



**City of Coral Gables**  
**CITY COMMISSION MEETING**  
**January 24, 2023**

**ITEM TITLE:**

A Resolution accepting a proposal from artist Janine Antoni and approving the fabrication and installation of the sculpture *Whispering Through a Stone*, (unanimously recommended by the Arts Advisory Panel, approval/denial vote: 7 to 0, and the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 7 to 0); authorizing the City Manager or his or her designee to negotiate an agreement with the artist; authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 amended budget to recognize as revenue a transfer from the Art in Public Places reserve, and appropriating such funds to put toward the cost of fabrication, installation, and related expenses regarding the artwork.

**DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval

**BRIEF HISTORY:**

The City Commission has consistently expressed interest in building the City's permanent public art collection with artworks by prominent artists representing a diversity of background and disciplines.

On August 2, 2022, the Arts Advisory panel reviewed a proposal by Janine Antoni that included a temporary installation for Art Basel 2022, and a permanent sculpture, *Whispering Through a Stone*, that could be completed in the following year. The Panel recommended approval of the proposal for permanent installation.

On August 4, 2022, the Cultural Development Board reviewed the proposal and expressed interest in *Whispering Through a Stone*; however, the Board prioritized recommending a project to highlight in time for Art Basel, 2022, and the sculpture could not meet the deadline.

On August 24, 2022, the City Commission was shown Antoni's submitted proposal and overall expressed interest in *Whispering through a stone*.

On December 20, 2022, the Cultural Development Board reviewed a revised proposal for *Whispering Through a Stone* and made a motion recommending approval to the City Commission.

**About the artist:**

Janine Antoni was born in Freeport, Bahamas and currently lives and works in New York and Miami. She received her MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and is represented by Luhring Augustine. Antoni works in sculpture, performance art, and photography. She is

globally known for a deeply personal, conceptual process that articulates her relationship to the world and the emotional states felt in and through the senses. Antoni has exhibited and is in the collections of major institutions including the Whitney Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and among others in Ireland, Sweden, the UK, Germany and more. In addition, Antoni has been represented in several international biennials and festivals including the Whitney, Venice, Johannesburg, documenta, and others.

About the artwork:

*Whispering Through a Stone* is based on the design of a classic conversation chair and allows people to share secrets or important moments privately while in a public space. Two seats will be sculpted out of a large stone, facing in opposite directions, with a small hole passing through the stone connecting the areas to allow those seated to speak in an intimate manner. The artwork is meant as a grounding presence, a place of respite, welcoming visitors to slow down and allow meaningful conversations. The stone will quickly become a cherished site for special moments.

*Whispering Through a Stone* is a commissioned, unique work with no further editions and will be sculpted from a single stone sourced by the artist.

Funding for design, engineering, and fabrication is estimated at \$277,500. It is anticipated that the stone will rest on its own weight and will not require an additional foundation. Installation, lighting, signage, and outreach are estimated at an additional \$29,500. The total estimated project cost of \$307,000 is being proposed through the Art Fund.

Staff recommends placement at Merrick Park, across from City Hall, under the large tree on the north end of the park. The proposed site does not conflict with current use of the park, including the park's annual holiday installation.

The cost of annual maintenance is anticipated to be minimal and is being proposed through use of the general fund as ordinary maintenance and will be included as part of the City's annual public art maintenance plan.

The Arts Advisory Panel voted (7-0) to recommend commission and acquisition of Janine Antoni's *Whispering Through a Stone* at their meeting on August 2, 2022.

The Cultural Development Board voted unanimously (7-0) to recommend commission and acquisition of Janine Antoni's *Whispering Through a Stone* at their meeting on December 20, 2022.

**BOARD/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Date.	Board/Committee	Comments
August 2, 2022	Arts Advisory Panel	Recommended approval
December 20, 2022	Cultural Development Board	Recommended approval

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

<b>Amount</b>	<b>Account number</b>	<b>Source of Funds</b>
<b>\$307,000</b>	<b>310-1500-573-48-05</b>	<b>Art in Public Places, Art Fund</b>

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

- 1. Draft Resolution**
- 2. Excerpt Minutes from Arts Advisory Panel meetings of August 2, 2022**
- 3. Excerpt Minutes from the Cultural Development Board meeting of August 4, 2022**
- 4. Excerpt Minutes from the Cultural Development Board meeting of December 20, 2022**
- 5. Exhibit A Whispering through a stone**
- 6. Artist information**
- 7. PPT for Whispering through a stone**