



City of Ketchum

December 16, 2019

Mayor Bradshaw and City Councilors
City of Ketchum
Ketchum, Idaho

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Request for Council Feedback to Ketchum Arts Commission on its Selection of Three Semi-Finalists for Permanent Sculpture

Recommendation and Summary

Staff is requesting Council to review and provide comments on three semi-finalists selected by the Ketchum Arts Commission (KAC) for a permanent sculpture on Fourth Street. The three semi-finalists will provide final proposals. One finalist will be selected and recommended by KAC to City Council for final approval.

The reasons for the recommendation are as follows:

- This project replaces two unsuccessful calls for artists for an interactive art piece.
- The art piece will be a permanent part of the city's art collection, located on the existing pedestal on Fourth Street, between East and Walnut avenues.

Introduction and History

On November 8, 2019, KAC issued a Call for Artists for a permanent sculpture. Fifty-four artists responded. On December 10, the Ketchum Arts Commission selected three semi-finalists; Jake Balcom from Kansas City; Steve Parker from Austin; and Will Vannerson, also from Kansas City. Each semi-finalist will be paid a \$250 stipend for their final proposals, which are due on January 13, 2020.

Analysis

Three top artists were selected through a silent jury process. Three rounds were conducted to eliminate artists, resulting in the selection of the top three. Attached to this staff report is a sampling of each of the top three submissions and a brief description of their proposed project.

Financial Impact

There is no new financial requirement or impact. On November 4, Council approved the appropriation of \$29,000 of unspent FY19 funds from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. The stipends totaling \$750 will be funded by miscellaneous donations in the FY20 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

Attachments:

- Jake Balcom Images and Proposal
- Steve Parker Images and Proposal
- Will Vannerson Images and Proposal

Balcom - Artist Statement

An aesthetic dialogue develops between a sculpture and its surroundings; one that entices people to stop and appreciate not only the sculpture itself, but the environment around it. Through this interaction, public art helps to build and maintain a culture of art around a community, while at the same time bringing about awareness and conversation within that community. My goal as an artist is always to create pieces representing this symbiotic relationship between art and community. I am inspired by organic forms found in nature and mathematical geometry to create unique, visually stimulating sculptures showcasing the complementary contrast between the natural and industrial worlds. I use a combination of old world techniques, new age technology, and a metal's natural malleability to create these site-specific sculptures.

I take extreme pride in not only the quality of my work, but the ethical and efficient use of budgets to deliver the highest value result. Consequently, I am often able to deliver a finished sculpture that exceeds expectations. I find my medium of fabricated metals particularly well suited to public art, since it provides flexibility in materials, shapes, finishes, and fabrication processes as well as being very durable and easy to maintain. As with all projects like this, the final design will be a collaborative effort between me, the project coordinators, and the city of Ketchum. Together, I believe we can create a dynamic and intriguing visual experience for Ketchum that residents, visitors, children and adults will enjoy for years.

Balcom - Proposal

Communities, such as Ketchum, are wonderful, complex, and socially organized entities created when individuals come together through their unique and collective histories, talents, and goals. My concept for the Ketchum Sculpture is based on this complex structure of community nestled in a beautiful, resort environment.

Just like a wild flower on the mountain side or a snow crystal falling on the resort, no two people in Ketchum are alike. I envision a large stellated polyhedron form composed of uniquely-cut, metal hexagons and pentagons that create an overall crystalline or floral shape. Within each of these hexagons and pentagons will be a custom, one of a kind patterns cut out of the metal. These patterns, when rotated around an axis, form beautiful compositions reminiscent of a snow crystal or flower bloom. All in all, there will be 8-12 separate designs cut out creating a lace like form. The partial transparency that is created by this style allows you to see the images on the opposite side giving it some motion and a slight kaleidoscope effect. The points and intersecting lines of the shape represent the unity and interconnectedness of the Ketchum community, while the separate abstract designs represent the unique nature of every individual in Ketchum and the beautiful environment they live in. I've included a general concept image in my work examples.

The Sculpture will be fabricated out of Aluminum or Stainless Steel sheet metal, making it very durable and weather resistant. The overall size of the sculpture can be up to 8' in diameter which, coupled with the existing concrete pad, makes the height up to 9-10'. Installation is simple. The sculpture is lifted into place and anchored to the pedestal using 6-8 appropriately sized masonry anchors. This simplicity also makes removal/replacement extremely quick and easy. Variations on this idea might be to fabricate 3 smaller forms arranged in an organic fashion or add color to the abstract crystal designs. Like I mentioned in the Artist Statement, the final design will be a collaborative effort between me, the project coordinators, and the city of Ketchum.

Ketchum Permanent Sculpture Concept

Preliminary Concept:

A Stainless Steel or Aluminum geometric sculpture roughly 6-8' in diameter. Within the faces, unique abstract designs will be custom cut out of the metal. For the general concept shown here, only 4 different designs were used. For the final proposal, the design for each facet will be specifically illustrated and incorporated into the model.

The sculpture will be engineered to be structurally sound and the final design approved by the city of Ketchum with regards to safety and appearance.

Possible Variations:

- We could add color to the sculpture, although going this route may affect the size, transparency, and/or maintenance requirements
- Instead of one large sculpture, we could look into 3 smaller sculptures arranged organically. Almost like a flower growing out of the ground.





Parker - Artist Statement

I gather people into democratic, communal rituals to explore systems of behavior, their variability across history, and their application to contemporary life. My projects include elaborate civic rituals for humans, animals, and machines; listening sculptures modeled after obsolete surveillance tools; and cathartic transportation symphonies for operators of cars, pedicabs, and bicycles. I work broadly with materials: primitive, analog, and digital instruments; amateur choirs and symphony orchestras; birders and church parishoners; bus drivers and pedicab fleets; urban bat colonies, honeybee hives, and flocks of grackles.

My current body of work focuses on the history of conflict through sound. I transform salvaged materials and vintage tools of war into instruments, listening devices, and visual scores. In turn, I use these pieces to facilitate performative situations between objects, participants, and viewers, all to promote catharsis, humor, and the simple act of listening deeply.

Description of project - Steve Parker

For the City of Ketchum's Fourth Street Heritage Corridor, I would be interested in creating an interactive sound sculpture. I'm interested in thinking about two possibilities.

Option 1: Creating a device called a Tubascope.

<https://www.steve-parker.net/war-tuba>

The Tubascope is a sculpture that works like a telescope for your ears. Modeled after obsolete WWII acoustic locators, the Tubascope is made from reclaimed and repurposed brass instruments that have been augmented with tubing and headphones. When used, the Tubascope helps a person focus their listening on specific, far away sounds that may have been otherwise unnoticed.

This sculpture builds on my past work and would invite Ketchum residents to take greater notice of the city's soundscape: the sounds of urban life, migratory birds, the rustling of trees, for example. I would be interested in augmenting this project with a series of illustrated listening games for kids or a curated set of soundwalks around town.

Option 2: Creating a "siren" that functions like a civic bell tower.

<https://www.steve-parker.net/sirens>

I would work with Ketchum residents to record solo voices singing the song, "Day is Done." Day is Done is a moving, poetic song sung to the tune of Taps. It's customary for people of many different walks of life to sing this song as a community ritual and a meditation. I would crowd source recording of locals singing this song and their voices would be broadcast at dusk every night, similar to a belltower. I would create a siren sculpture, like the one included in my work samples, to project this song daily.



Philip Rogers, Photographer



Phillip Rogers, Photographer

Statement – Will Vannerson

I have developed a distinctive sculptural idiom that is organic, fluid, and abstract. I have created tubular, biomorphic metal pieces whose formal underpinnings include trees, roots, rhizomes, bones, organs, and Gothic architecture. There is a fascination with incremental change written into the work. The incremental aspect is key—the works suggest the passage of time acting in conjunction with growth and erosion, evoking a sense of permanence. My work is visually inviting, stately, and a bit weird.

On my daily walks to the studio through my neighborhood in midtown Kansas City, I find that I have made a landmark out of a particularly gnarled tree in a vacant lot—I am reminded how much of a role an exceptional object can play in placemaking. This tree has embedded in its form a section of a wrought iron fence that has long since ceased to enclose the lot. Here, I am made especially aware of the powers of growth and resilience. The intention of my work is draw in the viewer and cause them to take notice of the fascinating physical world they inhabit by way of the exaggerated physicality of sculpture. I want the forms to resonate within the viewer's own bodily awareness, and to encourage reflection and curiosity.

Ketchum Proposal – Will Vannerson

An aspect of the American West that one cannot help but notice is the ruggedness of the terrain and of the living things that inhabit this land. The forces that sculpt rocks over eons are the very same that guide certain exposed trees into wonderfully gnarled, fascinating forms during the courses of their lives. This is an example of experience being encoded within form, and I believe most people can understand this, as well as relate it to their own experience. We have all felt acted upon by hardship at one time or another, for different durations and with different levels of intensity, and part of what makes us unique individuals is how we persevere.

My proposal is for an abstract sculptural form that heavily references those lonely evergreens clinging to rocks on the upper slopes. Compact for their age, stunted by wind, they are true survivors. The aesthetic of these trees has been prized in the bonsai world for centuries (Google “bonsai shari”), one of the pinnacles of the practice being, though not without controversy, to successfully harvest one of these gnarled old trees and carry it down from the mountain alive.

I am picturing a swooping mass cantilevered from the pedestal at chest height that doubles back over itself as it branches apart and resolves itself somewhere around 8' above the ground. This would be a “landscape” orientation—parallel to the ground and horizontal in its principal dimension (this can be changed if, for example, the dimensions of the piece cannot overhang the pedestal). The primary visual impact will be the mass of the form in relation to the viewer, followed by the complexity and the organic nature of the form. The budget is a little tight for the work to be executed in stainless steel, but I hope this will ultimately be possible. In this case, my aesthetic preference would be for a brushed, satin finish rather than a high polish—one that would change with the light, but not create visual confusion.

Thank you for your consideration.

CITY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER



