

**City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: 11/10/08		Item Number: <u>A-4</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Approval of an Agreement related to the Temporary Display of Public Art by Jedediah Caesar in Conjunction with the 2008 California Biennial Exhibition.			
Contact Person/Dept.: B. Christine Byers/ Cultural Affairs		Phone Number: (310) 253-5776	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: Master E-Mail Notification List: (11/05/08); Meetings and Agendas - Cultural Affairs (11/05/08); Cultural Affairs Commission (10/14/08 and 11/05/08); Kevin Read/Bastion Development (10/29/08); Owners, Occupants & Businesses within 500' Radius (10/29/08); Lauri Firstenberg/LA><ART, (10/14/08)			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld (11/03/08)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (11/03/08)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (by M. Noller) (11/3/08)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (11/05/08)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council approve an agreement related to the temporary display of public art by Jedediah Caesar entitled, <i>The Gleaner's Stone</i>, in the public right of way (sidewalk on Marcasel Ave., just north of Washington Blvd.) in conjunction with the 2008 California Biennial exhibition; and that the City Council authorize staff to spend up to \$3,000 toward transportation/installation costs and additional marketing as part of the agreement. <u>BACKGROUND & DISCUSSION:</u> On March 11, 2008 the Cultural Affairs Commission ("CAC") considered a proposal from Lauri Firstenberg, Founder and Director/Curator of LA><ART, and guest curator of the 2008 California Biennial for a temporary outdoor public art installation in Culver City in conjunction with that exhibition. The CAC unanimously supported the project and recommended that the City Council support Culver City's participation in the 2008 California Biennial with an amount not to exceed \$3,000. Ms. Firstenberg notified staff in the summer that she was successful in raising most of the \$25,000 necessary to realize the project and provided a projected installation date of January 2009. A potential location within the public right of way (sidewalk) on Marcasel Ave. (see attached image) was identified earlier this year. This location is both the artist's and Ms. Firstenberg's first choice from a programming perspective. Staff has remained in contact with the developer of the adjacent			
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property at 11957 Washington Blvd. since this temporary installation was first proposed. The development project planned for the adjacent site is currently scheduled to commence no sooner than summer 2009 and would not conflict with the proposed art work installation timeline. The developer, Kevin Read, has expressed his support for this endeavor in conjunction with the 2008 California Biennial.

The California Biennial was begun in 1984 and has grown in size and scope since then. It is the premier exhibition that supports and encourages artists in the region. The 2008 California Biennial features over 50 artists and includes site-specific satellite installations from Tijuana, Mexico to San Francisco in conjunction with the primary venue at the Orange County Museum of Art ("OCMA") in Newport Beach. Temporary installations are also planned in Los Angeles and West Hollywood. Although the museum exhibition dates are October 26, 2008 – March 15, 2009, the satellite installations are occurring at varying timeframes over approximately the next eight months. Ms. Firstenberg is requesting a 3 – 5 month installation time, depending on the condition of the art work after several months and the timeline for commencing the development project at 11957 Washington Blvd.

Jedediah Caesar whose art work, *The Gleaner's Stone* is to be created specifically for Culver City, has lived and worked in Culver City and completed his MFA in 2001 at UCLA's Warner Graduate Studios on Warner Drive. He is also represented by a Culver City-based gallery -- Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects -- where he was given a solo exhibition in the spring of 2007. Mr. Caesar was featured in this year's Whitney Biennial (www.whitney.org/biennial) which opened in March at the Park Avenue Armory in New York.

The Gleaner's Stone is made from resin, pigment and found objects that are embedded within the resin. The art work's dimensions are approximately 7.5' long x 3.5' wide x 3' high. Per Ms. Firstenberg, the artist envisions his installation serving as a "sculptural intervention" that passersby can experience up close. Changes to the art work as it sits in the public domain are part of its evolution. Artist drawings and a similar resin piece are included in the OCMA show with the intent of providing an experience that takes the visitor from the controlled environment of the artist studio, to the museum gallery, to a public urban setting.

After considering the artist's and Ms. Firstenberg's intent for the satellite installation in Culver City, staff recommended various locations. The approximately 28' wide sidewalk at Marcasel Ave. allows for groups to gather easily around the art work, provides good visibility, and does not impede pedestrian access to or use of the sidewalk. Parking is also available on the street.

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In addition to an exhibition catalogue, marketing for this exhibition is extensive and includes a partnership with ForYourArt, a well regarded promotional vehicle for contemporary art, various web sites and e-marketing vehicles such as Uber.com and E-flux. The OCMA uses both daily and monthly publications and membership groups for marketing of its programs. Cultural Affairs staff plans to contact local media outlets regarding the temporary installation in Culver City and use other web-based and e-noticing vehicles for further marketing. Provided funds are available, staff may also print a postcard for local distribution announcing the installation of the art work and its location.

Ms. Firstenberg has asked for specific financial assistance with regard to transportation between the artist's studio and the installation site. The estimated cost is between \$2,500 - \$3,000, and it is recommended that the artist should front the from and to transport costs, with those expenses being reimbursed by the City. An agreement would be entered into between Ms. Firstenberg, the artist and the City acknowledging that the art work is temporary and that the City would not be responsible for loss or damage during installation. Cultural Affairs staff has been working with Risk Management staff regarding this. (Cities such as West Hollywood are providing financial support and liability coverage at similar levels for their temporary installations.)

Ms. Firstenberg wishes to work with City staff to coordinate talks at the site with the artist and her curatorial team.

Both Cultural Affairs staff and the Cultural Affairs Commission support this project as a unique opportunity to participate in a high-profile regional contemporary art exhibition.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

\$40,000 is budgeted for FY 2008 – 09 from the Art Fund for Temporary Art Displays & Exhibits (41300676). \$20,000 of this is currently allocated for ARTWALK Culver City; the balance is available for costs associated with temporary exhibitions and/or temporary art. There may be minimal in-house staffing costs associated with this program; which could be absorbed within the current year's adopted budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. OCMA January 2008 Press Release;
2. Initial Project Description and Marketing Strategy submitted by LA><ART;
3. Image of a study for *The Gleaner's Stone*;

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4. Satellite photograph of site; and,
5. Photograph of sidewalk location at Marcasel Ave. looking north.

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Approve an Agreement between the City, the Artist, and other related Parties to authorize the temporary installation of public art in Culver City by Jedediah Caesar entitled, *The Gleaner's Stone*, in conjunction with the 2008 California Biennial in the public right of way on Marcasel Ave. including expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$3,000 from the Art Fund; and,
2. Authorize the City Attorney to review/prepare the necessary documents; and,
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City.