

ERIN MENDENHALL
Mayor



DEPARTMENT of COMMUNITY
and NEIGHBORHOODS
TAMMY HUNSAKER
Director

Salt Lake Art Design Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 6th, 2026

5:00 – 8:00 pm

PRESENT:

Nate King Tiffini Porter Colour Maisch
Amanda Stewart Michelle Buhler Wisam Kudhair

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:

Michael Mejia

GUESTS:

DJ Smith, Community Stakeholder for “A New Mural for *Out of the Blue*” public art project
Brian Heath, Community Stakeholder for “A New Mural for *Out of the Blue*” public art project
Stephen Kesler, Artist, *Out of the Blue*, Community Stakeholder for
“A New Mural for *Out of the Blue*” public art project

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

AGENDA

I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Ms. Colour Maisch welcomed everyone and read the mission and vision of the Art Design Board.
Mr. Renato Olmedo-González had everyone in attendance introduce themselves.

II. Approval of April 1st, 2026 Minutes

Ms. Tiffini Porter made a motion to approve the April 1, 2026, meeting minutes. Mr. Wisam Khudhair seconded the motion, all members in attendance voted in favor.

III. A New Mural for *Out of the Blue* (2026)

The four finalists selected for “A New Mural for *Out of the Blue*” presented their proposals to the Art Design Board and community stakeholders. Board members and stakeholders were provided with the artists’ qualifications, project goals, design criteria and parameters, and project timeline for reference prior to the presentations. Each finalist was given a 10–15-minute presentation followed by a 10-minute Q&A session. In addition to their digital proposals, each artist created and painted a 3D model of the sculpture featuring their proposed mural design.

The selected finalists are Brooke Smart, Jiyoung Lee-Lodge, Chuck Landvatter, and an artist team comprised of Jann Haworth, Daisy Blake, and Liberty Blake. Following the presentations, the Board had approximately 40 minutes to discuss the proposals and potentially select an artist to recommend to the Mayor for the commission. The goal is to announce the selected artist and design on August 1, with installation anticipated to take place in August and September.

Brooke Smart presented her proposal, *Unexpected Murmuration*, inspired by themes from the Community Engagement report for this project, including curiosity, delight, imagination, joy, nature, community, creativity, embracing difference, defying expectations, and the eclectic neighborhood. Her concept centers on a starling murmuration, the coordinated movement of a large flock of starlings, which she described as representing strength, connection, protection, and harmony within a community. Smart explained that the way starlings move together while remaining aware of one another reflects the unique beauty of individuals coming together to create a supportive and harmonious way of life.

The proposed mural features a flock of starlings swirling around the sculpture against a backdrop of sky and clouds. Each bird is depicted in a different stage of flight, creating a sense of movement and rhythm throughout the composition. Smart proposed using cyan, yellow, and magenta as the primary colors for the design, with overlapping layers to create additional colors. She explained that the overlapping of colors symbolizes how shared experiences and perspectives can lead to new and unexpected outcomes.

Smart noted that the design is intended to feel immersive and highly visible from the roadway. As viewers travel through the roundabout, the movement of the flock is meant to create the sensation of flying alongside the birds and becoming part of their world. The large-scale birds and bold color palette were designed to stand out and be visible from the road and surrounding sidewalks. She also reviewed her proposed project budget and installation schedule during the presentation.

Following the presentation, the Board asked several questions about the proposal. Mr. King asked about the blue and white background pattern, and Brooke Smart explained that it represents clouds in the sky and was intentionally kept simple so the birds would remain the primary focus of the mural. Mr. Renato Olmedo-González asked about the mural's base color, to which Smart responded that the clouds would be painted an off-white tone. She also noted that Riso graph prints inspired her color palette and interest in overlapping colors and visual interplay. In response to a question from Mr. Olmedo-González about staffing, Smart stated that she anticipated working with at least one mural assistant and had hired BYU students for past mural projects. Mr. Khudhair asked about her project timeline, and Smart shared that she expects the installation to take approximately two weeks, aligning with the lift rental period provided by the Public Art Program.

Jiyoung Lee-Lodge presented her proposal, *Open Your Eyes*, which explores the whale sculpture as a symbol of emergence and transformation. She described the sculpture as something that may initially feel unexpected or out of place, but over time becomes familiar and meaningful within the community.

The proposed design features a gradient color palette transitioning between blue, white, and pink, inspired by the Great Salt Lake and Utah's sky. Painted black linework of flowing water begins at the base of the whale and moves upward across the sculpture, symbolizing movement, energy, connection, and the surrounding neighborhood itself. Lee-Lodge emphasized that the waves are intended to represent people, joy, and transformation rather than danger. Scattered colored dots throughout the composition symbolize moments of curiosity, joy, and possibility. The design also

incorporates two exaggerated whale eyes, one open and one closed, representing awareness, presence, and shifting perspectives. Lee-Lodge explained that the composition uses shifting gradients and flowing forms to represent movement, overlapping experiences, and continual change within the city and neighborhood.

Lee-Lodge noted that the mural was specifically designed to respond to movement around the roundabout and to reveal itself differently from every angle. Rather than having a single focal point or narrative, the mural continuously unfolds as viewers drive around the sculpture. She explained that the composition prioritizes large readable forms and a non-reflective color palette to avoid visual clutter or confusion in the high-traffic environment while still maintaining a sense of openness and motion. The mural would be painted using durable exterior-grade acrylic paint suitable for fiberglass surfaces, and the composition follows the natural contours and vertical form of the whale sculpture to complement rather than compete with it. Simplified areas within reach were intentionally designed to support long-term maintenance and repair. Lee-Lodge also reviewed her proposed budget and project timeline as part of the presentation.

Following the presentation, the Board asked several questions about the proposal and installation process. Mr. DJ Smith asked how Lee-Lodge planned to create the gradient effect, and she explained that she intends to brush the gradients on by hand rather than spray them, but will need to do some tests. Ms. Tiffini Porter asked Lee-Lodge to elaborate on the concepts of metaphor and water within her work. Lee-Lodge described her recurring *Waterman* character, as a human figure made of moving water, which reflects her experience moving to Utah eight years ago and her search for connection and community. She explained that the work explores the idea that finding community is an ongoing journey.

Mr. Olmedo-González asked about her proposed schedule and flexibility. Lee-Lodge shared that she is open to adjusting the schedule, working with assistants, and contracting support, as she would primarily be available on weekends. Additional discussion focused on paint application methods and durability, with Lee-Lodge noting that she plans to test different techniques before applying the gradient and linework. The Board also asked whether she would be open to design adjustments, including changes to the background, dots, and whale eye size, and Lee-Lodge confirmed that she was open to those revisions.

Chuck Landvatter presented his untitled mural proposal. In the PDF proposal he submitted to the Public Art Program the week before, he described the project as a community-centered artwork intended to reflect the identity and character of the historic neighborhood. The concept includes nine figurative portraits of local residents alongside nine animal figures, connected visually through graphic shapes, painterly realism, and a needle-and-thread motif symbolizing connection and shared identity. The rendering included in the PDF showed a collage-like arrangement of portraits and animals across the whale, with colorful patterns and line work layered over a red-to-blue-to-purple gradient background.

Landvatter also presented an unfinished 3D model to the Board and community stakeholders that differed from his PDF rendering. The model featured loosely outlined figures on the upper portion of the whale and numbered areas for animals along the lower section. While the gradient background remained, other design elements shown in the PDF, including colored shapes, line work, and red patches across the whale, were absent from the model. Landvatter explained that through his artistic process, he often changes elements as the work develops, which is why the layout of the animals and figures differed from the submitted proposal.

During the presentation, Landvatter shared that he plans to simplify the composition to reduce visual clutter by enlarging the human figures and placing the animals along the lower body of the whale. He stated that the people and animals will likely be painted in black and white to minimize sun fading, while decorative line work and textures will remain on the fins. He may also choose to paint them in a more surrealist style. He also noted that he has not finalized the poses or identities of the figures because he hopes to photograph community members before completing the mural. If selected, he will work with the Arts Council and community leaders in the neighborhood to find the right people to represent on the mural. The artist emphasized that the interlocking placement of the figures and animals is intended to symbolize community connection and reliance on one another.

Landvatter described the proposal as a “community-first” project that draws inspiration from neighborhood feedback and his own personal history in the area. He explained that the work is informed by words included in the community engagement report, including playful, creative, welcoming, and quirky. For the animal section of the mural, he will use familiar local animals like dogs with unexpected species such as giraffes, koalas, or rhinoceroses to reflect the “Out of the Blue” identity of the whale sculpture. He also discussed incorporating slightly surreal elements and stated that he hopes the completed mural will serve as a visual representation of how the community experiences and defines the 9th & 9th neighborhood. It should be noted that Landvatter described most of his design to the board vocally; there was no rendering of the proposed mural design provided to the Board or Community Stakeholders.

Board members asked Landvatter questions regarding his artistic process, approach to community representation, and the development of the mural design. Landvatter shared that he often works intuitively when given creative freedom, referencing a previous mural at the Traeger Grills headquarters that he developed organically throughout the painting process. For this project, however, he stated that he would stay closely aligned with the proposed concept. He explained that the figures included in the mural would reflect the diversity of the neighborhood and that he hopes viewers will be able to see themselves represented in the work. To select participants, he plans to engage with neighborhood residents and work alongside the Arts Council, stakeholders, business owners, and community leaders. He also confirmed that the surreal animal elements would be stylistically cohesive with the human portraits and that he plans to complete most of the mural himself, with possible assistance only for preliminary groundwork. The figures are intended to be painted primarily in translucent black and white, and Landvatter estimated that the painting process would take approximately three weeks after the design is finalized.

Board members also discussed concerns and suggestions related to the proposal. Ms. Tiffini Porter suggested a more generalized and organic approach to the figures rather than depicting specific community members, while Landvatter emphasized the importance of representing actual people from the neighborhood. Mr. Olmedo-González raised concerns about the risks involved in selecting individuals for representation and the need for a clear process to guide those decisions. Ms. Laurel Cannon-Alder asked about the patterning on the base of the mural, to which Landvatter responded that gradients would be kept minimal and concentrated mainly on the fins and nose, while lighter line work and organic shapes would add texture without overpowering the figures. Mr. Olmedo-González expressed concern that the proposal lacked a finalized rendering, making it difficult to recommend to the Mayor. In response, Chuck Landvatter explained that he did not want to fully develop the final composition until he identified and photographed the people who would be included, although Board members noted that placeholder figures could have helped communicate the overall vision more clearly.

Jann Haworth, Liberty Blake, and Daisy Blake presented their mural proposal titled “Merry-Go-Roundabout.” The artists discussed the conceptual development of the design, explaining that they were interested in exploring the realism of the whale sculpture itself. They described wanting to honor and enhance the existing form. Their proposal also differed slightly from their submitted PDF proposal and the 3D model they painted. The design was shown unfinished on a poster board.

Their proposal emphasized symmetry, realism, community connection, and references to traditional fairground art. The artists explained that the concept was inspired in part by the sculpture’s placement within a roundabout, noting that in England, a roundabout is commonly referred to as a “merry-go-round.” This association led them to think about fairgrounds and the visual language of fairground painting. Their proposed design features a realistically painted blue whale with a baby whale painted on the belly of the sculpture. Symmetrical decorative patterns extend outward from the baby whale and wrap around the back of the sculpture. With waves at the bottom of the baby whale and a sun surrounding the top of the baby whale. The artists stated that they wanted to preserve the recognizable realism of the whale while integrating ornamental and whimsical elements inspired by traditional fairground art practices.

The artists also discussed how community feedback informed the proposal. They referenced comments about Salt Lake City’s strong connection to nature and noted the symbolic significance of a whale sculpture facing westward toward the distant ocean. They explained that realism can act as a bridge for audiences with varying levels of familiarity with art, while the decorative design elements add accessibility, playfulness, and broader visual appeal. The inclusion of the baby whale was intended to reflect the family-oriented character of the 9th & 9th neighborhood and reinforce themes of connection and community.

The artists also shared personal and historical connections to fairground art, explaining that while studying art Jann Haworth and her husband had previously received grants to paint fairgrounds and circuses throughout Europe and had longstanding relationships with traveling fairground communities in England. They described fairground painting as highly human, freehand, and accessible, emphasizing that it reflects craftsmanship and artistic labor that cannot be replicated by artificial intelligence. The artists also reviewed their proposed work schedule, budget, and maintenance plan, explaining that they would maintain a library of matching paints and reusable stencils to address future repairs or graffiti removal. They concluded by discussing their personal connection to the neighborhood, noting that they live nearby, use the 9-Line Trail, and regularly visit local businesses in the area.

Board members asked questions regarding how the wave elements in the “Merry-Go-Roundabout” design would wrap around the sculpture, as this detail was not fully shown in the 3D model. The artists explained that the baby whale would be positioned higher on the belly of the whale sculpture, while the waves would flow along the lower portion and wrap around the back side of the sculpture. Additional discussion focused on the relationship between realism and the whimsical qualities of fairground art. The artists explained that they were interested in the contrast between the naturalistic form of the whale and the decorative, ornamental elements inspired by fairground painting. They also referenced the tradition of merry-go-round animals, which are often realistically rendered while still incorporating stylized and decorative details. Board members further asked whether there were underlying influences in the design, including references to tattoo culture and wave imagery.

The Board discussed the four mural proposals and expressed concerns about the level of completeness and consistency between the submitted proposals and presentation materials. Ms. Felicia Baca noted that Landvatter's proposal was incomplete and also pointed out that Haworth's team presented design changes that differed from their originally submitted PDF proposal. While Board members acknowledged that artistic processes can be fluid and evolve over time, several members expressed concern that other artists had arrived with fully developed proposals despite all artists having the same amount of preparation time. Ms. Maisch agreed that while intuitive approaches may work within an artist's studio practice, the visibility and significance of this project required a clearer and more finalized proposal process. Mr. Olmedo-González clarified that artists are told that proposals should not change after they are submitted to the Public Art Program.

The Board then discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the individual proposals. Ms. Tifini Porter expressed strong interest in Lee-Lodge's proposal, noting that it was conceptually thoughtful, visually compelling, and deeply connected to the site. She also appreciated Haworth's "Merry-Go-Roundabout" concept and found the fairground references compelling, though she felt more drawn to Lee-Lodge's proposal overall. Several Board members commented that Brooke Smart's proposal was strong and well presented, though some felt it was visually closer to the existing mural and therefore less strong. Mr. Nate King shared that he appreciated the storytelling behind Landvatter's proposal but struggled to fully understand the unfinished concept. He also favored both Smart's and Lee-Lodge's proposals, particularly noting Lee-Lodge's playful qualities and Brooke Smart's use of starlings moving around the whale sculpture.

Discussion continued around the visual effectiveness and visibility of the proposals. Ms. Maisch described Lee-Lodge's proposal as the strongest and most visually dynamic of the four and appreciated that it would create a distinctly new appearance for the whale sculpture. Mr. Khudhair also favored Lee-Lodge's proposal, noting the multiple narratives embedded within the design and the connection to the Great Salt Lake, while ranking Smart's proposal as his second choice. Several Board members discussed possible changes to Lee-Lodge's proposal, including reducing white space, adjusting the color gradient, moving her line elements higher up on the whale for greater visibility, and varying the size of the colored dots.

Board members also reflected on the conceptual goals of the project and how the proposals responded to community feedback. Ms. Felicia Baca felt that Smart's proposal responded most directly to the community engagement process, while also recognizing the strength of Lee-Lodge's community-centered themes. Mr. Stephen Kesler raised concerns about Landvatter's proposal to select specific community members for representation, noting the possibility that some residents could feel excluded. At the same time, he stated that Landvatter had initially been his favorite artist for the project and found the lack of a finalized proposal disappointing. Ms. Michelle Buhler shared that her frontrunners were Chuck Landvatter and Jann Haworth's team because they felt the most visually distinct from the current whale mural. However, both Ms. Buhler and Mr. Kesler acknowledged that none of the proposals felt like an obvious or unanimous choice for the project.

Toward the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Olmedo-González asked whether the Board believed any of the four proposals would result in a successful artwork if selected. The majority of Board members and stakeholders agreed that at least one of the proposals could be successful if approved. Mr. DJ Smith noted that the mural is expected to change again within the next three to five years, framing the project as part of the sculpture's ongoing evolution. Ms. Maisch requested a straw poll regarding support for Lee-Lodge's proposal, and four Board members expressed support. Mr. Kesler concluded by noting that the whale sculpture itself was originally designed to function as a painted canvas rather than appear fully realistic.

Ms. Maisch put a motion to commission Lee-Lodges with requested changes. Mr. Khudhair seconded. All members voted in favor.

IV. *Love Your Block*: Art Placement Approval

The Board was asked to approve the placement of two murals on City property that were funded by the Love Your Block Grants. One mural will be located at the Sorenson Unity Center (1383 South 900 West) and will be designed and painted by Lizzie Wenger. The Second mural will be located at Pioneer Police Precinct (1040 West 700 South) designed and painted by Kendyl Schofield.

Mr. Stewart made a motion to approve the placement of the who murals funded by Love Your Block at the Sorenson Unity Center and the Pioneer Police Precinct. Mr. Khudhair seconded, all Board members in attendance voted in favor.

V. Public Comment

No Public Comment was received

VI. Other Business / Adjourn

Mr. Olmedo-González gave Public Art Program updates. Ms. Amy Childress led a Public Art Scooter Tour along the Jordan River Park in collaboration with Public Lands. For the Fleet Block Open Space Project, finalist Bryony Roberts has added Elsa Ponce to her team. There is a celebration bike ride happening on May 27th from 5:30 –6:30 pm for the new artwork, *Strut*, and the new protected bike lanes on the 400 South Viaduct Trail and along 300 West. This event is in collaboration with the Transportation Division, as well as Neighborhood House and the Poplar Grove Community Council. *Kosmo* will be installed at the roundabout located on 700 South and 1000 West on May 11th. Cole Eisenhour was selected to create a mural for Japantown. This project is being funded by the Community Reinvestment Agency, and a community-led committee of members from the Japanese American community selected the artwork. His mural was announced at the Nihon Matsuri festival. Another Community Reinvestment Agency project the Public Art Program is working on is the North Temple Mural Program. This is similar to the Ballpark Mural Program. Six murals are being funded to be painted on private property in the North Temple Area. In a few weeks, the Board will receive the Jordan River Parkway Mural Program RFQ for review. For this project, four murals will be painted on city property along the Jordan River Parkway. The Public Art Program is still having discussions about the feasibility of the selected proposal for the 9-Line Trail public art project. Finally, the next Art Design Board meeting on June 3rd is going to be four hours long. The five finalists for the Fleet Block Open Space project will present their proposals, as well as Matthew Mazzotta, who will present his revised proposal for the Glendal Park public art project.

Ms. Felicia Baca shared several updates with the Board. She noted that the Arts Council is still seeking volunteers for the Living Traditions Festival and encouraged Board members to share the volunteer sign-up link that is available online. She also informed the Board that the Mayor presented the FY27 budget the previous evening, which included a 5% budget reduction across most City departments, including the Arts Council. While the reduction will not impact Arts Council staffing, approximately \$125,000 will need to be reduced from program funding. Ms. Baca explained that the budget reduction process will continue through the Arts Council Board, where leadership will present potential scenarios for program reductions and adjustments.

Mr. Buhler made a motion to close. Mr. King seconded.