



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 18-2762

Agenda Item Number: 16.

Agenda Date: 4/19/2018

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Department of Arts & Culture

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Debbie Racca-Sittre

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT: Accepting a Public Art Gift from Mexico City

SUMMARY:

This ordinance accepts a gift of the bronze sculpture “Alas de Mexico” from the government of Mexico City and the artist Jorge Marín to the City of San Antonio, in celebration of the San Antonio Tricentennial, and authorizes the initial installation costs of \$15,000 to be paid from the FY 2018 Tricentennial Office budget.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The City’s Department of Arts & Culture, the International Relations Division of the Economic Development Department and Tricentennial Commission have been coordinating with Mexico City authorities since November 2015 on a gift of a public art sculpture. Originally, the offer of the gift was made during the visit by former Mayor Ivy R. Taylor to Mexico City in November 2015 as part of a cultural and trade mission organized by the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, during which time an economic cooperative agreement was signed by Mexico City and San Antonio. Jorge Marín is one of Mexico’s most influential artists and has been an active figure in the contemporary art world for the last 25 years. He began to sculpt ceramic in the early 1980s. Bronze has been his preferred material for the last ten years. His work often depicts horses, centaurs, garudas, children, madonnas, and acrobats, along with elements such as spheres, masks, arrows, boats and scales. These concepts are consistent with recurring themes such as reflection and balance. In September 2015, Jorge Marín’s *Wings of the City* series was successfully shown at the San Antonio Botanical Gardens as part of a US tour organized by the Mexican Government’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of the pieces exhibited was the “Alas de México” which proved to be one of the most popular

pieces as it promoted a high level of public engagement. In 2017, his work has toured the Orient: Singapore, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong. Mexico City has made similar presentations of “Alas de Mexico” to other cities with which it has official relationships: Los Angeles, CA; Montreal, Quebec; and Singapore.

The sculpture “Alas de Mexico” will be installed in the eastern plaza of Hemisfair Park. The piece invites people to become part of the art - visitors can stand on a pedestal in between two large bronze wings for a photo with the Tower of the Americas in the background.

ISSUE:

This action accepts a gift of the sculpture “Alas de Mexico” produced by artist Jorge Marín and presented by the Government of Mexico City in celebration of the San Antonio Tricentennial.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council could choose not to accept this sculpture as a gift and instead require staff to execute a loan agreement only for the Tricentennial. This would cause the City to be responsible for costs of de-installation and shipping back to Mexico in 2019. These costs are estimated at \$15,000.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The sculpture is valued at \$50,000 and is being donated to the City’s inventory of Public Art. This ordinance authorizes the initial installation costs of \$15,000 will be paid from the Tricentennial Sculpture Trail Project available within the FY 2018 Tricentennial Office budget. The City will be responsible for maintenance which is anticipated to be funded by the City’s Public Art Maintenance Plan and will be included in future budget years within the Department of Arts and Culture operating funds from Hotel Occupancy Tax.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff, the Tricentennial Commission, and the San Antonio Arts Commission recommend that City Council approve this ordinance accepting a gift of the sculpture “Alas de Mexico” from the government of Mexico City and the artist Jorge Marín to the City of San Antonio, in celebration of the San Antonio Tricentennial.