

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-1
June 28, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Deputy City Attorney, Cristina Suarez

Cultural Arts Specialist, Catherine Cathers

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-1 [Start: 11:12 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission approving concept proposals from artists Janine Antoni and George Sánchez-Calderón for a temporary public art exhibition extending through winter, 2023, and to submit an event application to Art Basel. (unanimously recommended by Development Board approval/denial vote: 5 to 0).

Mayor Lago: Good morning.

Deputy City Attorney Suarez: Mayor I-4 is...

Mayor Lago: We are going to do H-1.

Deputy City Attorney Suarez: H-1 is a Resolution of the City Commission approving concept proposals from artists Janine Antoni and George Sánchez-Calderón for a temporary public art exhibition extending through winter, 2023, and to submit an event application to Art Basel.

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Ms. Cathers: Good morning, Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, I'm Catherine Cathers, Arts and Cultural Specialist for the city. And first I respectfully would like to request language added to the title added to the resolution to clarify that this is a request for concept proposals. So, the Cultural Development Board is making a recommendation to the Commission to approve development and submission of concept proposals by two artists for the city's 2022 annual temporary public art exhibition that is also affiliated with application to Art Basel for an official event. Janine Antoni and George Sanchez-Calderone. Following brief remarks, appointed members of the Arts Advisory Panel and Cultural Development Board are here to speak on behalf of their respective boards. So, since 2016, the city has received recognition for Art Basel for an annual temporary exhibition. The recognition encourages the city to maintain quality programs and invites its residents, visitors and art lovers to experience all the arts within Coral Gables. City staff worked closely with the Arts Advisory Panel and compiled a list of artists who fit the city's artist criteria, along with the profile of artists affiliated with Art Basel and the represented galleries. It should be noted that this process included a review of approximately 20 artists over the course of months and included ongoing discussions about timeline, budget, availability of the artist and also their connection to our area. On June 16, after thoughtful consideration, the panel ardently recommended artist Janine Antoni with George Sanchez-Calderone as an alternate. On June 21st, the Cultural Development Board reviewed the recommendation of the panel and voted unanimously to recommend the requesting proposals from both artists. So, just to provide a little bit of information about the artists. Janine Antoni was born and grew up in Freeport, Bahamas, and moved to Florida at a young age. She received her MFA from Rhode Island School of Design. She currently lives and works in New York and Miami and is represented by Luhring Augustine. The artist works in sculpture, performance art and photography and shows nationally and internationally. In addition, she's been represented in several Biennials and festivals, including The Whitney, Venice, Johannesburg, Gwanangju, Istanbul and documenta14, among others. The work is included in the collections of the National Gallery of Art, Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, the Israel Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Art Institution of Chicago, Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and more. George Sanchez-Calderon was born in New York and spent most of his life in Miami. He received his MFA also from the Rhode Island School of Design and he works in sculptor, painting and multi-media. Sanchez-Calderon has shown in exhibitions at the David Castillo Gallery, Carlos and Rosa de la Cruz Collection and the Feana Arts Complex as part of Art Basel. His work is in the collections of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas; the Perez Art Museum, Miami; Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami; Franklin Furnace Archive, New York; Carlos and Rosa de la Cruz Collection; Craig Robbins Collection, Miami; and Arturo and Liza Mosquera Collection in Miami. For this opportunity, both artists are interested in developing concepts that include meaningful public engagement with the work that extends beyond the work itself. So, today the board is recommending approval for them to develop

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concepts only and not for specific artwork yet. The proposals will be reviewed and come back to the Commission with a recommendation for the artwork. A decision will need to be made at that time in order to meet the application for Art Basel and allow enough time for fabrication and installation of the work. The Arts Advisory Panel has also recommended that the concept be site specific new work that could also be considered for permanent acquisition as previous Art Basel related projects have been. Staff is recommending funding of \$5,000 toward the development phase and \$450,000 is the recommended budget for funding the temporary installation itself and is in line with previous Art Basel temporary exhibitions. Funding for the project is proposed through the art fund which is funded through private development projects. And now I'd like to introduce Adler Guerrier to speak on behalf of the Arts Panel and Ray Corral to speak on behalf of the Cultural Development Board.

Mr. Adler Guerrier: Our support for Janine Antoni and George Calderon pretty much stems from their connection to South Florida. They are two artists, even though Janine Antoni is actually based in New York, they have a long history with South Florida and whose practices can be really responsive to the time, the issues that are current to us. Janine Antoni is an artist whose practice can focus on very specific issues. She is famous for making artwork about being a mother or a daughter. She can create work that will be immediately received by the art world at large and would be totally embraced. George Sanchez-Calderon is from Miami, grew up here, practice here. His work tends to link South Florida to Spain and there is architecture and carnivalesque tradition and these are themes that are so relevant and so could be a great proposal if that's the channel he wants to pursue. So, the Art Advisory Panel, we originally recommended Janine Antoni as recommendation and George as an alternate, but we fully support the board's elevation of both artists to get proposals from them because we would be in a good place to receive good ideas.

Mr. Ray Corral: Good morning, my name is Ray Corral representing the Arts and Cultural Development Board and I've been appointed to speak on behalf of the board as-a-whole. The board as-a-whole is hoping that you all approve the two artists that they can prepare proposals for Art Week coming up. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Mena: I just have a question, to make sure I understand correctly. Are we requesting two proposals for one exhibition?

Mayor Lago: Yes. So that's what I was going to discuss. So first off, thank you for your hard work. Please tell the board that we're grateful for their commitment and their exhaustive efforts to deliver the finest for the city in regard to arts and culture. I've been doing a little bit of research on both artists. I was familiar with one, not with the other. I think they are both great artists, but I have reservations with moving forward on two and I'll tell you why. We have limited resources, every dollar counts, and I want to make sure that this is not only temporary. I want to have an understanding if we are going to make a significant type of investment in regards to these artists,

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I want to make sure that its something that we could potentially have on display, even if it cost just a little bit more, but I want to make sure that you're talking about artists that have significant trajectory, they have a great CV and I'd love for this to be something that we could potentially have on permanent display. So that's something that I want the Commission to think about, not only just temporary, by the way, it doesn't have to be a significantly massive sculpture. Again, some of the best works are small works. Its all about scale. You look at a Jasper John Flag and its not about the magnitude of the work. Its about the beauty and the intricacy of the work and what is conceptualized in the work. So, I understand, and I respect the request of the board and if we'd like to head in that direction, but I don't want to spend too much money on dual tracks and then have to split the baby at the end, because I think that the artwork would suffer.

Vice Mayor Mena: How have we done it previously on both fronts. One on the proposal front, right; and two, on, if I'm not mistaken, the piece right outside City Hall here in the intersection was an Art Basel temporary exhibit, but I think its still there last I checked.

Ms. Cathers: That was an acquisition. So, this is actually the first time that we would be doing, that they are recommending concept proposals from two artists ahead of coming straight to the Commission, if the concept and the artist.

Vice Mayor Mena: Pay for both?

Ms. Cathers: We'd pay for the proposal fee which would be \$2,000 per artist.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay.

Ms. Cathers: So, it's a minimal amount for the concept. But in all the cases so far, except for Kiki Smith last year, they've been direct selections of artists who have then developed a concept and then we've come to the Commission with that concept. So, this year it's a little bit different and its more being driven directly by our panel and boards, this year as well. They've both been told that if they do develop a concept, it should be with the intent of potentially procuring it for permanent acquisition and that amount would be to be determined. I don't know what that amount would be until they include that with their proposal, but we have asked them to do that, so we know what the temporary fee would be, and we would know what the acquisition fee is.

Vice Mayor Mena: As part of the proposal.

Ms. Cathers: As part of the proposal.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay. Okay.

Mr. Guerrier: I could add that \$2,000 is in line with how municipalities tend to get proposals for public art and sometimes there are four, five artists on the panel. So, this is not that far of a range to get good ideas that can be productive.

Vice Mayor Mena: Also, if you – listen, we are probably going to get two great proposals, right, and you have to make a decision. Is there a way to sort of, whichever one we don't select to sort of almost have it in the bank for like a potential Art in Public Places on a future development where we could say, hey, we already got this proposal right here, is that something you would be interested in? If there is a way, on the assumption that people like both and its something that hypothetically would like to see somewhere else, maybe we can pivot for an opportunity.

Mr. Guerrier: That could be the strength of this process that ultimately will be choosing from two ideas, but it could potentially commission two ideas, not necessarily simultaneously for Basel but for anytime.

Mayor Lago: Well, I think there is consensus to explore the two artists and move forward.

Vice Mayor Mena: Is there an identified location for the temporary exhibit or is that like...

Ms. Cathers: We've been asking them to focus in the downtown area.

Mayor Lago: By the way, the good thing about this, this is pretty short notice for something in Art Basel around the corner. Like our friend here said, there are local artists who have a presence here we can move rather quickly. So, is there a motion to accept the recommendation?

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes. I'll move it.

Commissioner Anderson: Second.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor before you vote, there is a member of the public requesting to speak on this item.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Maria Cruz.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Cruz.

Ms. Cruz: Good morning, Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I just have some concerns. At first, I read that it was a temporary thing. Now I hear that we probably could make it permanent and the reason that I'm here is to remind you all what happened with several items that we did this process and then we were saddled with maintenance that only the artist could do and were very expensive.

I love the possibility of having this become permanent, but we need to be conscious that we are not going to be paying a million dollars every year to maintain whatever it is that we buy.

Vice Mayor Mena: Thank you Ms. Cruz. I think that's a good point. It's a point we talked about in the past and I've asked for any of these processes, especially if there is a real desire for it to eventually be permanent. I don't know what the criteria are that are provided for them in terms of their proposal and in terms of the ultimate selection, but to me, that point should be a significant factor. Whether or not its something that can withstand the elements over time with minimal maintenance. And I've asked even our City Attorney's office to make sure and now this is the lawyer in me talking, I know this is not the way to view the arts, but I expect people to come in with reps and warranties about whatever it is we are paying for, you know. If you buy a car, you expect it to work. If you buy a laptop, you expect it to work. If my buy an outdoor sculpture I expect it to be able to last outdoors and I think that's a reasonable thing to ask of the artist, because yes, we have had some experiences in the past. So, I just want to make sure. I know we've talked about this before, but at every step of any of these things it needs to be, I think, a real factor that is a priority.

Mayor Lago: So, let me just add something to that. I think this is important to memorialize. We are also responsible, we are responsible. You can't buy something; you can't build something like a fire station and let it fall apart for years. You've got to hire somebody, like we are doing right now; the Manager is bringing somebody back to make sure that, for example, our Public Safety Building is kept in immaculate shape. That person's job will be from head to toe, just making sure that building is in immaculate shape, or we could not hire that person and then in 15 years have to pay \$3 million dollars in delamination and stucco and paint and a litany of different issues. That's called maintenance at the end of the day. We failed as a city, so we have to be honest with ourselves. Number two, I think it was the Vice Mayor that requested, I can't remember, I think it was the Vice Mayor that requested that we take some money from the Art in Public Places budget as monies that can be used for maintenance and I think that was brought up as a result of the three sculptures that are located right off of LeJeune on the Frank Quesada Park, you know what I'm talking about.

Vice Mayor Mena: By Cartagena Circle.

Mayor Lago: Yes, by Cartagena Circle, you know what I'm talking about, right. The three sculptures at Ingraham Park, that's where it came up, because those were dilapidated, those sculptures weren't kept up. It's incumbent on us to maintain this, number one; number two, I think we've learned, we do not put sculptures, colorful sculptures out in the hot sun all day. You have to find a shaded area; you've got to maintain those sculptures on a monthly basis. You have to go by them make sure they are cleaned. That's what we are doing with the Hank Willis sculptures that we have. We are not letting them fall apart. We are addressing them every three or four years

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to make sure that they are tiptop shape and putting them in positions where they would be successful as sculptures. So, I agree with you 100 percent. We've got to save money. Got to make sure that, for example, if a developer comes and puts a sculpture that we visit that sculpture once a year, make sure the developer is upkeeping that sculpture. Just like we are doing with the landscaping starting June 30th. A lot of people in the downtown didn't upkeep their landscaping and I hate to go on the dire tribe, but it's up to the employees and to staff and to the Commission to make sure that people are held accountable, landscaping, streets, curbs, sidewalks, art, everything needs to be kept up. Just because you install it, you can't forget about it. So, I agree with the Vice Mayor, make that a point.

Commissioner Anderson: I've just got one more comment to add to that, and that has to do with choice of materials. We have a painted sculpture, its not going to hold up as well as one that has natural surfaces and materials. It was within six months that the flower sculpture went from a colorful one to a dull one. If our cars powered out and the paint falls that quickly we'd be back to the auto dealer right away. Again, claiming on the warrantee as the Vice Mayor aptly noted. Not only do we have to have contract terms, but do we really want that kind of expense in the future on the maintenance. So, we need to choose materials that hold up better.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Ms. Cathers: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Vice Mayor, we have a motion.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)