

ERIN MENDENHALL
MAYOR



BEN KOLENDAR
DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT of ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Salt Lake City Art Design Board Meeting
April 7, 2022
5:00 – 7:00 pm
Webex Online

PRESENT: Tiffini Porter Meggie Troili Alejandro Moya
Angela Dean Michael Mejia Colour Maisch

Staff Members

Renato Olmedo-González, Public Art Program Manager
Taylor Knuth, Arts Council Assistant Director
Rocio Vasquez Cisneros, BIPOC Emerging Fellow

Stakeholders:

Hoang Nguyen, Chair of the Midtown Business District Community Organization, a stakeholder for *Life on State* public art project
Isapela Freeman, Assistant to Hoang Nguyen
Jena Carver, Salt Lake City Transportation Division and project manager for *Life on State*

I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Ms. Meggie Troili called the meeting to order.

II. Approval of March 16th, 2022 Minutes

Ms. Angela Dean motioned to approve the minutes as written, Ms. Colour Maisch seconded, and all board members present voted in favor.

III. *Life on State* call for artists discussion and commission recommendation

Mr. Renato Olmedo-González recapped the *Life on State* public art project. He clarified that Ms. Hoang Nguyen, from Sapa Investments, was invited to participate in the decision-making discussions through her role as Chair of the Midtown Business District, a community group who participated in the development of this public art project. The geographic boundaries of the Midtown Business District encompass the area surrounding State Street (from 600 to 1700 South and the area between 200 East and West Temple). In total, there were 90+ individual eligible proposals from 61 different artists, many of whom were first-time applicants. The total project budget is \$87,878, including artist commissions and artwork fabrication. The eight selected artists will receive a commission of \$1,500 for their design. One of the primary goals for this project is to contribute to the symbolism of State Street and build upon its historical significance. Supporting emerging artists, those without previous public art experience, and other underrepresented artists was also a priority in the development of the *Life on State* public art project. The Art Design's Board recommendation will be sent to the Mayor for final approval. The fabrication and installation will happen during Summer 2022 and the project will be completed this fall (tentatively October 2022). Ms. Jena Carver from the City's Transportation Division explained that the original plans for the *Life on State* project originally aimed to cover State Street between 600 South and 900 South, but due to the rise in cost of material prices, the project had to be reduced to cover the block between 600 to 700 South and a portion of the 700 to 800 South block. The Transportation Division's goal for the *Life on State* project are to make the corridor more pedestrian friendly, lively, and incorporate more green spaces. Mr. Olmedo-González explained that the artwork will stay within the boundaries of the project's construction and the

artwork will be ultimately placed in front of various restaurants, entertainment venues, and other businesses on State Street.

Based on the Art Design Boards previous ranking of all eligible proposals, 27 unique artworks were presented to the Board as a shortlist to be discussed during the meeting. An opportunity for Art Design Board members and stakeholders present was made to bring forward any artworks not on the shortlist that any individuals present felt strongly about discussing further with the entire the group. Designs may be modified slightly to accommodate the neon fabrication if the fabricator requests such changes to be made. Ms. Troili suggested that the Board begin their discussion by addressing the various themes explored by artists in their proposals. Prevalent themes included lowrider car culture, food/drink/entertainment, historical events associated with State Street (e.g., 1983 floods and the width of the street itself, which allowed an ox cart to make a complete U-turn), and other symbols typically associated with Utah and Salt Lake City.

Mr. Olmedo- González presented the shortlist of designs in a slideshow format and included other designs not on the original shortlist the board requested to review. The board discussed their desire for the selected designs to have State Street site-specificity.

Ms. Nguyen pointed out that the Midtown Business District Community Organization also made a short list of designs. There were four proposals in particular that both the Art Design Board and Midtown ranked as high: *Low Rider* by Mr. Alexander Billany, *Elephant* by Mr. Brighton Sampson and Mr. Christopher Henderson, *Polynesian Tribal* by Ms. Tikuafu Kelani, and *Urban River* by Mr. Rob Bellshine. These were elevated for immediate discussion.

The board discussed the *Elephant* design and its connection to State Street. According to the artists' proposal letter, the design was based on the real-life story of Princess Alice, an elephant that escaped the Liberty Park Zoo in the early 20th century and roamed the streets of Salt Lake City. The artist statement was reviewed, and some comments were made regarding the artists' mention of Highway 89, which is a designated name for the historic route that runs through today's State Street. It is important to note that the artists' proposal letter only mentions Highway 89 as an allegory of the elephant's "refusal to be bound" and the "freedom shared for decades by travelers and road-trippers along the historic Highway 89."

The Board discussed Mr. Billany's *Low Rider* designs along with a similar car design by Mr. Sanchez-Conejo. The Board concluded that Mr. Billany's design is more effective, clearer, and shows movement in a clever way. Mr. Alejandro Moya worried that these car designs could potentially be mistaken by a logo of a company or business because of their location on State Street.

Designs by Mr. Rojas, Ms. Tukuafu, and Ms. Shattler were also discussed in detail. Ms. Troili asked for Ms. Shattler's *Pink Moon* design to be moved up on the list of top choices, as it represents the LGBTQ+ communities that have thrived on State Street. Mr. Mejia expressed his enjoyment of the colors and overall design within the *Polynesian Tribal* proposal, a sentiment shared by the board; this proposal was subsequently moved up.

The board reviewed various designs referencing the historic 1983 flood that transformed State Street into a rushing urban river. The board members agreed that Mr. Bellshine's design might need to be modified to accommodate neon fabrication and questioned the integrity of the design, given its detail and complexity. Ms. Troili asked for Ms. Valerie Jar's design of *Tea Dumplings* to be moved up. The board members liked the connection to the various Dim Sum restaurant that used to be on State Street and their wish to see an Asian artist and theme represented within the project. Ms. Veronica Perez' design, *Migration and Transformation*, was moved-up for discussion. Ms. Tiffini Porter expressed her appreciation for the design and the themes of migration and belonging the artist brough through her proposal, which referenced State Street as an "artery". Ms. Troili expressed a worry for the butterflies included in her in her proposal and how these could be adapted into neon; slight changes might need to be made to simplify Ms. Perez's design. Overall, the board shared their enthusiasm over the representation Ms. Perez's proposal would bring to the entire project.

Ms. Porter requested to pull up images of all the designs that featured ox carts. Mr. Mike Murdock's design was discussed as fun and lively, although Ms. Porter expressed a level of hesitation because Mr. Murdock had recently received a mural commission from the Public Art Program. Ms. Troili asked to still consider the proposal given its aesthetic elements. Ms. Troili expressed a desire to see more fun colors added to Ms. Emma Ryder's *Ox Cart U-turn*. The board agreed that both designs of oxen accomplish the same effect and ultimately chose to move Ms. Ryder's design forward because of its effective simplicity, cleverness, in addition to the fact that the artist has not been previously commissioned by the Public Art Program.

Ms. Porter invited the board to start filtering out designs that accomplished the same and asked if the proposals by Ms. Shattler and Ms. Tukuafu were too similar in purpose.

Ms. Colour explained that the *Polynesian Tribal* design accomplished several including representing Polynesians, Utah symbolism, and LGBTQ+ communities. Both designs were kept at the top of the list. The Board agreed to move up Mr. Chuck Landvatter's design *Man Talking with Music Notes*. They discussed that even though he is a recently commissioned artist by the Public Art Program, the themes of music and its enjoyment by people should be represented in the final collection of designs.

Mr. Michael Mejia mentioned that he was not keen on including one of the designs representing the historic 1983 flood of State Street. Ms. Troili explained that there were a number of artists who responded to that theme through their proposals and conveyed her wish to see a design commemorating this historic event in the final selection.

Group members discussed the top designs and their connection to State Street. Most of the designs discussed had a strong connection. Mr. Olmedo- González explained that although a connection to State Street was encouraged to artists in the call for artists guidelines, this was not a rigid requirement.

The Board discussed the designs that were ranked highest following the evening's discussion. Further discussion on whether including a design representing the historic 1983 flood continued, but a majority of the Board ultimately decided not to include these designs for aesthetic reasons.

Ms. Maisch made a motion to extend the meeting by twenty minutes, Mr. Michael Mejia seconded, and all board members voted in favor.

Mr. Taylor Knuth recommended that the Board review their personal notes to ensure all designs were discussed thoroughly and prevent any hesitancy in the decision.

Ms. Nguyen asked to review Ms. Cara Jean-Hall's design one more time. It was determined that it was not strongly connected to State Street and it did not move forward.

Mr. Mejia made a motion to recommend the following designs to Mayor Erin Mendenhall for commission, Mr. Moya seconded the motion:

- Alexander Billany – *Low Rider* (front view)
- Veronica Perez – *Migration and Transformation*
- Chuck Landvatter – *Man Talking with Music Notes*
- Emma Ryder – *Ox Cart U-turn (with color changes)*
- Liz Shattler – *Pink Moon*
- Valerie Jar – *Tea Dumplings*
- Kalani Tukuafu – *Polynesian Tribal*
- Ryan Perkins – *Great Basin Rattlesnake*

All members present, except for Ms. Angela Dean, voted in favor of recommending this grouping for commission. Ms. Dean's dissenting vote was made because of her wish to include a design that reflected the historic 1983 flood that ran through State Street.

Mr. Troili suggested that the Board recommend one or more designs as alternatives in case one of the selected artists is not able to fulfill their commission. Ms. Maisch made a motion to select Mr. Jeff Griffin's design of the 1983 floods and Mr. Murdock's design of an ox cart as alternatives. Mr. Moya seconded this motion and all members present voted in favor.

IV. Public Comment

No public was present.

V. Other Business / Adjourn

Mr. Olmedo- González reminded the board about the opening of *Out of the Blue* on Monday, April 11, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. On Saturday, April 23, 2022 there will be a celebration at Glendale Park for *Glendale Gather Blocks*.

Ms. Maisch motioned to close the meeting; Ms. Dean seconded and all members voted in favor.

Next meeting: May 5, 2022, at 5:00 pm