

Memorandum



Date: May 13, 2025

To: Chair and Members
Art in Public Places Trust

From: Marialaura Leslie, Director
Department of Cultural Affairs

Subject: Trust Resolution No. APPT 25-25 / La Vaughn Belle / RCG Headquarters at PortMiami / Professional Artist Services Agreement

Trust Resolution No. APPT 25-25

RESOLUTION APPROVING A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST SERVICES AGREEMENT IN SUBSTANTIALLY THE FORM ATTACHED WITH LA VAUGHN BELLE STUDIO LLC (LEAD ARTIST LA VAUGHN BELLE) IN THE NOT-TO-EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$230,000.00 FOR DESIGN, FABRICATION, AND INSTALLATION OF THE ARTWORK PROJECT FOR THE NEW ROYAL CARIBBEAN GROUP HEADQUARTER AT PORTMIAMI (FROM MIAMI-DADE COUNTY SEAPORT AND ROYAL CARIBBEAN GROUP, LTD. PUBLIC ART FUNDS)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Art in Public Places Trust approve a Professional Artist Services agreement with La Vaughn Belle Studio LLC (lead artist La Vaughn Belle) in the not-to-exceed amount of \$ 230,000.00 for design, fabrication, and installation of the artwork project for the new Royal Caribbean Group Headquarter at PortMiami.

Background

On January 23 and 24, 2020 a Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was convened to review design proposals from a shortlist of international artists for the campus expansion project for Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd's (RCCL) headquarter at PortMiami. Designed by HOK Architects, the project encompasses the renovation of two prominent existing buildings and the construction of a new, state of the art HQ facility and accompanying new garage, and a dynamic program of open green spaces and waterfront activations, as well as a network of pathways and canopies. Artists were encouraged to proposed interventions at the lobbies for the existing buildings and intervene at key elements of the new building including but not limited to: terrazzo integration, suspended light-based features and overall lobby environment for the new HQ building, stand-alone sculptural, seating, and shading elements for the central green area, paver design and canopy applications throughout the campus, stand-alone and or integrated glazing elements in the new atrium features for the existing building, terrazzo integration, as well as two and three-dimensional artworks for the lobbies of those existing buildings or the creation of overall environments.

After deliberation with input from the RCCL and HOK architecture-design teams, APP Trust members, and APP staff, the PAC unanimously recommended international artist La Vaughn Belle for implementation of an original design for the building terrazzo and an arrangement of handmade paintings on porcelain plates inspired on the colonial Royal Copenhagen china.

In April of 2020, while negotiating design development contracts with artists, APP was notified that the headquarters construction project was put on hold due to the worldwide COVID-19 crisis which halted all international travel and shut down all cruise activities at PortMiami. Artists were notified of the temporary hold on all commissions pending reactivation of the RCCL expansion project. After 18 months in hiatus, RCCL reinitiated the expansion program with a new management team and an anticipated timeline that originally extended the completion of the new headquarters to late 2025 and pushed the renovation of the existing two office buildings to late 2026-2027. However, these plans did not come to fruition as a new development deal was struck between PortMiami and Royal Caribbean Group, LTD which further delayed the start of construction for another two years. In early November 2024, APP was notified that the project had been reinitiated under a new management partnership that transfers responsibility of project controls and funding to the Seaport. This new deal generated an additional \$1,632,488 of APP funds, while at the same time reducing and limiting the public art opportunities for artists to pursue to the new facility. The renovation of the existing offices has been cancelled.

Considering the four-year delay in the start of this project and the significant design and schedule changes to the overall expansion project, APP staff recommended offering an enhanced proposal contract to each of the (9) artists whose original concepts were designated for implementation at the new headquarter and the building renovations. These proposal contracts, authorized by Trust approval of Resolution APPT No. 24-61, allowed artists to quickly engage with APP and the new client team to refine the specific artwork concepts that they could commit to deliver within the current budget and time constraints of the RCG expansion program.

On May 7 and May 8, 2025, the design and construction teams of RCG, the Seaport, and APP staff met to review the presentations of the artists updated proposals based on the initial PAC recommendations and current conditions of public art opportunities given the accelerated construction timetable. After the presentation of La Vaughn Belle's revised proposal concept, the project teams of RCG and APP concurred that the artist's full concept could be fully implemented to include the three (3) different components proposed as part of the overall artwork installation. These components include two (2) large-scale artist-design custom terrazzo motifs for placement on the first floor and second floor landings of the grand staircase and three (3) original configurations featuring the artist's well-known practice of hand-painting on porcelain plates for the three (3) niches in the main circulation corridor flanking the auditorium. The artist's budget will be complemented with construction credits from the terrazzo floor receiving the artist's work.

APP staff recommends the approval of Trust Resolution APPT No. 25-25 authorizing a Professional Artist Services agreement in substantially the form attached with La Vaughn Belle in the not-to-exceed amount of \$230,000.00 for the design, fabrication, and installation of the artwork project for the Royal Caribbean Group, LTD Headquarters at PortMiami.