ELECTRICAL BOX WRAPS PUBLIC ART PROJECT

JURY REPORT

August 21st, 2019

BACKGROUND

This report is an overview of the discussion and decision of the volunteer citizen jury which met on the evening of Tuesday August 13th, 2019 to determine which of the six (6) shortlisted artists’ proposals for Electrical Boxes in Downtown Hamilton should be implemented. They reviewed the submissions in terms of technical issues, artistic excellence, response to context, public consultation results and in response to the following competition goal:

Utility box public art in the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Area (DHCIPA) should be vibrant, positive and reflective of Hamilton’s downtown.

The jury also reviewed submissions for how successfully they addressed one or more of the following themes identified by artists, local residents and business owners:

- Hamilton Through the Ages
- Hamilton Stories
- Hamilton Communities / Street Life

AWARD

After a discussing the various aspects of the six (6) shortlisted proposals the jury gave the highest overall score to the proposal Hamilton Enchanted by Charlit Floriano. The commission for the series work will therefore be awarded to Charlit Floriano.
JURY COMMENTS

The jury members applaud the efforts of all 63 artists that made submissions to the competition. There were many excellent proposals. Opening personal ideas and talents to public scrutiny can be difficult and the jury therefore extend their thanks to all the artists that shared their ideas by submitting to this competition, especially the six (6) shortlisted artists whose proposals were presented for public comment.

The jury also extend their thanks to all 190 people that took the time to review the shortlisted submissions, select their preferred proposal and provide comments. There were fifteen pages of comments submitted including many excellent comments related to the project goal which helped inform their decision. The insightful comments provided were very helpful in understanding public reaction to all of the proposals and in making the difficult decision of which of the six (6) excellent proposals should be implemented.

Jury comments on each proposal are as follows:

**ENCHANTED HAMILTON** by Charlit Floriano

This artist’s work made a subtle impression on the jury initially but grew on them over the course of the adjudication period. There is a richness in the execution of this series of designs the jury felt would lead the public to new observations and discoveries as time passed. Two of the five designs (*Health and Transportation*) were not as vibrant in terms of colour palette as the others. However the jury felt Floriano’s work was the most unique of the proposals, as each design referenced the buildings and street life that surround its context in an inventive, playful and meaningful way. The jury felt this artist’s proposal responded well to competition goal and themes and had high artistic merit. This proposal also received the largest number of favourable comments from the public.

**VARIATIONS ON A CONTINUUM** by David Trautrimas

The jury applauded this artist’s efforts to honour and re-interpret several important architectural landmarks in the design series’ surrounding context. Trautrimas’ research and attention to detail translated to an intriguing and impressive visual narrative of Downtown Hamilton’s built environment. Members of the jury were concerned however that the series lacked the visual depth of some of the other proposals and that its subtle patterning may attract graffiti. The proposal was not highly ranked in public consultation and the jury worried the series might not continuously engage the public over time.

**VIBRANT CITY** by Jenn Kitagawa

The jury felt this artist’s work read very strongly as a series. It made an admirable attempt at capturing a variety of elements from the design series’ site context and did so in lively fashion. Though upbeat, the jury did remark that the colours of this proposal are not as vibrant as some of the other proposals. Members of the jury were concerned the use of
symbology throughout the series was too abstract, didn’t delve deeply and therefore, was not as reflective of the competition goal and themes as the higher scoring proposals. The jury also worried there was a lot of open space throughout the series, which may prove attractive to graffiti-taggers. In terms of public consultation, this proposal was not identified by many as preferred.

THE STORIED PAST OF OUR GREAT CITY by Kayla Whitney
The jury applauded the artist’s attempt to capture a variety of local architectural landmarks, many well-known Hamilton stories and local personalities. Whitney’s use of watercolour was also refreshing, in an age where much is digitized. The jury felt however that the elements depicted seemed disconnected and didn’t respond to the design series’ locations as well as some of the other proposals. The Jury also raised there may be concerns with the use of Indigenous themes and symbols by an artist who does not identify as Indigenous. Though this work was generally well-received by the public, some members of the public identified concerns with honouring the Suffragettes’ legacy in terms of race and segregation within the movement. Overall, the jury felt the proposal was not as conceptually strong as some of the others.

UNTITLED by Kirsten McCrae
The jury loved the various textures this artist’s work offered. Jury members felt the series was vibrant and colourful and appreciated the artist’s conceptual proposal of diversity through pattern. In execution, however, jury members felt the Hamilton connection was weak and would not be obvious to passers-by. Subsequently, the jury was of the opinion this series did not adequately address the goal and themes of the competition.

URBAN JUNGLE by Natalie Very B.
The jury loved the fun and vibrant nature of this artist’s series of designs. Its fantastical elements and theme of a mythical Hamilton were well-received. The jury agreed it would be clearly recognized as a series and bring a playful energy to downtown streets. Jury members felt the series has the potential to engage a younger audience in the present but were concerned that over time, the work may become dated. The jury also had reservations the proposal didn’t reference Downtown Hamilton as strongly as some of the other proposals and therefore was not as successful in addressing the project goal and themes.
THE JURY

Dr. Monolina Bhattacharyya-Ray  City of Hamilton Arts Advisory Commission
Kerry Jarvi  Executive Director, Downtown Hamilton BIA
Jamie Lawson  Artist/Local Resident *Absent for Final Adjudication
Eli Nolet  Artist/Local Resident
Brendan Wetton  Community Engagement Coordinator, Intl. Village BIA

Advisors to the Jury:
Ken Coit  Manager, Placemaking, Public Art & Projects
Zahra Awang  Art in Public Places Project Specialist, Placemaking, Public Art & Projects