



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

City of Palo Alto Staff Report to Public Art Commission

Meeting Date: March 17, 2022

RE: Agenda Item 2 – Joint Meeting with the Human Relations Commission to discuss the Dr. Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King Artist Residency

Discussion:

At the City Council's November 2, 2020 meeting, the City Council voted to refer the development of permanent public art on King Plaza reflecting the City's commitment to race and equity to the Public Art Commission on the consent calendar. The staff report for the November 2, 2020 City Council consent agenda item can be found [here](#) (staff report #11708).

The PAC discussed the topic at the November 21, 2020 meeting and expressed overall support for exploring a permanent platform for ongoing rotating artworks addressing race and equity, and staff presented some of the cost and logistical implications of that kind of programming at the January 21, 2021 PAC meeting. The commissioners also reviewed the Human Relations Commission's report on Black and Brown Lives in Palo Alto to use as a resource in informing the framework of the project. On March 17, 2021 the PAC and Human Relation Commission held a joint meeting to discuss the development of the residency and artwork. There was mutual support for the artwork being reflective of and relevant to Palo Alto and building discussions and expressing multiple perspectives and experiences of diverse communities in Palo Alto. At the March 18 PAC meeting, the PAC selected members to take part in HRC community meetings and requested that staff return with recommendations for budget implications, framework, and artist residency options to launch the program. On April 15, 2021 the Commission discussed available resources available for the residency, expectations for community engagement, and the temporary artwork development to inform the artist call. The PAC allocated \$50,000 in funds for the first artist residency and artwork. The funds support a six-month period of creative community engagement that will inform the creation of an artwork for King Plaza that will be in place for six months to one year, and a new residency would begin at that time.

The call was launched in June, and had 17 artists apply to the call by the deadline in August. The panel selected three finalists in August who were paid a stipend to develop specific proposals

for their Palo Alto residency. The three finalists made public presentations October 19, 2021 about their background, their artistic practice, and their specific proposal for Palo Alto. Members of the public were invited to watch the presentations and give feedback to the panel before they made their final decision. The selection panel consisted of:

Adam Amram – Artist

Adriana Eberle – Commissioner, Human Relations Commission

Amanda Rawson – Researcher/Project Manager | Art Builds Community

Chantal Gaines – Deputy City Manager, City of Palo Alto

Emily Chan – Student, President and Founder, Advocacy Through Art

Nia Taylor – Chair, Public Art Commission

The panel recommended artist Rayos Magos to be the first artist in residence. That recommendation was approved by the PAC in November 2021. The residency launched in February 2022.

For his residency project, titled [Rituals of Resilience](#) and rooted in empathic collaborations and civic engagements, Rayos Magos utilizes the power of storytelling and imagery in community conversations about culture, identity, belonging, and resilience in Palo Alto, with the special focus on amplifying voices of Latinx and BIPOC community members and mental health service providers. The project looks towards storytelling through imagery, reflections, and rituals, and engages the larger Palo Alto community in a series of conversations and art making workshops that will offer community members to reflect and share their stories about belonging, human connection, and the impact of social distancing on their mental health during the pandemic. His documentation of personal stories and learned experiences will result in a final temporary artwork displayed on King Plaza for a period of six months to one year. The artist has been set up in his studio at Cubberley and is at work getting to know the community and partnering with local organizations focused on mental health and wellbeing.

Staff and Magos will present updates on the status of the residency at the March 17 joint meeting between the HRC and PAC, and would like to gather feedback from Commissioners. A few focused areas of particular interest include:

- Avenues for engagement that are not already underway (community groups or organizations)
- How to build the presence or knowledge about the residency in Palo Alto
- Questions about the residency for staff and the artist to consider

For more information about the King Artist Residency, visit the [Public Art Program page](#).