



City of Coral Gables  
CITY COMMISSION MEETING  
July 10, 2018

**ITEM TITLE:**

A Resolution approving the concept for a work of public art by Michele Oka Doner in conjunction with the Merrick Park Hotel project at 4241 Aurora Street 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: 6 to 0, and the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 7 to 0)

**DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval

**BRIEF HISTORY:**

Hersha Hospitality (the “Developer”) is constructing a hotel at 4241 Aurora Street (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 Developer selected Michele Oka Doner (the “Artist”) to proceed with a concept design proposal for artwork titled *A Fertile Portal*. The artwork is an intricate, decorative gilded artwork that will be embedded into the main entry glazing. The unique pattern is organic in its geometry and will encompass the entire glazing area of the main entry door system. This coverage will be made up of several glazing panels that will be inset as part of the door assembly. As a native Miamian, and an artist both seeped in and familiar with the particular landscape that surrounds Coral Gables built environment and surrounding streets, the artist will create an entrance façade that will immediately present a recognizable face to both visitors and locals alike.

Drawing inspiration from the natural world will add rhythms and patterns to the structure inherent in the building, creating an identity that resonates with the architecture and design. For example, abundant seed pods, encountered daily by pedestrians underfoot, translate seamlessly into hardware for the front entrance doors. When translated into a sculptural form in the studio and cast into bronze, this inspiration will seemingly imply that the entrance to the Merrick Park Hotel relates to the Garden of Eden. Adding to the narrative will be gilded metal with a design drawn from the interior life of the tree, the actual cellular structure, bringing the detail both to the macro level and an imagined place. Even the notion that this beautiful tree is used everywhere to create shade lends ballast to its use at the Merrick Park Hotel. It is also a tree designated for environmental management, yet another note, that will resonate in the years ahead.

Michele Oka Doner is an internationally acclaimed artist whose career spans four decades. The breadth of her artistic production encompasses sculpture, public art, functional objects, and more. Whether large scale architectural projects or intimately scaled objects, Oka Doner's work is fueled by a lifelong study and appreciation of the natural world, from which she derives her formal vocabulary. She is well known for creating numerous public art installations throughout the United States, including *Radiant Site* at New York’s Herald Square subway, *Flight* at Washington’s Reagan International Airport and *A Walk on the Beach* at The Miami International

Airport (1995-2010), which features nine thousand unique bronze sculptures inlaid over a mile-and-a-quarter long concourse of terrazzo with mother-of-pearl, one of the largest public artworks in the world. Oka Doner's other public art projects can be found in federal courthouses, public libraries, hospitals, universities, other transportation centers and public parks.

Oka Doner is represented by Marlborough Gallery, New York. In addition to major solo exhibitions at Marlborough, her artwork can be found in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at the Louvre, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, The Dallas Museum of Art, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, The University of Michigan Museum of Art, the Yale Art Gallery and the Princeton University Art Museum, among others. She has created collections with Steuben in glass, Christofle in silver and Nymphenburg in porcelain. Publications about her work include three monographs: *Natural Seduction* (Hudson Hills Press, 2003), *Workbook* (Oka Press, 2004), and *HumanNature* (Edizioni Charta, 2008). Her most recent book is *Into the Mysterium* (Regan Arts, 2016).

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 \$442,600, which is more than the required 1% of the Project's total budget estimate of \$43,000,000. At the close of the project if there is difference in cost, the difference 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 art concept at their respective meetings on February 28, 2018 and April 03, 2018

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.

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION:**

Date.	Resolution/Ordinance No.	Comments
N/A		

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

Date.	Board/Committee	Comments
February 28, 2018	Arts Advisory Panel	Recommendation of approval of concept
April 03, 2018	Cultural Development Board	Recommendation of approval of concept

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION: (If Applicable)**

No.	Amount	Source of Funds
N/A		

**APPROVED BY:**

Department Director	City Attorney	Assistant City Manager	City Manager

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

- 1. Proposed Resolution**
- 2. Exhibit A (Project concept, preliminary budget, support material)**
- 3. AAP Minutes, February 28, 2018 EXCERPT**
- 4. CDB Minutes, April 03, 2018 EXCERPT**