

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-1
September 22, 2020
Virtual Meeting
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Historical Resources Interim Director, Kara Kautz
Arts and Cultural Specialist, Catherine Cathers

Public Speaker(s)

Carlos Beckmann, The Plaza

Agenda Item H-1

A Resolution of the City Commission approving the concept for a work of public art by Jean-Michel Othoniel in conjunction with The Plaza Coral Gables development project at 2901 Ponce De Leon Boulevard, 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: 5 to 0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Item H-1, a resolution.

City Attorney Ramos: H-1 is a Resolution of the City Commission approving the concept for a work of public art by Jean-Michel Othoniel in conjunction with The Plaza Coral Gables development project at 2901 Ponce De Leon Boulevard, in fulfillment of the Art in Public Places requirement for public art in private development.

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Do I hear a motion? Go ahead, sorry.

Historical Resources Interim Director Kautz: Good morning, I'm Kara Kautz, Interim Director of Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Department. This is the third piece for the Plaza Development. I'm going to turn it over to Catherine Cathers, the Arts and Cultural Specialist for the City.

Ms. Cathers: Good morning Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, Catherine Cathers, Arts and Cultural Specialist for the City. Agave Plaza Trustee with the Plaza Development at 2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard is coming before the Commission with a petition waiver request of the Art in Public Places fee requirement by commissioning and installing artwork within the project. The Agave Development team will present a little over 50 artists of international claim by consultant Bill Brady and invited Jean-Michel Othoniel to propose a sculptural fountain piece for a dedicated space on the Plaza. Jean-Michel Othoniel lives and works in Paris, France, he offers a fresh and contemporary voice, enriching public environments, such as civic spaces and pedestrian streetscapes in France and around the world. Othoniel predilection for materials with reversible, non-reflective properties has been the hallmark of his practice since the early 90's, and relates to the deeply equivocal nature of his art. He creates art that's monumental, yet delicate, baroque yet minimal, twadack and contemplative. Jean-Michel Othniel's holistic sensibility further compares to fung shae, but the art of harmonizing people with the environment. In his case, allowing viewers to inhabit his world through reflection and motion, which you'll see in his work. Othoniel is represented by Perrotin in New York and Paris. In addition to major solo exhibitions throughout the world, his artwork can be found in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, a Brooklyn Museum in New York, Centre Pompidou and at Versailles in France, the Hara Museum and Mori Art Museum in Japan, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice and more. Mr. Carlos Beckmann with the Plaza, along with Bill Brady, will review the concept proposal for the Commission. The cost of the proposed art piece and installation is estimated to be \$848,500, which is less than the required one percent of the project's total Art in Public Places fee. The Arts Advisory Panel and Cultural Development Boards voted unanimously to recommend the artwork at the respective meetings on August 26th and September 1st. The developer is required to provide for the perpetual maintenance of the artwork, which will be the sole responsibility of the developer. And now I'm going to turn it over to Carlos Beckman, who has a presentation about the proposed artwork.

Mr. Beckmann: Good morning. Thank you, Catherine, thank you Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners and City staff. Like Catherine said, we are really excited to present the third piece that's part of the Art in Public Places program for The Plaza; and this is Jean-Michel Othoniel fountain by the north parcel. I don't know if Bill is in the meeting, but I'll go ahead and if Bill, you can join at the end, if you are there, if not, time is precious, so I'll do the presentation really quickly. We like water a lot; the concept of The Plaza, obviously, includes a lot of green spaces, open spaces, and water is a big component of that. So, we are introducing this water feature by Jean-Michel Othoniel in the north parcel right next to Palermo, across from other work that you've seen, the monumental ritual bench by Michele Oka Doner is right across the street from Palermo. So this is really one of the core areas of the project, the welcoming center, and I think by putting

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the sound of water and the visual impact of this water feature, it really becomes a central point of focus and a nice welcome to the public, to the tenants, and to the public in general. This is a look of the fountain. What the artist has suggested, and we have chosen a stainless-steel mirror beads that really throws a perpetual movement and it has water jets with a really playful water and colors. You can see in the middle; I'll show the next slide of the presentation. You will see we have a stainless steel, polished stainless steel mirror clad column that will add to the reflection of the water, the stainless steel beads, and can see at the back, that's the escalator, so that's the main entrance to the north parcel on Palermo, surrounded by the commercial areas. So again, this is the view from Palermo Street, but looking north, and this is another perspective view. By the way, I want to make a point that the fountain, the column, the mechanical equipment, the basin and everything that's not the beads is actually being funded by Agave directly and its not part of this Art in Public Places request. So, it's really just the artist design beads and all that mechanical systems, lighting, and like Catherine said, maintenance for perpetuity is being carried by Agave and The Plaza. This is just another view from the inside. These are the beads with the jets. Obviously, the stainless-steel clad column under the escalators and this is looking southeast to the far-right area. I don't know if you guys see my cursor, but over here that's where we have the bronze bench with the tree and everything by Michele Oka Doner. These are some of the changes that we went through going over the Arts Advisory Board, etc., etc., some finetuning, like moving jets a little bit inward to prevent people from trying to reach them, etc. I think also, the stainless steel was a benefit that came as a result of all these meetings. Before there was ceramic tile. This slide shows it's a rendering of the project where the fountain will go. This was presented because of a comment about potential wind, etc., but this clearly shows that the area is well protected in Palermo and wind should not be an issue. Also, since its open and it's a water feature, there was a security concern, so rest easy that this is right next to the main entrance to the project and with 24/7 security, so not only for the night, but for during the day when children, people are tempted to go into the pool, etc. This is a highly secure area. These are some of the elements, to give you an idea of the size. I apologize, these are, I think in meters, but obviously from a French designer everything is meters, we'll make sure that those get changed to inches here. And this is the location what I was talking about. To the left is Ponce Circle Park. This is Palermo Avenue, which is the main access to the project. This is the turnaround to the speed ramps for the parking. So as the people enter the project, the first to the right they will see the monumental Cragg, Tony Cragg's sculpture that's already and has been approved by this Commission. Moving onto the historic house that will be to the right. This is the Michele Oka Doner proposed bench location with the specimen tree; and right across from the street is the fountain. So really, this becomes a triangle of spectacular world-class sculptures that really become part of the arrival experience, and again, obviously being open to the public. I will not spend much time on technical information, other than there is a very specific detailed maintenance program that we have agreed to obey by and obviously, in the heart of the project, its very important to the developer that this piece is perfectly maintained. And lighting is not mentioned a lot in this presentation, because again, this is not part of the sculpt art or funding for the Art in Public Places program, but we will consult with the Othoniel studio to make sure that the lighting is designed by Othoniel we install and we maintain. I think this is the last slide. Again, just showing a brief description of the breakdown, \$884,000. On the lower part you can see all these other items that are part of the installation, but not part of

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this project, like the actual water feature, the tile finish, at the basin, the fountain perimeter stone tub, mechanical water systems, lighting, and maintenance.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much Mr. Beckman, very impressive; very, very impressive and I congratulate you, because we are going to have in your project three of the most beautiful and important art pieces in Coral Gables. Cragg, Oka Doner and then this one and I thank you for the presentation. Are there any comments?

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes. Just briefly. First of all, I wanted to commend staff and I wanted to commend the developer, along with Bill Brady Gallery, which is an exceptional gallery located here in South Florida and in New York. This is the type of art that this city deserves. This developer here has spared no expense, has travelled the world, has done everything possible to deliver world-class art. This will stand the test of time. I did a little research, I knew about Jean-Michel Othoniel because I'm friends with the gallery that represents him, Perrotin. They used to have an outpost here in Miami, they have one in Hong Kong, New York and multiple different locations throughout the world, also in Paris, obviously that's where he's from. When you talk about what the developer has done here, its impressive to see the transparency and the funding mechanism. Just the fact that we are talking about the art, we are not talking about the actual function of the art, that to me is refreshing to see. When you talk about the maintenance and the techniques and what's going to be done. We've learned the hard way in previous issues. We have a partner here that's going to make sure that this is A-1 constantly and that's what we want to make sure occurs. This artist is in every major art fair, is in every major museum, every major museum in the world. And one of the interesting things as I was doing my research, because I wanted to find out more besides the fact that I knew that it was incredibly aesthetically appealing and intricate the work and very delicate, the glass nature of the work and the way that its beaded and the way that it is hung from trees or its actually made into a sculpture. I found several articles that talks about the installation that was done in the Chateau de Versailles, which was something incredible. I highly recommend that you read that article, it was in Forbes Magazine. It talks about that in 300 years, there hasn't been a permanent acquisition by the Chateau de Versailles for any artwork in 300 years, except for now by Othoniel, which is a fountain in the same vane as the ones that are being proposed for this project. So, we are in very, very good company and I just want to commend our team, I want to commend the developer, the gallerist who worked on this for such a long time. This is the type of artwork that the city deserves, that this community deserves, and I think its going to be along with Tony Cragg and the other artists, because I know there is more work coming, there is more work coming, this is the type of draw that's going to bring people to our community to see exceptional artwork, similar to what you find in Miami Beach, which was just installed around the new Convention Center. So, I don't know if you need a motion.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, we need a motion.

Vice Mayor Lago: I'd be honored to make a motion accepting this work.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is there a second?

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Commissioner Mena: There is a second. I also just wanted to very briefly add without reiterating what was said, but I think one of the most important things you said that I really appreciate is, that they are funding, that Agave is funding a lot of the sort of tangential or supplemental aspects of the piece and that the money itself, as it should be going to the piece of art. I think that's really important. I think that's the way it should be, but I just wanted to reiterate that point because I think it was for me, a very important aspect of what he said, and I hope to continue seeing that from the various developers putting pieces of art in their projects.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Commissioner. Will you call the roll please?

Vice Mayor Lago: You want to say something?

Ms. Cathers: The Arts Advisory Panel, this piece came before them a couple of times and the developer and artist were very responsive to their comments and tweaking it and making it an even more beautiful than the original proposal.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Will you call the roll Billy?

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes
Commissioner Mena: Yes
Commissioner Fors: Yes
Commissioner Keon: Yes
Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes
(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very, very much Mr. Beckman. Agave, thank you for everything and for providing Coral Gables with the means to be even more beautiful than it is today. Thank you.