

DRAFT

EXCERPT

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES
ARTS ADVISORY PANEL MEETING
Wednesday, September 23, 2020 9:00 a.m.**

**Historical Resources & Cultural Arts Department
Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

MEMBERS	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J+	J	A	S
	19	19	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Nelson deLeón	P	-	P	P	P	-	-	-	P	P	E	P	P
Dr. Jill Deupi	E	-	P	E	E	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P
Adler Guerrier*													P
Jacek Kolasiński	P	-	P	P	E	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P
Emily MacDonald-Korth	P	-	P	E	P	-	-	-	P	P	P	E	P
Manny Mato*			P	P	P	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P
Marijean Miyar	P	-	P	P	P	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P
Juan Roselione-Valadez	E	-	P	P	P	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P

LEGEND: A = Absent; P = Present; E = Excused; * = New Member; ^= Resigned Member;
- = No Meeting + = Special Meeting

STAFF:

Kara Kautz, Interim Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Director
Catherine Cathers, Arts & Culture Specialist

MEETING RECORD / MINUTES PREPARATION: Catherine Cathers, Arts & Culture Specialist,
Historical Resources & Cultural Arts Department

Dr. Deupi called the Arts Advisory Panel meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

OLD BUSINESS:

a. AIPP WAIVER REQUEST, VILLA VALENCIA – THOMAS HOUSEAGO

The Panel received revised proposal materials and related maintenance information from the Villa Valencia development project for a waiver request of the Art in Public Places (AiPP) fee for commissioned artwork by artist Thomas Houseago. Ms. Cathers introduced Joanna Davila as representing Villa Valencia and art consultant Katia Rosenthal. Ms. Davila proceeded with a presentation, highlighting proposal revisions made in response to previous comments from the Panel.

Ms. Cathers gave a brief overview of the project, stating that the second sculpture presented (Lady) is the one the developer would like to move forward.

Ms. Davila reviewed the project site, noting the location of the sculpture in the 9,000 square foot public park at Villa Valencia. She discussed the nature of the materiality of the piece and reported consulting with the artist's studio and RLA (conservators) regarding the weathering process and maintenance of the piece. The developer, she said, is taking responsibility of the conservation of the piece and the intention of the artist's studio is to allow it to (naturally) patina with the option of waxing the piece to slow the process if it appears to be weathering too quickly. Similar artworks were mentioned, including a larger piece placed in a sub-tropical environment similar to this region.

Ms. Rosenthal provided further details, stating that RLA recommended wiping the sculpture as part of the general maintenance and waxing or providing another protective coating in addition to regularly cleaning the piece.

Ms. MacDonald-Korth, who was not able to attend the previous meeting, stated that she read the minutes and related maintenance information that was provided. She commented that the materials did not mention a coating and it needs to be addressed, ideally by RLA. She asked about the height of the plinth and that the documents specify that it cannot be touched, adding that anywhere it's touched will increase the rate of oxidation greatly. Ms. Davila responded that the plinth height is proportional to the artwork; however, they're open to suggestions. Ms. Cathers asked if it's possible to have landscaping around it. Ms. MacDonald-Korth agreed, something to keep people at a distance. Ms. Davila said there may be some demarcation between (the pedestal and surrounding area) and a small hedge would be o.k.

One of the main concerns, Ms. MacDonald-Korth said, is the oxidation rate of brass. She described the trouble associated with the process of de-zincification of the metal, where it dissolves out from the alloy leaving more of the copper behind, which looks like red spots. It could be what the artist is going for, she continued, and over time it would probably start at the top and drip down; maybe that should be the plan of the artist for embracing deterioration as part of the timeline of the sculpture. Ms. Rosenthal said she believed that's the the intention of the artist, the dripping described is the nature of the metal and is part of the artist's integrity of the work.

Ms. Cathers commented that clarification is needed for how the material is being treated. The submitted documents, she said, don't state how the material is being processed.

Ms. Davila said the intent of the studio is not to wax the sculpture and in this case it seems to be a concern about the weather climate; (therefore) the studio indicated it (waxing or coating) could be a preventative process to help with the conservation of the piece and slow the (oxidation) process.

Ms. MacDonald-Korth's connection was poor and she proceeded to share her thoughts through the chat, which Dr. Deupi read aloud. Ms. MacDonald-Korth asked about the exact alloy of the material and noted that any coating would require frequent maintenance. Dr. Deupi asked for a precise answer, adding that the Panel has to look beyond the aesthetics and at the practicality because of the hostile environment (including) the salinity, humidity and heat fluctuations.

Because it hasn't been manufactured yet, Dr. Deupi asked, is it possible to consider a different material, one with a patina that creates the same type of effect. She acknowledged the concerns expressed and that (the City) needs a sense of comfort regarding the longevity and how it's going to wear. Ms. Davila responded that they can't manufacture the piece in another materiality. She said they did explore it and because of the construction of the piece, doing it in another metal or material would change the construction and probably involve a mold, increasing the cost and bringing it out of the scope of the budget.

Ms. MacDonald-Korth recommended using brass with a small amount of tin as a viable solution. It was noted that it would be helpful to see the surface of a similar work that's been out for an extended period. Mr. Guerrier stated that the studio provided the fabricator's information in Switzerland, saying they can provide information on where they sourced the alloy, provide specification of the content and how it's expected to perform in our environment.

Mr. deLeón stated that allowing it to weather naturally and have people touch it may be preferable because of the tremendous maintenance requirements.

Ms. MacDonald-Korth noted that the documents state that if the oxidation rate is too fast, it should be sent back to the gallery in Switzerland; it's a cost that would have to be borne by the developer. Mr. Mato commented that the developer will pass on the maintenance cost to the homeowners; eventually the condo association will be responsible, and they may not be as eager to spend money on conservation. So naturally, he said, it's important to look at the long term and how will it will age.

Ms. Rosenthal referenced the material specifications of a similar work. Ms. MacDonald-Korth responded that the reference is for a surface treatment that is applied after the sculpture is assembled. The surface treatment, she said, does not last forever; if you touch it, it can oxidize through the patina. Ms. Rosenthal responded that that is the artist's intention. If that's the case, Ms. MacDonald-Korth said, then why are there so many specifications about not touching the sculpture without cotton gloves. Ms. Rosenthal said they probably don't want it (the oxidation) to accelerate as fast. She said they did speak with the gallery, which assured them that a wax coating once or twice a year should be fine and allow the work to age beautifully.

Dr. Deupi asked if Ms. MacDonald-Korth could draft a brief set of questions for a response to the Panel's concerns, documenting a clear and precise form of conservation. The Panel agreed.

Mr. Roselione-Valadez said he was ready to move forward with the developer's preference.

Ms. MacDonald-Korth noted that she likes the work although it seems a bit small. She commented on liking the hue, the weight of the sheets, and how it changes as you move around the piece.

Mr. Guerrier commented that he likes the artist's work and had initial concerns about it being lost in the setting; however, with the intention of inviting people in he felt it was right for the park.

Ms. Miyar expressed that there is a science of conservation that should not be discarded and should be addressed, as the Panel has done.

With no further discussion, the following motion was made:

Ms. Miyar made a motion recommending approval of the waiver request to incorporate artwork as presented by artist Thomas Houseago into the Villa Valencia development project, with a requirement that the development team submit the specific alloy and treatment of the artwork along with the pedestal height and design. Mr. Mato seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Ms. Davila and Ms. Rosenthal thanked the Panel and left the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Cathers
Arts & Culture Specialist