

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Artwork

Three Proposals Unveiled/Feedback from Community Members

October 18, 2005

5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

KGTV Channel 10 Studio A

4600 Air Way, San Diego, CA 92105

Meeting Summary

Welcome and a Brief Update

Proposed Site

- Home Avenue retaining wall and berm on the south side of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freeway

Scope of the Art Project

- \$200,000 art budget
- 1400 linear feet
- Artists are responsible for: lighting, landscaping, site preparation, traffic control, insurance, design, fabrication and installation

Artwork Values and Goals

- Create a prominent landmark
- Artwork should teach Dr. King's message
- Artwork should reflect diversity
- Artwork should be long-lasting and easy to maintain

What Step in the Process is Happening Today?

- Step 8 of 9 - Three proposals are presented to community members for questions and feedback

Next Step

- Step 9 – The Artist Selection Panel interviews the three artist teams and reviews the three proposals and makes a final decision

Introduction of the Three Finalist Artist Teams

Artist Team Leader: Lynn Schuette, San Diego

Team Members: William Bulkley, Christopher Lee, Neil Kendricks, Ricardo Islas

See websites for:

Lynn Schuette www.lynnschuette.com

Christopher Lee www.cleesculpture.com

Artist Team Leader: Philip Matzigkeit, San Diego

Team Member: Judy Baca

See websites for:

Philip Matzigkeit www.publicaddress.us/Matzigke.html

Judy Baca www.sparcmurals.org

Artist Team Leader: Wick Alexander, San Diego

Team Members: Robin Brailsford, Gerda Govine, Luis Ituatre

See websites for:

Wick Alexander www.wickalexander.com

Robin Brailsford www.publicaddress.us/Brailsford.htm

[Community Feedback](#)

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- All teams should be complimented on their creativity.
- There should be community input for raising additional funds.
- This project should be grand and the funding level needs to reflect and support that vision.
- We need to honor Dr. King's reputation and legacy in a high quality way; the funding level must support a high quality work of art.
- \$200,000 is chump change. I would rather see nothing at all than something that's chintzy because it wasn't adequately funded.
- Additional funding is vital if this artwork is to be viewed as exceptional and worthy of national exposure. A mediocre artwork will not only not set well with the community, but, most likely, it will also not set well with drivers passing by. Nor will it hold its own in comparison with other artwork commemorating Dr. King around the country. San Diego should have a first-class artwork commemorating Dr. King.
- Most important to project is quality, excellence and positive connection with community. How will that be achieved?
- The funding should be increased to give this project and Dr. King the proper reflection and pride.
- The artwork should portray Dr. King and his messages; it should not reinvent either.

- The city and especially the adjacent communities are very landscape conscious. The winning proposal should take into account the blessings and curses of having the patrons be interested in and experienced about landscaping.
- The artwork in its final form should be available to viewers in 15-20 seconds it takes to drive by.
- The winning proposal has to speak to people who are not art literate, left-brained, or both.
- I would like to see images of children included in the works.
- I understand that none of the proposals can feature moving elements because of the restrictions of working on a freeway site, but even still, all the proposals seem too static. None of the proposals conveyed a sense of movement.
- None of the proposals is of the creative caliber that I was hoping for.

COMMENTS ON THE ART PROPOSAL BY LYNN SCHUETTE'S TEAM:

- Though this proposal is the most colorful and captivating, it seems empty and disconnected because it does not use the wall.
- The dimensional aspect of this proposal is interesting to look at from many perspectives. I love this proposal.
- Great job integrating landscaping into overall design. It's colorful and dramatic. The flame as a beacon of light is a powerful image. The symbolism is good.
- Based on the arrangement of the panels, does a visitor driving on the MLK, Jr. Freeway who is traveling east or west with no intention of returning to San Diego have to come back and travel in other direction to get the whole idea of artwork?
- The panel showing hands and arms is a confusing and disturbing image. The panels seem congested and clumped together.
- I prefer this proposal. It's exquisite and has beautiful images and colors. It's powerful.
- Nice, but not that strong.
- Too compressed. Doesn't take advantage of entire site. Needs to be simplified and spread out. Message is not as clear as it should be.

- This proposal is beautiful. I like the use of plants in this proposal.
- The fiery images are beautiful.
- This proposal is the best at conveying the message of Dr. King.
- This proposal is the most vibrant and effective. The use of color and symbols best demonstrate the goals.
- I like the concept.
- This proposal seems like it really wants to be a 2-D mural. The 3-D panels feel like a force-sit for the site and the site hasn't been used to its maximum potential.
- It's beautiful, but may be too small for site.
- It's initially eye catching but the images of Dr. King are so iconic and so familiar. How much long-term interest and contemplation can these images really generate? The images will just take on the same relevance as other logos or symbols in our culture — images that are so recognizable that we don't even see them after a while.
- This proposal would be better as a traditional mural not a multi-panel, freestanding "sculpture."
- I am concerned that this proposal will not weather well and it might be too vulnerable to graffiti. It should be spread out more; too much is happening for the cars passing by so quickly.
- I prefer this proposal.
- Since I drive the MLK, Jr. Freeway and exit at Home Avenue everyday, I would like to see color and symbols of hope during that drive. This proposal best captures those qualities.
- While this proposal does have a certain beauty, it doesn't reflect the power of the man and his message. I want to feel the impact of his courage and wisdom. We need to understand the global, eternal measure of his impact. Show us the truth about equality. Maybe the imagery doesn't have to be so literal. It feels flat, but that's not just because it's 2-D.
- I prefer this proposal.
- I prefer this proposal because I believe it will revitalize hope in passers-by. The diversified hands (multi cultural, women, youth) represent hands reaching for a goal, or reaching out to "pull" someone else up, or whatever we can dream up in

our creative minds. It's inspirational, eye-catching, dynamic, upbeat, contemporary, timeless, and strong. It will have a positive impact on the masses (not just Blacks), and it will rekindle the fire of a dream that someone may have stopped pursuing by reminding them that with God, all things are possible if you believe.

- I prefer this proposal.
- It's "plop" art.
- This proposal negates the nature of the site. The existing wall is already a natural "frame", so to make "frames" in front of a "frame" is a poor use of the site.
- It's too cluttered, too close together, and too intense.
- I prefer this proposal, but it does seem to be arranged too close together.
- I like the connection between the imagery and the content of Dr. King's speeches.
- This proposal is beautiful, powerful, and colorful.
- This proposal should be a traditional mural and not a 3-D piece.
- It's too fragmented.
- The colors used in this piece fit well with the San Diego environment. It helps root the pieces in San Diego. It's San Diego's MLK monument, not a MLK monument in any other part of the country.

COMMENTS ON THE ART PROPOSAL BY PHILIP MATZIGKEIT'S TEAM:

- I like the sculpture of Dr. King and the march, but the bus/lady and landscaping could be eliminated.
- This proposal is too flat. Incorporating children's drawings on the wall is a good idea. The image of the bus is too hard to identify and doesn't seem universally symbolic. With no living plants in the landscaping, it seems flat even though the whole proposal is colorful.
- This proposal is the strongest, but the small images painted on the wall weaken it.
- The cutouts are strong and powerful. The ground design is appealing. The wall design with the children's work is distracting. Too much is going on.

- It responds to entire length of the site, but it needs to be simplified. The cut-outs are enough. The small images on the wall aren't necessary.
- This proposal is too unfocused. It needs to be edited to its most powerful essentials.
- The landscape patterning is the best part about this proposal.
- The ongoing school outreach program seems unrealistic given the budget. This element should be eliminated.
- This proposal is my favorite, but it's much stronger without the images painted on the wall. And there is no need for the smaller images of youth on overpass bridge. It seems like too much is happening. I love the ground treatment. I love the use of Dr. King's face. I like that his face takes up so much of the site, but this idea needs to be simplified.
- This proposal seems too over-the-top.
- This proposal lacks coherence.
- I do not like the idea of converting the hillside to dirt and rocks. That seems too dry and dusty. Please don't eliminate plants.
- The images need to be refined. Dr. King's hand as shown in the proposal looks weird.
- The artists should concentrate on the cutouts and the slope. Keep the continuous programming with children out of it; it's too costly and complicated to implement.
- The dark steel seems too cold and harsh.
- The scope of this proposal seems obviously out of range with the existing budget. I do not want this proposal to be selected and then find out that only a portion of the project can be completed. That would not be a proper tribute to Dr. King.
- This proposal tells a story and has appeal for all generations.
- The image of the bus and boycotter needs to be proportional. It now appears as if her legs are being cut off.
- This would be a beautiful addition to the community.

- The idea of tiling the wall and using the “fabric” landscaping in connection with the Dr. King image is impressive though colorless and without warmth.
- This proposal is most in keeping with the intent of the project.
- I prefer this proposal. It’s colorful, captivating, visually expressive, clear, easily recognized, and the site is used to its capacity. It’s representative of Dr. King and his culture.
- The metal images of Dr. King are very impressive, but the images of the march and the bus/lady are not as strong.
- It’s good because it occupies the site and it’s dynamic, but it’s too busy. The images on the wall overlapped by the steel cutouts don’t mix well together. The images on the wall should be eliminated.
- This proposal creates the most experience of movement.
- This proposal is the most graphically compelling and the one that makes the best use of the site. Visually, it is too complicated. A combination of the cut figures and graphics on the lawn would be the most effective.
- I think of this proposal as the “Civil Rights/Old School Monument.” It focuses too much on the march and not Dr. King. It reminds me of the South and slavery. It is my opinion that as a culture we’ve moved on from that mentality and this monument will take us back there. I don’t like watching “Roots” because it upsets me and this monument has a similar effect; let’s be progressive not regressive. Dr. King’s tombstone reads “Free at last....” and, praise God, we are free today, so let’s move on. I’m not saying there is not room for improvement because there is much room, but let’s perpetuate the positive as opposed to the negative.

COMMENTS ON THE ART PROPOSAL BY WICK ALEXANDER’S TEAM:

- This is the most creative and ambitious proposal.
- How will very young citizens be able to connect this visual symbol to Dr. King? It would be nice to have a depiction of more activity under the tower, i.e. sculptures of Dr. King and children in the community, etc. As a teacher in the community, I am concerned about the education of our children and, looking at this artwork through the eyes of a young child, I’m concerned they may not be able to enjoy your ideas.
- This proposal would be a good piece of abstract art that could be explained. The lack of a physical image of Dr. King could make it easier for more people to relate to. Could a rainbow of color or images of beads be added?

- The sculpture would not be easily connected with Dr. King, but it's beautiful and the idea of radio is interesting.
- It makes no sense to me.
- The monolith means nothing without an image and I'm concerned that the radio frequency will be tougher to obtain than explained.
- The tower structure, though visually interesting, gives one absolutely no connection to Dr. King or his message. In fact, it rather resembles prison doors and the radio station component seems problematic without extensive research. It's an admirable idea, however.
- Something that looks and acts as a radio tower cannot remind us and the world about the depth and spirit of Dr. King's legacy. His message and legacy cannot be depicted without people – his soul is connected to souls, not radio frequencies.
- I like how it would be able to broadcast Dr. King's speeches.
- This proposal is interesting but much too conceptual. Without the radio component, there is no way to connect this with Dr. King. I actually like the sculpture, but not for this particular project. The radio/website is interesting, but likely wouldn't be used. The sculpture is too small for the site.
- This proposal is too abstract for the focus of this commission.
- I do not see this sculpture being the landmark the artists said it would become.
- Dr. King is already an icon. To propose that a tower will become an icon representing Dr. King is not recognizing that he is already an icon.
- I like everything about this concept except the way it looks. Why does it have to look like a cell tower? It looks like very other piece of industrial furniture on the freeway. Why can't it be something that stands out? How are you going to get people to listen to the radio if the sculpture can't even attract their attention.
- Our children need to see Dr. King's face.
- The tower is a "thinking piece." It's an out-of-the-box idea.
- Focus on the 5-second message so non-artists can "get it."
- This sculpture is something you might notice one or twice and then never again. Something with noticeable shape and color would be more interesting.

- The artists have good intentions with this proposal, but I do not think the community will like it.
- It's a clever and thoughtful idea, but I'd like to see this executed in a more interesting way.
- The metal is too cold and harsh.
- It looks like an industrial tower.
- This proposal does not meet any of the artwork goals.
- The website and "podcast"/radio idea is gimmicky and unsophisticated. The concept of using sound is interesting given Dr. King's notable speeches and the power of his voice, but it is a big stretch to imagine that many people would tune into the radio station more than once or go home and look up the website. Don't get tangled up in the novelty and popularity of technology unless it can be expertly handled. This artwork should be about Dr. King, not about technology.
- This proposal is way too abstract. It doesn't convey Dr. King's message.
- This proposal does not clearly address the theme and it is not site specific.
- This proposal looks like a cell tower and it doesn't have a discernible message.
- This proposal is too conceptual and very unattractive.
- This proposal does not acknowledge Dr. King in the least. Honestly, I can't imagine more than a handful of individuals tuning into this radio station and those who do would probably only do it out of curiosity. It's boring.
- The sculpture is sterile and anonymous. An artwork commemorating Dr. King cannot be so faceless, heartless, nameless. It doesn't fit well size-wise into the site and it's indistinguishable from the other gray freeway fixtures and cell towers in the area.
- The sculpture is too abstract. It is not site specific, and it should be.