ERIN MENDENHALL
MAYOR

LORENA RIFFO-JENSON
DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT *of* ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Salt Lake City Art Design Board Meeting
March 3rd, 2023
5:00 – 7:30 pm
Webex Online & Finch Lane Gallery

MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE PENDING APPROVAL

PRESENT:	Tiffini Porter	Meggie Troili	Alejandro Moya
	Michael Mejia	Angela Dean	Jen Lopez

Staff Members
Renato Olmedo-González, Public Art Program Manager
Felicia Baca, Arts Council Director
Brenda Alavez, Public Art Program Coordinator

EXCUSED: Colour Maisch

GUESTS: Mark Stephens, City Engineer
Susan Lundmark, Transportation Planner III
Dang Quach, Engineer III

AGENDA

I. Call to Order and Welcome
Ms. Meggie Troili called the meeting to order.

II. Approval of February 1st, 2023 Minutes
Mr. Michael Mejia motioned to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Angela Dean seconded the motion. All others voted in favor.

III. 400 South Viaduct Trail Finalist Interviews

a) *Request for Qualifications* overview
Mr. Renato Olmedo-González summarized the project's artwork goals and selection criteria as outlined in the *Request for Qualifications* issued for this project. The Art Design Board and stakeholders would be focusing on artists' past work and ability to execute a large infrastructure-focused project within a team made up of architects, contractors, and various city departments and divisions. Unique to this project, the Art Design Board would be selecting an artist to act as a consultant and designer for this project – this project would not involve creating a singular artwork.

Mr. Olmedo-González recapped the Public Art Program's site visit of the 400 South Viaduct project area and surrounding walkways with the artists earlier that day. All finalists, Public Art Program staff, Transportation and Engineering staff visited the project area. Artists had an opportunity to ask questions about the site, project, and surrounding communities. All of the artists flew in from out-of-state and were in Salt Lake City to visit the site and present to the Art Design Board.

Additionally, Mr. Olmedo-González reminded the Board that this meeting would only be interviews with the artists and that the selection of a finalist would be determined during April's monthly meeting. Each artist and artist team were given the same questions to answer after their timed 10-minute presentations. The questions posed during their interview were the following:

1. **Can you further elaborate on how your artistic practice would be a good fit for this project?** We are interested to learn more about how you would integrate design and aesthetic enhancements into this infrastructure project.

2. The selected artist for the *400 South Viaduct Trail* public art project is someone who will be fully integrated into the engineering design team. One of their main responsibilities will be to leverage existing material budgets and identify opportunities for aesthetic enhancements in creative and innovative ways. **Can you tell us about your experience in working for a project like this?**

3. **Please describe your creative process and how you incorporate input from various stakeholder groups into your artwork?** These stakeholders can include governmental departments and divisions like SLC Public Utilities, Engineering, and Transportation, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), neighborhood groups, engineers, landscape architects, etc.

4. The *400 South Viaduct Trail project* area presents an opportunity for an artist to help Salt Lake City dismantle the negative legacies caused by our city's history of redlining. The East and West sides of SLC continue to be racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically divided along this axis. **How would you connect with SLC's diverse communities to incorporate their experiences and desires into the infrastructure design of this project?**

b) Finalist Interviews
   - **DiBari & Associates (Vito Di Bari)**
     - Mr. Vito DiBari of the design and art installation studio DiBari & Associates was the first to present.

       Mr. DiBari showcased his custom international public artworks in Miami, London, and Milan to name a few. Many of his works were featured in larger city events, such as the London Olympic Games or the World Expo in Milan. Mr. DiBari expanded on his work in Miami where he was commissioned to create an

underwater city attraction, an artistic bridge infrastructure, and an artistically embellished parking lot. Mr. DiBari's past work focused on innovative approaches to installation art by using unexpected materials (such as light, projection mapping, and underwater sculptures). Mr. DiBari is also a former professor of Design and is currently based in Miami, FL.

Aside from Mr. DiBari's large-scale installation experience, Mr. DiBari also explained what his primary interest in this particular project was and why his studio applied for it. Mr. DiBari expressed enthusiasm for working on the 400 South Viaduct project since its primary goal is to bridge the East Side and West Side of Salt Lake City. Mr. DiBari explained that his process when approaching projects is to build on metaphors. In the case of 400 South, it would mean working on both a literal and symbolic bridge between two cultures. Mr. DiBari acknowledged that he is not currently the most knowledgeable on Salt Lake City culture, but he stated that he enjoys learning about local culture and speaking with a variety of people in the research phase of his projects. Mr. DiBari related to the Board that during the site visit he took the initiative to speak to the unhoused persons who occupied the 400 South Bridge and inquired as to what they would want most out of a public art project in this area. Mr. DiBari assured the Board that he would continue to engage with the community if chosen for the project. He described his work's main goal as being converting spaces into "a wow with a cause."

- **Haddad|Drugan (Laura Haddad & Tom Drugan)**
  - The next artists to present were the artist team Haddad|Drugan, consisting of Ms. Laura Haddad and Mr. Tom Drugan. Ms. Haddad and Mr. Drugan, who are based in Seattle, WA, have a background in landscape architecture and have been working as a team for 20 years based in Seattle, WA.

    Ms. Haddad and Mr. Drugan described their work as consisting of primarily experiential sculptures. In particular, the Haddad|Drugan team's work focuses on activating spaces through environmental phenomenons. An example of this type of work is seen in *Water Mark*, a public art project in Scottsdale, AZ comprised of several horse gargoyles that collect water during rainstorms and can be experienced by pedestrians as they walk along this multi-use trail. Ms. Haddad and Mr. Drugan also expounded on their approach and process when designing and executing public art projects. Ms. Haddad and Mr. Drugan like to play with different materials and techniques, such as pavement art, light reflecting glass work, rain gardens, and interactive sculptures.

    They emphasized that community engagement is a central part of how they work. Notably, Ms. Haddad and Mr. Drugan make it a point to work closely with local artists when implementing their final designs. For example, in El Paso, TX the Haddad|Drugan team worked on designing a series of transit stations that highlighted the local history in a unified way through glass mosaic-like portraits.

As part of this project, they implemented a mentorship program with a couple of local artists who assisted the team with research and execution.

Ms. Haddad and Mr. Drugan also presented some preliminary ideas for how the would approach the 400 South Viaduct trail project if awarded the commission. Their conceptual designs focused on adding artistically-designed canopies to the biking and walking trails, which would capture natural light in interesting ways, and add special paving that could capture movement along the trail, and/or unique sculptures that can act as a gateway.

- **Sujin Lim**
  - Ms. Sujin Lim was third to present. Ms. Lim has worked internationally in South Korea and Canada, as well as across the US. She is currently based in New York, NY.

    Ms. Lim described her work as focusing on functional and interactive sculptural pieces or structures. She also explained the significance of her signature use of cloud imagery in her work. The symbol of the cloud in her work is often but not always combined with the human form and it uses the ephemeral beauty of clouds to evoke the thoughts and dreams of people .

    Ms. Lim presented her experience with projects with specific functional needs, such as in Ottawa, Canada, where she was commissioned to create a functional sculpture that would also act as a traffic calming measure. Ms. Lim's design acted as a gateway and bridge between the quiet residential area and the nearby busy downtown. The house frame sculpture she created for this project acted as an arch and features a gated element that could be opened and closed depending on the traffic needs of the neighborhood.

    Ms. Lim also explained that the context of the site is the most important part of a public art project and that it is most successful when people are connected to it. As an example, Ms. Lim presented her work in Seoul, South Korea where she worked with local furniture makers to create a bus stop reminiscent of the bespoke furniture design of the local businesses that had been impacted by the recent failed development efforts in the area. This piece helped dignify and beautify the neighborhood and its residents.

    Finally, Ms. Lim shared her inspirations in approaching the 400 South Viaduct project. Ms. Lim explained that her approach would draw from successful revitalization efforts from other cities, such as the colorful and bold pavement painting of a district in Copenhagen or the repurposing of old infrastructure to create a green space for pedestrians in the Highline in New York City. Similar but more localized methods can be used to revitalize the 400 South Viaduct Trail.

- **Suikang Zhao**
  - Mr. Suikang Zhao was the last artist to present. Mr. Zhao has been working nationally on various artist-designed infrastructure projects. He also worked and lived in Salt Lake City in previous years while completing a project for the University of Utah. He is currently based in New York, NY.

    Mr. Zhao explained that the goal of public art-driven projects should be to take art out of a museum setting by keeping in mind the audience and context of the site. In his own work, he also thinks about the long-term maintenance and longevity of the work and which materials could work best.

    Some of the large-scale projects Mr. Zhao has worked on include designing an innovative Johnson County Juvenile Detention Center in Kansas, which invokes positivity, and creating an aesthetically pleasing parking lot design that had been an eyesore to the local community in San Diego, CA. While the parking lot design was never fully implemented due to change in management, the initial outreach to the skeptical community was conducted and residents responded positively to Mr. Zhao's designs.

    Mr. Zhao emphasized that he likes to focus on how a person might move through a space over time and likes to use language as another central theme of his work. Mr. Zhao will often incorporate text into his projects, such as when he gathered written testimony from residents of the Juvenile Detention Center to create a wall representing hopes, dreams, and aspirations. This interaction and personal touch are some of the methods Mr. Zhao employs to engage the community to be part of the finished work.

    When describing his approach to larger projects, Mr. Zhao emphasized that his work is centered on using art to solve a problem. He sees setbacks or changes to the scope of a project as a welcome challenge. Mr. Zhao also expressed his enthusiasm for veering in a different direction than what was originally planned; adapting and shifting designs as a project progresses is all part of the process.

IV. Public Comment

None.

V. Other Business / Adjourn

a) Public Art Program Updates

a. Mr. Olmedo-González informed the Board that the installation for artist Colette Hosmer's *Jordan River Current* project would be taking place later that month. The Board was invited to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony with the Mayor.

b. Mr. Olmedo-Gonzalez also related the success of the community engagement activity for this piece, which involved Edison Elementary School. The fourth-grade students were invited to walk to Fisher Mansions (one of the installation

sites) to listen to Mayor Mendenhall discuss the significance of the Jordan River. The Mayor then walked back with the students along the Jordan River.

b) Ms. Tiffini Porter motioned to close the meeting. Mr. Alejandro Moya seconded the motion. All others voted in favor.