City of Culver City

Staff Report

File #: 26-02, **Version:** 1 **Item #:** A-2.

CAC ACTION ITEM - (1) Discussion of Potential Partnership and Requested Funding for the Attune LA Temporary Outdoor Sound & Frequency Exhibition by Now Art; (2) Provide Comments as Appropriate; and (3) Provide Recommendation to Staff.

Meeting Date: September 16, 2025

Contact Person/Dept: Sally Unsworth / City Manager - Office of Economic and Cultural Development

Phone Number: (310) 253-6003

Fiscal Impact: Yes [X] No [] **General Fund: Yes [] No [X]**

Public Hearing: [] **Action Item: [X]** **Attachments: [X]**

Public Notification: Meetings and Agendas - Cultural Affairs Commission (09/12/25)

Department Approval: Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager (09/12/25)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC):

1. Discuss a proposed partnership and funding request for the Attune LA project; and
2. Provide comments; and
3. Provide a recommendation to staff regarding use of the Cultural Trust Fund for the proposed temporary art project; and
4. Provide a recommendation to staff regarding the proposed partnership and funding request.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

Now Art, a Los Angeles-based public art agency, has proposed Attune LA, a temporary, multi-site exhibition of sound and light to take place across Los Angeles County. According to Now Art, the project is designed to create a synchronized, county-wide experience through compositions, sound frequencies, and responsive lighting activated simultaneously at approximately 20-30 locations. (See Attachment 1)

As part of their latest project updates, Now Art has identified Saturday, November 8, 2025, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. as the tentative date for the event. Now Art also launched a dedicated webpage with program details at <https://nowartpublic.com/project-attune/>.

Program details provided by Now Art indicate that the event would feature sound experiences by invited artists, including Miguel Atwood-Ferguson, with additional participants under consideration. Installations are expected to incorporate field recordings, sound journeys, and light elements intended to create a collective experience that is free and open to the public.
Now Art has also indicated that several municipal arts agencies and cultural organizations are supporting or considering participation, including Long Beach and the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Staff emphasizes that while these updates have been provided directly by Now Art, staff has not independently confirmed this information with the other project partners.

Culver City Consideration

Now Art has approached Culver City about hosting a location and has requested financial support in the range of $10,000-$15,000. Staff notes that the requested contribution aligns with the FY 2025-26 Cultural Trust Fund Adopted Capital Improvement Budget for temporary art displays, although a project like this was not explicitly considered when the work plan was established earlier in the year.
During its August 25, 2025 discussion, the Public Art Subcommittee identified several potential locations within Culver City. Members agreed that Veterans Memorial Park and the Wende Museum would offer accessible and visible locations for the public, particularly given their open space and community-oriented programming.
Other locations discussed included:

- West Los Angeles College, which could provide a large, open setting; and
- The Baldwin Hills Overlook, offering scenic potential but requiring coordination with state entities; and
- Other grassy or open public areas where audiences might naturally gather.

Subcommittee members also raised questions about whether the site should be one where people would “stumble upon” the experience versus a destination setting that encourages intentional attendance. They emphasized the need to balance accessibility, ambiance, and logistics when identifying a Culver City site.

Alternative Considerations

While the Attune LA proposal is being considered as a single opportunity, the Commission may wish to explore developing a framework for evaluating future temporary, multi-disciplinary activations. Subcommittee discussion highlighted:

- The growing number of proposals that do not fall neatly into existing categories such as the Performing Arts Grant Program or permanent public art.
- The value of establishing clear criteria and intake processes for external proposals to ensure transparency and consistency.
- The possibility of defining a temporary art category within the Cultural Trust allocation, guided by the Municipal Code allowance for temporary works.
- The opportunity to use small-scale pilots as a way to assess public engagement and community benefit before committing to larger or recurring initiatives.

Next Steps

If the Commission provides a recommendation to proceed, staff will prepare an agreement with Now Art for a one-time contribution of $10,000. The agreement would stipulate that:

- Now Art secures all permits and comprehensive liability insurance for the event;
- Now Art assumes full responsibility for production and logistics; and
- Culver City's role is limited to recognition as a supporting partner and assistance with site coordination and Culver City-specific event promotion.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The requested contribution of $10,000 from Culver City could potentially be funded from the FY 2025-26 Cultural Trust Fund Adopted Capital Improvement Budget for Temporary Art Displays & Exhibits. This amount falls below the threshold requiring City Council approval, which allows staff to execute a contribution agreement with a recommendation from the Cultural Affairs Commission.

No General Fund impact is anticipated. Now Art assumes responsibility for all production, permits, and liability insurance expenses.

Under CCMC §15.06.100 (Art in Public Places Program), Cultural Trust funds may be allocated for permanent or temporary artworks. This provision supports the potential use of Trust resources for one-time or short-term activations of the type proposed by Now Art.

ATTACHMENTS:

25-09-16_ATT 1_NOW Art Proposal

MOTION:

That the Cultural Affairs Commission:

1. Discuss the proposed Attune LA project; and

2. Make a recommendation on an agreement that provides Culver City's partnership and a one-time contribution of $10,000 to Now Art to support their Attune LA project;

OR

3. Recommend the City decline this request for contribution; and

4. Provide a recommendation to staff regarding similar temporary art proposals in the future.