



City of Coral Gables  
CITY COMMISSION MEETING  
January 22, 2019

**ITEM TITLE:**

A Resolution approving acquisition of twenty-two (22) speech bubble artwork signs from “The truth is I welcome you” by Hank Willis Thomas and installation on Miracle Mile of the artwork *Ernest and Ruth* by Hank Willis Thomas. (Unanimously recommended by the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 4 to 0).

**DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval

**BRIEF HISTORY:**

On May 22, 2018, the City Commission approved temporary exhibition of artist Hank Willis Thomas’ series of twenty-two sculptural signs during Art Basel and through Winter of 2019.

The artist’s studio approached the City with a proposal to consider purchase of the artworks following the success of the Art Basel endorsed exhibition.

The series of artworks, as part of the artist’s exhibition in Coral Gables titled “The truth is I welcome you”, consists of twenty-two signs, each containing a line from the poem *the truth is i am you* written by Hank Willis Thomas and Ryan Alexiev and translated into the most spoken languages in Coral Gables.

In consideration of the artist’s distinction and positive response to the artworks; the desire to activate Miracle Mile with exceptional public art; and the positive, interactive nature of the work, the Cultural Development Board was presented with the proposal and unanimously voted to recommend acquiring the twenty-two artworks for an amount of \$200,000 (two hundred thousand dollars). The Board further recommended that the artwork bench *Ernest and Ruth* (currently installed on McBride Plaza) be permanently installed on Miracle Mile.

Funds are being proposed through use of art acquisition funds previously set aside for public art on Miracle Mile. The cost of annual maintenance is being proposed through use of the general fund as ordinary maintenance.

At their meeting on January 15, 2019, the Cultural Development Board voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend acquisition of the twenty-two speech bubble artwork signs currently installed from “The truth is I welcome you” exhibition and that the artwork *Ernest and Ruth* be permanently installed on Miracle Mile.

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION:**

Date.	Resolution/Ordinance No.	Comments
May 22, 2018	2018-149	Approval of temporary exhibition of artwork by Hank Willis Thomas

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

Date.	Board/Committee	Comments
January 15, 2019	Cultural Development Board	Recommended approval of acquisition

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION: (If Applicable)**

Account No.	Amount	Source of Funds
310-1500-559-63-00	\$225,000	Art Acquisition Funds set aside for Miracle Mile
001-1330-573-3190	tbd	Annual maintenance per year/General Fund, Other Professional Services

**APPROVED BY:**

Department Director	City Attorney	Assistant City Manager	City Manager

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

1. Proposed Resolution
2. Excerpt Minutes from the Cultural Development Board meeting of January 15, 2019
3. Hank Willis Thomas Biography and Image reference