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TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Craig Hupy, Public Services Administrator  
Aaron Seagraves, Public Art Administrator

CC: Steven D. Powers, City Administrator

**SUBJECT: ARGO SELECTION PROCESS**

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The public art project at Argo Cascades is in the artist selection process. The City issued a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) in 2012. The deadline for the response was in March, 2013. In April, the Selection Panel for the project selected three artists as finalists for the project. The three finalists will be asked to complete a design proposal for the site. The finalists are pre-qualified to respond to a City issued Request for Proposals (RFP).

Language from the SOQ and RFP sets the expectations for any artwork at the site:

*The Cascades have been designed to appear natural and have been constructed using natural materials. Public art at the site shall preserve the natural quality and appeal of the area. Functional art elements are encouraged, wherever possible.*

*Artwork cannot be an obstruction to the area of the embankment maintained by the State of Michigan and the Water Treatment Services Unit. This area of the embankment is located between the entry to the Cascades and the dam. The embankment cannot be penetrated in that area. All artwork proposals will be subject to a technical and safety review by the appropriate city staff. The feasibility of the artwork's compatibility with the site requirements must meet their approval.*

*The paths that border the recreation area will not be obstructed. View of the recreational activities cannot be obstructed by the placement, size and shape of the artwork. The artwork should add value to the site and not interfere with the recreational uses or the natural appearance of the area.*

The Public Art Commission's artist selection process involves a great deal of public engagement and community input for projects of this size and scope.

First, the Selection Panel is made up of stakeholders of the Cascades. Parks staff and a member PAC are on the Panel. They provide the Panel a perspective that is compatible to the vitality of the Cascades as a recreational highlight of the city.

The Panel membership includes:

- Julie Grand, Chair of the Parks Advisory Commission
- Cheryl Saam, Facility Supervisor of Argo Livery and the Cascades
- Two members of the Public Art Commission
- An artist and former member of the Public Art Commission
- A resident in the neighborhood of the Cascades
- An architect and member of the Ann Arbor Rowing Club

Second, a pre-design survey of the community was sent out and completed this month. Over one hundred respondents completed the survey. The survey was intended to provide information to any potential artist the City contracts with for art at the location. The survey was designed to give the artist input on how the park amenities are used, which are valued by the public and give the artist direction as to what would be the valued art work types, appearance and features. Staff can compile the survey results and share if desired. This information will serve to avoid a design that is not going fit the community's.

Third, an artist visit is planned for August 3<sup>rd</sup>. The artists will be given a short tour of the downtown area, give a presentation of their past work, visit the Cascades and be available to the community for open house/meet-and-greet. August 3<sup>rd</sup> is a Saturday and should provide an opportunity for the artists to see the Cascades at their busiest.

Fourth, once the proposal designs are completed, the three artists will present the designs in-person. The proposals will be due in October. Following the presentation of the design, the three designs will be placed on display. The Public Art Commission will gather feedback about the designs online, using Open City Hall, and at the location of the physical display. All the information gathered will be given to the Selection Panel for their consideration before they make their recommended selection. The Panel meets and determines their recommendation for a design on the artwork.

The Selection Panel's recommendation is approved, or not, by the Public Art Commission. The Park Advisory Commission will also pass a resolution supporting (or not) the selection panel's recommendation. The contract with the artist is then placed on the agenda of City Council for approval. For the purpose of the Proposal design, the city will enter into an agreement with the three final artists and provide an honorarium of \$3,000. The \$115,000 for the artist contract comes from the pooled public art funds from water related City projects. The Public Art Commission established a total budget of \$150,000 for the project to include the artist contract, the honorariums, administration, contingency and other expenses related to public engagement.

The final artists for the project were selected primarily because of their body of work at natural areas and in locations near bodies of water. The artists are: Jann Rosen-Queralt, Mags Harries & Lajos Heder, and Andy Dufford. I'm including links to their websites:

<http://jannrosen-queralt.com/>

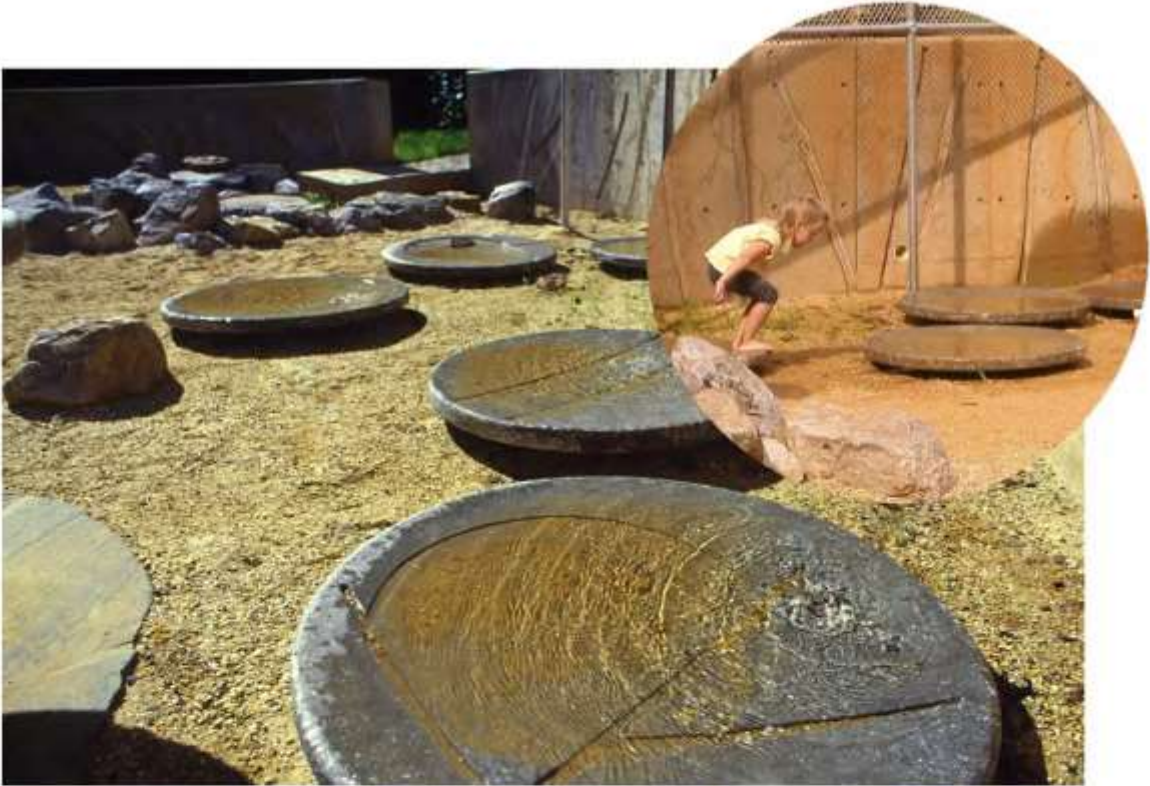
<http://www.chevostudios.com/>

<http://harriesheder.com/>

IMAGES OF PAST WORK by Harries and Heder



IMAGE OF PAST WORK by Rosen-Queralt



**Summary of Public Input Survey (Pre-Design for Artwork)**

**Public Art at Argo Cascades**

Argo Cascades' Survey Responses  
for Potential Art Installation

## Survey Structure

- On a scale from 1-5 please rank
  - Activities
  - Features
- Considerations for Artists
- Important to you/suggestions (open ended)

## Sources

- A2 Open City Hall
- Paper version, collected at Argo Canoe livery

Total Responses: 120

Average score for the Activity Importance at the Cascades on a 5 to 1 scale. (Score of 5 being the most important.)

## Q1: Activity Importance

1	Walking/running/biking	4.26
2	Canoeing/kayaking	4.15
3	Picnicking/relaxing	3.82
4	Tubing	3.24



Average score placed on the Importance of Features on a 5 to 1 scale. (Score of 5 being the most important.)

## Q2: Features Importance

1	Natural Beauty	4.66
2	Nature and vegetation	4.43
3	Border-to-border trail	4.29
4	Natural stone boulders	4.20
5	Drops and Pools	4.05
6	The bridges	3.79

Number of Selections from the list.

## Q3: Artist Should Consider

Use of natural materials	71
Structure fits with the site	69
Functional Art	51
Subdued colors that blend in	47
Environmental education	34
History of the site	29
Interactivity	25
Accessibility(ADA)	22
Children's play	19
Use of materials that contrast with nature	7
Bright colors that stand out	4
Structure stands out from the site	4
Notoriety of design	1

## Overarching Comments

- 35 comments did not favor public art at the Cascades, i.e. fourth comment
- should function without electricity (unless solar)...money better spent on better access and launch clean up
- I would suggest including benches even closer to the parking lot than the lonely boulders. My dad is 92 and would like to have some place to sit near the top of the cascades. I bet he isn't alone! This has become a favorite place in the city. Also shade!
- That it fit in with the environment surrounding it. Use natural materials. It should compliment the area around it; not be the feature.
- Art work is not required at the Cascades. Why ruin natural beauty. If money is spent here it should be limited to what is needed to bring additional value to the site through function, limiting maintenance needs, etc.
- That it is timeless and brings a smile. That it enhance, rather than compete with, the movement of people and water through and around the site.