

JAMES STREET SOUTH MURAL PUBLIC ART COMPETITION



JURY REPORT

March 28, 2018

BACKGROUND

This report is an overview of the discussion and decision of the volunteer citizen jury that met on the evening of Tuesday March 27, 2018 to determine which of the six short-listed artists' proposals for a mural (to be installed on an exterior wall on James Street South, across from the Hamilton GO Centre in downtown Hamilton) should be implemented. They reviewed the submissions in terms of technical issues, artistic excellence, response to context, public consultation results and the proposals' response to the following competition goal:

“That the proposed art work should be welcoming and invite a sense of arrival to Hamilton, as well as help minimize the negative effects of the railway bridge concrete structure and its dark tunnel.”

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

- The location as a gateway to the Durand and Corktown neighbourhoods, downtown and the city;
- The natural character of the street as a geographic connection between the Niagara Escarpment and downtown, and between the historic grade and the current street level;
- The rich architectural heritage of the neighbourhood;
- A vibrant community undergoing revitalization.

AWARD

After a discussing the various aspects of the short-listed proposals the jury gave the highest overall score to the proposal **Gateway** by **Vivian Rosas & Vesna Asanovic**. The commission for the work will therefore be awarded to Vivian Rosas and Vesna Asanovic.

JURY COMMENTS

The jury members applauded the efforts of all of the 31 artists that made submissions to the competition. There were many excellent proposals. The jury extended their thanks to all of the artists that shared their ideas by submitting to this competition, especially the six short-listed artists whose proposals were presented for public comment.

The jury also shared their appreciation for all 547 people that took the time to review the short-listed submissions, select their preferred proposal and provide comments. There were nearly 60 pages of comments submitted which included many excellent ones related to the project goal and themes, which helped to inform the jury's decision. Moreover, the public consultation offered important insight into public reaction to all of the proposals. While there was enthusiastic support for each of the six proposals, the prevailing preference was for Gateway. The many perceptive comments in support of this proposal influenced the jury in making their decision to award this proposal the highest score.

Jury comments on each proposal are as follows:

Gateway, Artists: Vivian Rosas & Vesna Asanovic

The jury felt that Gateway had the strongest graphic presentation – crisp, clear, and bright, most effectively addressing the goal of welcoming and minimizing the negative effects of the dark tunnel. They felt the imagery would be clearly discernable for motorists, pedestrians viewing from across the street and those passing at night. They appreciated that the artists played with the unique proportions of the mural – using large imagery in narrow sections and creating a seamless narrative flow in a well-balanced layout. The jury also commented that the energy and content of the proposal successfully reflected a changing and revitalizing multicultural neighbourhood, as well as its natural character.

Hidden Time, Artist: Alex McLeod

The jury noted that Alex McLeod's proposal stood out as creating a unique, three dimensional world that would lend great depth to the space and bring nature to an urban area. They indicated that this proposal has great flow, and would be a beautiful addition to the street. However, the jury was concerned that the concept of Hidden Time may not translate to the viewer, that from a distance the forms may be hard to distinguish, and that the work did not portray as strong a connection to Hamilton as the other proposals.

Untitled, Artist: Coloma Art and Design

The jury appreciated the proposal by Coloma Art and Design for its urban grittiness and conceptual richness. They felt that the level of detail would draw viewers to take a closer look and make for a multidimensional experience. However, the jury felt that the concept did not appear to be fully executed in the visual proposal. They also expressed a concern that the overall dark tone of the proposal would not meet the goal of bringing lightness to the tunnel.

Excavation, Artists: Dave Kuruc with Lisa Pijuan-Nomura, Brian Kelly & Elijah Nolet

The jury felt that Excavation stood out as being most grounded in Hamilton history and iconography and commended the team for their research. They enjoyed the graphic presentation using multiple mediums and felt the imagery would be clearly visible for motorists, pedestrians viewing from across the street and those passing at night. However, the jury felt that the pre-historic imagery was dominant and that while the design did celebrate heritage in general, it did not address architectural heritage nor did it address the natural landscape or a revitalizing neighbourhood as well as some other proposals.

Timelines, Artist: Natalie Hunter

The jury found Timelines to be most conceptually rich, having the potential to connect the escarpment to city and therefore scored it very high on artistic merit. However, the jury felt that the concept wasn't rendered to its full potential in the visual proposal, and that it lacked a diversity of imagery. They also were concerned that the sophisticated mural concept might not translate to the average passer-by.

Untitled, Artist: Vermillion Sands (Jacqui Oakley & Jamie Lawson)

The jury noted the highly skilled artistry in the bright and warm proposal by Vermillion Sands. They enjoyed the fluidity and movement in this work which featured complex patterning, united through colour. However, the jury felt the work had the effect of transporting the viewer away from Hamilton due to the palette, which makes the otherwise strong local flora and fauna motifs feel tropical. They therefore didn't feel that this piece functioned well in inviting a sense of arrival to Hamilton.

THE JURY

Caroline Sutton*	Local Resident
Bryce Huffman	Artist, Previous Public Art Competition winner for Cater Park Mural
Victoria Long-Wincza	Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts
Chris Redmond**	President Durand Neighbourhood Association; Durand Coffee
Irene Feddema	Local Resident – IF Graphic Design
Sara Dickinson	Arts Advisory Commission
Mandeep Jassal	Community Relations, Metrolinx

*Partial attendance – Stage One jury only
** Partial attendance – Stage Two jury only

Advisors to the Jury:

Ken Coit, City of Hamilton, Program Manager, Public Art & Projects (Facilitator)
Jen Anisef, City of Hamilton, Cultural Projects Specialist, Public Art & Projects