *Seven Canyons Refuge*, as well as the completion of ten new murals throughout the Ballpark neighborhood, created in partnership with the Community Reinvestment Agency, the Public Art Program, and private property owners.

Ms. Baca reported on the *Wake the Great Salt Lake* project. The Bloomberg Philanthropies team and Olafur Eliasson's team recently visited Salt Lake City, offering high praise for the organization, collaboration, and overall energy of the *Wake the Great Salt Lake* team. During their visit, staff showcased several ongoing projects, including murals, *Seven Canyons Refuge*, and a Plan B Theater production. The team also presented updated visuals to the Public Lands Division, receiving positive support and confirmation that the planned park installations are moving in the right direction.

Ms. Baca also shared updates on recent small group meetings with individual City Council members. Feedback was generally positive, though each council member has distinct priorities for their district. Ms. Baca and Ms. Laurel Cannon-Alder presented strategies to increase council engagement and leverage district-level funding, including the small pool of funds allocated last budget cycle for local art initiatives. A proposal outlining potential approaches will be sent to

Council soon, with another presentation anticipated later this winter. Ms. Cannon-Alder added that council members consistently express strong support for the arts and public art. Ms. Baca also noted that one new council member, Erica Carlson was elected for District 5.

Ms. Maisch made a motion to close the meeting, Mr. Mejia Seconded. All members in attendance voted in favor.