



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
October 13, 2020**

ITEM TITLE:

A Resolution approving the concept for a work of public art by Thomas Houseago in conjunction with the Villa Valencia development project at 515 Valencia Avenue in fulfillment of the Art in Public Places requirement for public art in private development (unanimously recommended by the Arts Advisory Panel approval/denial vote: 8 to 0, and the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 6 to 0).

DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:

Approval

BRIEF HISTORY:

Villa Valencia (the “Developer”) is constructing a 39-unit condominium at 515 Valencia Avenue (the “Project”). The Developer has chosen the option of petitioning for a waiver of the Art in Public Places Fee requirement by commissioning and installing artwork within the project as specified in the Zoning Code, Article 3, Division 21.

The Villa Valencia development team was presented with over fifteen national and international artists over the course of several months and proposed acquiring artwork by the artist Thomas Houseago for a dedicated space within a public park on the project site. Houseago utilizes mediums associated with classical and modernist sculpture, such as carved wood, clay, plaster, and bronze, as well as less traditional materials like rebar, brass, and hemp. Thomas Houseago builds monumental figures that show the work of the artist’s hand and visually oscillate between projections of power and vulnerability.

For this project, Thomas Houseago proposed a new work, “Lady”, based on a tabletop sculpture and following his investigations of the interplay between two dimensions and three dimensions. Houseago experiments with interlocking plywood, fitting shapes together and playing with how they work to represent solid form. Brass sheets are then cut, slotted together, and welded in a carefully engineered process. His work evokes simplicity in its construction while containing surprising dynamism and edge. “Lady” is proposed for a highly visible location within the park and presents multi-faceted views as one enters from multiple directions.

The developer and artist responded to the Arts Advisory Panel’s initial review of the artist’s work and presented work in keeping with the artist’s figurative vernacular. The Panel expressed concern regarding the proposed brass material, to which the developer responded with extensive documentation from the artist’s studio, fabricator, and developer’s conservationist. The Cultural Development Board agreed and further recommended fabricating the artwork at a slightly larger scale.

Thomas Houseago was born in Leeds, England and lives and works in Los Angeles, California. Houseago is represented by Gagosian Gallery and in addition to major solo exhibitions throughout the world, including recent exhibitions at the Royal Academy of Art in London, England and at the Musée De La Ville De Paris, in France, Houseago was included in the 2010 Whitney Biennial and collaborated with the New York Public Art Fund on two separate large scale public sculpture projects.

His artwork can be found in the collections of The Museum of Contemporary Art and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas; the New Orleans Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art in Paris France; the Pinault Collections in Paris and Venice, and more.

The concept proposal is attached as Exhibit A to the proposed Resolution.

The cost of the proposed art piece and installation is estimated to be \$502,275 (five hundred two thousand, two hundred, seventy-five dollars) which is comparable to the required 1% of the Project's total art in public places fee estimate of \$451,509 (four hundred fifty-one thousand, five hundred nine dollars). Any difference in documented expense in favor of the City will be issued as a check for deposit into the Art Acquisition Fund.

The Arts Advisory Panel and the Cultural Development Board voted unanimously to recommend the artwork at their respective meetings on September 23, 2020 and September 30, 2020.

The Developer is required to provide for the perpetual maintenance of the artwork, which will be the sole responsibility of the Developer, in accordance with a restrictive covenant entered into with the City of Coral Gables and following the Art in Public Places: Funding, Goals, and Implementation Guidelines.

ADVISORY BOARD/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION(S):

| Date. | Board/Committee | Comments |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| September 23, 2020 | Arts Advisory Panel | Recommended |
| September 30, 2020 | Cultural Development Board | Recommended |

ATTACHMENT(S):

- 1. Draft Resolution**
- 2. Exhibit A, Project Proposal Concept with Preliminary Budget**
- 3. Excerpt Minutes from the Arts Advisory Panel meeting of September 23, 2020**
- 4. Excerpt Minutes from the Cultural Development Board meeting of September 30, 2020**