

Crossroads Park Public Art: Artist Selection

At today's meeting, staff will seek an endorsement of the artist selected by the Crossroads Park Artist Selection Panel to create a new artwork for Crossroads Park.

Motion: A motion to endorse the Crossroads Park Artist Selection Panel's selection of Anna Mlasowsky to design, fabricate and install an artwork in Crossroads Park.

Code and bylaw support: This item is presented to the Commission supported by Bellevue City Code 3.56.070 item F: "Develop recommendations for acquiring public artwork consistent with guidelines and priorities approved by city council."

Background

In 2021, Amazon agreed to provide \$100,000 in funding to the City for a public art project in Crossroads Park. The application was open to artists from July 18th through September 6th. Artists were allowed to submit up to two bodies of artwork. If the panel selected an artist that submitted two bodies of work, it would pick the body of work they wanted the artist to explore.

This pilot project has been conceived as an opportunity for artists to transition out of the gallery space and into the field of public art. It's being developed as a mentoring opportunity for the selected artist to work closely with the City's project manager in developing the design, fabrication and installation of a 3-dimensional work. The artist's budget for design, fabrication and installation is \$75,000, with the remaining \$25,000 in funds from Amazon managed by the city to cover engineering, permitting, and any foundation construction. The current schedule has the project completed early in 2025.

Crossroads Park Artist Selection Panel

The selection panel was composed of the following:

1. Arts Commissioner Monik Martinez
2. Billie Hassebrock, Bellevue Youth Theatre Community Services Supervisor
3. Lele Barnett, Art Consultant and Curator

The panel reviewed 47 submitted applications and selected four finalists. Staff provided each of the four artists, including artists Anna Mlasowsky, Eileen Jimenez, Morgan Madison and Tzzy Yi (Amy) Young, questions prior to a virtual interview with staff. The panel then unanimously voted on October 2nd to select Anna Mlasowsky for the opportunity. Key determining factors were the vibrancy in the colors in dichroic glass used by the artist, the artist's personal story and thoughts around how they want to engage the public in interacting with the future artwork.

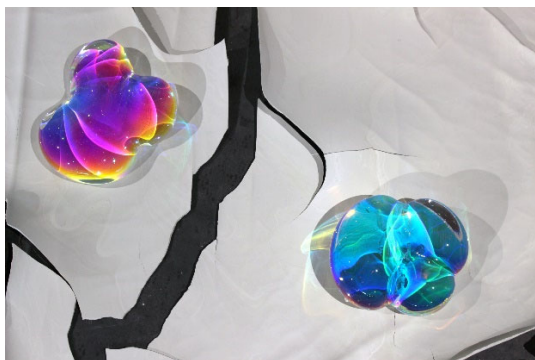
The Artist – Anna Mlasowsky

Anna Mlasowsky is a Seattle-based artist that has primarily worked in glass, although has worked in multiple mediums. As an immigrant, Anna often explores the concepts of "otherness" in their work. From her application materials:

Born in 1984 in East Germany, Anna Mlasowsky holds a B.A. in Glass from the Royal Danish Academy and an MFA in Sculpture from the University of Washington. Anna is a recipient of a TAG Grant (2015), an IASPIS Grant (2013) from the Swedish Arts Council, an Artist Trust Fellowship (2017) and 4Culture Grant (2019), she was most recently a Haas Fellow at the Science History Institute (2021-22) and an artist in residence at Amazon (2022). She received an Aldo Bellini Award (2015), the BAM Biennial John and Joyce Price Award of Excellence (2018), a Toyama Glass Biennial Silver Prize and was a Museum of Art and Design Burk Prize finalist. Her work is in the collections of institutions such as The Corning Museum of Glass (NY), The Toyama City Art Museum (Japan), the Castello Sforzesco (Milan, Italy) and the Museum of Art and Design (NY).

Anna Mlasowsky submitted one body of work with her application. It is a series of dichroic glass objects. She wants to explore how to use dichroic glass in public art as a way to play with natural and projected light throughout the day. In her interview, she talked a lot about the Crossroads community interacting with a future artwork and attracting children to play in the light.

Some examples from her body of work and the light casting properties of dichroic glass:



Staff Analysis and Recommendation

Anna's artworks are typically composed of a sculptural element paired with a performance of some kind. Her explanation of dichroic glass comes out of a body of work where she wanted to be more intuitive with her art making and follow her instincts rather than focusing on specific concepts first. She now sees these works as representing "inclusion, diversity, and joy, that celebrates the complexity of identity, belonging and perception." The exciting element of this body of work is that

light creates the performance that is integral to all the work she creates. Additionally, the material, dichroic glass, will project different colors depending on whether sunlight is hitting it or artificial projected lights like from the lighting in the park. The result could be an artwork that changes throughout the day and year with changing colors between the day and night and the sun casting light at different angles throughout the year.

The obvious challenge with working with glass in a public park is how to protect it from being damaged or creating a hazard. First, it is important that the artist will not be allowed to create anything that is hollow glass or brittle – any glass used will need to be safety-glass and/or solid. There are a number of well-established public artists that work in glass, or even specifically work with dichroic glass, that create works for outdoor locations. Prominent regional examples include Preston Singletary and Ed Carpenter, who has a piece with dichroic glass in the city's public art collection at Meydenbauer Center. While design for this project won't start until contracting with the artist is complete, the artist did talk about using dichroic glass and materials, such as stainless steel, as possibly part of a future design to make sure that the artwork is safe and maintainable.

Staff sees the following elements as critical to the success of the project:

- Mentoring is key: Staff plans to set up opportunities for the artist to talk with other artists that are both established public artists and those used to working with dichroic glass outdoors. Additionally, staff is planning to coordinate similar meetings with the artist and with other artists on developing a budget and design, and fabricators and installers so they can understand how a successful project comes together.
- Light studies with the material on site will help better understand the potential of dichroic glass and how it can be used in a sculpture for Crossroads Park.
- Engineering will provide assurance that the artwork is designed and installed in a manner consistent with safety.

Staff Recommendation: Due to the flexibility and willingness of the artist to learn the field of public art, plus their personal story and the potential of their art for this project, staff recommends the endorsement by the commission of the artist, Anna Mlasowsky, chosen by the artist selection panel, for the Crossroads Public Art Project.

Options

Option 1: The Commission endorses the Crossroads Park Artist Selection Panels selection of Anna Mlasowsky to create a public artwork for Crossroads Park.

Option 2: The Commission chooses not to endorse the selection of Anna Mlasowsky by the Crossroads Park Artist Selection Panel.

Next Steps

If the commission endorses the artist selection, staff will work to contract with the artist to begin work. In that event, staff and the artist will return to the commission to present the artwork concept design at a future meeting.

Staff Contact

Scott MacDonald, Public Art Specialist
425-452-7897, smacdonald@bellevuewa.gov