



## Board Report

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**File #:** 2020-0471, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

**Agenda Number:** 45.

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### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AUGUST 20, 2020

**SUBJECT: REPORT ON MOTION TO “UPLIFT THE HUMAN SPIRIT THROUGH METRO ART”**  
**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE a report and approach to “Uplift the Human Spirit Through Metro Art” in response to the June 2020 Board motion (Attachment A).

#### **ISSUE**

At their June 2020 meeting, in a motion titled “Uplifting the Human Spirit Through Metro Art”, the Board directed staff to return with a report on how Metro can a) Integrate Metro Art programs into our trains, busses; b) Champion artistic experimentation including provocative works that are responsive to the issues and concerns of our time; and c) Think about how artists might be included in the Reimagining of transportation. This report provides the requested response.

#### **BACKGROUND**

As the Board discussed during the June 2020 Board meeting, we are currently in the midst of a pandemic and a civil rights movement. Metro staff were asked to leverage the arts as a way to bring people together in ways that are inspiring, welcoming, and add humanity to our public spaces and to strategically implement arts programming to balance Metro safety and recovery messaging, mitigate anxieties, and to reimagine the future of transportation in our region.

Metro has incorporated a small percentage (Attachment B) of transit construction costs to the integration of art into capital projects since the 1980s. The agency has received recognition for the Metro Art program’s interdisciplinary approach, broad range of artists commissioned and community engagement in the process. Strong support has been demonstrated by funding awarded by federal, state and local sources as well as the respect and care given the works by the public. Over half of the artists Metro Art has commissioned are artists of color.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The Board motion asks Metro to consider ways in which the arts might play a role that goes beyond

transit infrastructure.

Periodically, and when resources and space are made available, Metro Art has exhibited artwork in unused advertising spaces throughout the system, including the fleet. Examples have included Poetry in Motion, Through the Eyes of Artists neighborhood posters, More People Than You Know portrait series, and Art on TAP. Metro Art Presents and the experimental MetroLab series have provided opportunities for musicians, dancers, poets and other arts and cultural practitioners to connect with communities and to cultivate ridership. These programs have been effective additional ways to commission local artists to create works that are both relevant and responsive.

To address the Board motion in the immediate term we will work to reprioritize available resources to quickly and effectively integrate arts and culture into current agency Transit Operations and Recovery plans.

Immediate initiatives to be implemented in the next six months might include:

1. Champion artistic expression of local visual artists through posters within Metro's allocation of advertising spaces, including on buses and trains, when/where space is available
2. Partner with community based cultural organizations to interpret and document this pivotal moment
3. Curate cultural programming to foster connections with the public, and
4. Commission local artists to creatively convey 'new manners', safety messaging and mobility stories to surprise and delight riders

One additional full-time contingent staff will be necessary to explore external funding opportunities, write grant proposals and develop, manage, conduct outreach, document and communicate about these pilot initiatives. Current staff are at capacity as a result of significantly increased transit infrastructure project delivery schedules.

Moving forward, these pilot projects will inform an updated Metro Art policy that will formalize the role of the arts beyond transportation infrastructure, utilizing the following guiding principles:

1. Put people first
  - a. Uplift customer journeys and local communities through artistic expression
  - b. Provide paid opportunities for artists at all levels of their careers
  - c. Engage riders and stakeholders through shared sense of ownership
  - d. Provide workforce development and career pipeline opportunities
2. Connect to creative communities throughout LA County
  - a. Celebrate connections to diverse local arts and cultural destinations
  - b. Present curated partnerships and sponsorships
  - c. Foster and facilitate arts tours and highlight creative communities
  - d. Facilitate creative outreach and engagement.
3. Champion innovation

- a. Collaborate with internal departments to integrate the arts across transportation modes and initiatives
- b. Leverage strategic funding opportunities
- c. Support artistic experimentation
- d. Explore new technologies and advance best practices

In response to the broader Board Motion regarding Reimagining transportation, Metro Art staff will seek to partner with other agency departments to pursue ways of incorporating arts and culture into existing agency plans and initiatives such as NextGen, BRT Vision & Principles Study, Long Range Transportation Plan, Customer Experience Plan, Equity Framework and the Recovery Task Force response.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Item is presented for information only with no financial impact at this time. Staff will reprioritize available resources and work cross-departmentally to identify internal and external funding opportunities to support pilot projects.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The information in this Report supports Metro's strategic goals of delivering outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system (goal #2) and enhancing communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity (goal #3). This work aligns with Metro's Equity Platform, specifically Pillar Two: Listen and Learn, and Pillar Three: Focus and Deliver. Arts-based strategies will be utilized to improve relationships, partnerships and actions to advance more equitable transportation outcomes. Community-driven conversations will be used to develop best practices, inform strategic community-focused partnerships, and build capacity to better address the needs of historically underserved communities.

### **NEXT STEPS**


Staff will pursue the work as described above and will return to the Board in six to eight months with a report detailing pilot projects launched in response to the Board motion, lessons learned, and an updated Metro Art policy that formally expands the role of the arts beyond transportation infrastructure to uplift the customer experience.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - June 2020 Board Directive  
Attachment B - Transit Agency Percent for Art Programs

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Chief Executive Officer

Metro

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Los Angeles, CA



## Board Report

File #: 2020-0427, File Type: Motion / Motion Response

Agenda Number: 36.

### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE JUNE 18, 2020

#### Motion by:

#### DIRECTORS BUTTS, SOLIS, GARCETTI, AND HAHN

#### Uplifting The Human Spirit Through Metro Art

On Saturday June 6th the L. A. Times published in its Saturday Section (F) 14 different artworks from different artists under the title “California Artists Express the Pain of Injustice.”

I’ve been periodically reminded by my staff that Metro has a long history in the forefront as a leader in integrating public art into transit construction projects. Our Metro Rail stations are famous for their artworks. We even have people taking tours of the station artworks.

As I mentioned in my State of the Agency remarks, we are currently faced with two concurrent tragedies and the artwork published in the Times spoke to the moment of the outpouring of grief and anger across our county and nation.

Mayor Garcetti spoke of re-imagining LA County transportation and I would propose that we consider ways in which the arts might play a role in that transformation that goes beyond transit infrastructure.

The Arts are a powerful means of bringing people together across borders of all kinds. Much of the inspiring news coverage/media attention at present is often about how the artists are expressing and conveying the longstanding pain of injustice.

As we are undertaking strategies to encourage people to return and use public transportation wisely and more often, I would like to see us explore ways to formally incorporate arts programming into areas beyond construction. As people ride busses and trains in this troublesome era, we should balance Metro safety messaging with welcoming creative artworks that mitigate anxieties and add a touch of humanity. Let us use this tragedy to help uplift the human spirit through art.

**SUBJECT: UPLIFTING THE HUMAN SPIRIT THROUGH METRO ART**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

APPROVE Motion by Directors Butts, Solis, Garcetti, and Hahn that the Board direct the CEO to return in the August Board cycle with a Report back on how Metro can:

- Integrate Metro Art programs into our trains, busses;
- Champion artistic experimentation including provocative works that are responsive to the issues and concerns of our time; and
- Think about how artists might be included in the Reimagining of transportation

## Examples of Transit Agency % for Art Allocations

Sacramento	2.0%
San Francisco	2.0%
Santa Clara	2.0%
Miami-Dade	1.5%
Portland	1.5%
Atlanta	1.0%
New York City	1.0%
Seattle	1.0%
<b>Los Angeles County Metro</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

FTA Circular 9400.1A recommends that transportation projects allocate “a minimum one-half of 1% of construction costs, but should not exceed 5% of construction costs”.



# Uplifting the Human Spirit Through Metro Art

EMC Item 45  
August 2020

RICHARD WYATT  
*City of Dreams/River of History*  
Union Station



# June Board Motion/*Comments*:

## “Uplift the Human Spirit Through Metro Art”

- Integrate Metro Art programs into our trains, buses
- Champion artistic experimentation including provocative works responsive to the issues & concerns of our time
- Think about how artists might be included in the Reimagining of transportation
  
- *Support local artists*
- *Reinvigorate the arts in a post-pandemic world*
- *Provide access to arts and culture for underserved communities*

# Capital Projects (% for Art)



CHRISTINE ULKE  
*El Aliso de Los Angeles*  
Division 13

# Current Arts Impacts

## Americans for the Arts Report 8/11/20

- 94% report income loss
- 63% have become fully unemployed
- 76% use their art to raise morale and create community cohesion

## Brookings Institute Report 8/11/20

- Creative economy is one of the sectors most at risk
- California will be hit hardest in terms of absolute losses
- Small stop-gap measures will not undo the damage; a substantial and sustained recovery strategy is required
- Opportunity to develop strategies to hire local artists and create online platforms



**Leimert Park**

Through the eyes of artist Sam Jans  
 Jans visually creates one of L.A.'s best-kept secrets. When also can you experience jazz, hip-hop, blues, poetry, artwork and great food? Come chill out in the park to play chess or domino!

Metro

**East L.A.**

Through the eyes of artist Antonio Rodriguez  
 Rodriguez illustrates how East Los Angeles continues to honor its rich history and culture. He depicts the lives of immigrants and their families, and the vibrant community that has grown.

Metro

**Griffith Park**

Through the eyes of artist Bob Zoell  
 Bob Zoell's colorful art is a celebration of the outdoor recreation that defines Griffith Park. He depicts the park's many trails, observatory, carousel, and more.

Metro

**Inglewood**

Through the eyes of artist Mikal Gilmore  
 A kaleidoscope of vibrant colors and patterns, Gilmore's artwork is a celebration of the city's rich cultural heritage and the vibrant community that has grown.

Metro

# “Integrate Metro Art Into Trains, Buses”

**Long Beach**

Through the eyes of artist Christine Nguyen  
 An intricate, expressive downtown playfully intertwines old-fashioned architecture and modern city life. Long Beach landmarks, including the Aquarium, are depicted in a vibrant, colorful style.

Metro

**Pasadena**

Through the eyes of artist Walter Aulin  
 A vibrant, stylized illustration of the city's rich history and culture. A central figure is surrounded by symbols of the city's past and present.

Metro

**Gardena**

Through the eyes of artist Jonathan Anderson  
 A vibrant, stylized illustration of the city's rich history and culture. A central figure is surrounded by symbols of the city's past and present.

Metro

**Little Tokyo**

Through the eyes of artist Shizu Saldamando  
 A vibrant, stylized illustration of the city's rich history and culture. A central figure is surrounded by symbols of the city's past and present.

Metro



# On Subways as Riders Return: Odes to Their Resilience

Leaders of the “Poetry in Motion” program hope verse can help to comfort and encourage people as they return to the trains in greater numbers.





“Champion  
artistic  
experimentation  
including  
provocative  
works  
responsive to  
the issues &  
concerns of our  
time”

NONI OLABISI  
*1995 Commemorative Poster*  
Metro Green Line



**Metro Green Line**  
Summer 1995

Rosa Parks' contribution to the history of transportation and civil rights is honored in this powerful work by artist Noni Olabisi.

This is a member of our series of local artist commissions to the MGLA & DCT Program in celebration of the opening of the Metro Green Line.



“Think about how artists might be included in the Reimagining of transportation”



HELEN LUNDEBERG  
1939 WPA Mural: *History of Transportation*  
Inglewood, CA



“Think about how artists might be included in the Reimagining of transportation”



MICHAEL ALVAREZ  
Artist-Led Community Workshops  
Lulu Washington Dance Theatre  
KAOS Network



# Initiatives to be implemented in the next six months might include:

1. Champion artistic expression of local visual artists through onboard posters as space is available
2. Partner with community-based arts and cultural organizations to interpret and document this pivotal moment
3. Curate cultural programming to foster connections with the public
4. Commission local artists to creatively convey 'new manners,' safety messaging & mobility stories to surprise and delight riders

# Next Steps

- Initiate pilot projects to “Uplift the Human Spirit”
- Engage local artists and arts organizations
- Report back on pilot projects and expanding the role of the arts beyond infrastructure in Reimagining transportation