Chicago Veterans’ Home  
Springfield, Illinois  
CDB Project Number 040-080-001  
Monday, March 25, 2018  
10:00 a.m.

Fine Arts Review Committee Meeting Minutes

**Fine Arts Review Committee Members**
Justin Blandford, Illinois Arts Council  
Robert Sill, Illinois State Museum  
Alli Gentles, Harley Ellis Devereaux Architects, Inc.  
Linda Chapa LaVia, Dept. of Veterans’ Affairs

**Other Attendees**
Gwen Diehl, Dept. of Veterans’ Affairs  
Linda Norbut Suits, Capital Development Board  
Ben Bagby, Chief Procurement Office-Higher Education

- The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. when Linda Norbut Suits welcomed the Committee and passed around the sign-in sheet.
- She also explained the legislative requirements of the Art-in-Architecture Program.
- Everyone in attendance then received a score sheet. Ms. Suits explained score sheets are for the convenience of the Fine Arts Review Committee (FARC) members and are not collected at the end of the process.
- Ms. Gentles reminded the Committee on the construction schedule, color scheme, finishes, and layout of the Veterans’ Home and the artwork area. She also briefly touched on the questions asked by the artists during their design processes.
- Ms. Suits reminded the Committee members that the artists did not have time to complete detailed designs for all eight artwork area. Given the timing of the construction process, it is important that the A/E know as soon as possible if any construction changes are necessary to accommodate the artwork. The artists were instructed to have infrastructure needs detailed but that design details could be completed as the project moved forward.
The first artist to present, Mr. Jason Watts was introduced to the Committee and began his presentation by showing some of his previous work.

He explained that his design for this project was intended to provide a soothing yet stimulating artwork that established a sense of place outside each household. The pieces consisted of large-scale conceptual views of Illinois landscapes painted with oil on canvas. These canvases were then overlaid with a powder-coated metal, die-cut panel that highlighted certain elements of the painted canvas.

He presented four maquettes that showed smaller versions of the paintings.

After answering questions from the Committee that clarified his thought process and the physical nature of the work, Mr. Watts completed his presentation.

After his presentation the Committee discussed the proposal and felt the work was well conceived and appropriate for the space.

The second artist to present, Mr. Jason Messinger, set up his design proposal and began his presentation.

His proposal was for eight hand-made ceramic tile murals “designed to provide tranquil and joyful beauty and stimulate accessible memory through the display of familiar and easily identifiable landscape imagery. Designed also to provide way-finding identity, establish community identity, and be easily cleaned and disinfected.” The 192 hand-made tiles for the project would be handmade and hand-carved.

In addition to presentation boards of the overall designs, he showed the Committee 16 examples of the tiles to illustrate the glazes and tactile nature of the pieces.

Each mural would be 3’x8’ and installed with epoxy grout that is stain resistant and mold-free.

After the presentation the Committee discussed the proposal and liked the tactile nature of the pieces and the representation of nature.

The third artist arrived during Mr. Messinger’s presentation and rather than break for lunch the Committee agreed to move ahead with the third presentation.

Ms. Indira Freitas Johnson was introduced and began her presentation. She introduced the Committee to “Hand in Hand, a series of eight sculptures installed in the entryways to the eight neighborhoods that make up the Chicago Veterans’ Home. They capture hearts and minds by creating a welcoming, engaging and positive visual environment for veterans and their families.”
• She intends for the gentle curves and round lines of the piece to balance the linear hallway.

• She intends to create the piece out of clay and then cast in polyester resin and fiberglass, a medium that has become the choice for many artists operating in the public art field. This is because fiberglass and resin can precisely replicate all the minute details of the original artwork, while combining a relatively low weight with superior strength. The three-dimensional polyester resin and fiberglass canvas will then be painted with layers of acrylic paints and sealed with multiple coats of polymer varnish. This allows the sculpture to be easily cleaned with a soft cloth or dusting brush.

• The Committee asked Ms. Johnson if there was an opportunity to redesign any part of the work to incorporate the more ribbon-like flow of the artwork she designed for the University of Illinois. Ms. Johnson was open to changing that aspect of the design.

• Ms. Johnson completed her presentation and after she left the room the Committee reviewed her presentation.

• After all the presentations were complete, the Committee brought out all maquettes and reviewed them noting their strengths and weaknesses.

• After a careful selection based on skill, aesthetic quality, and relevance, the Committee chose Ms. Indira Freitas Johnson for the commission with the understanding that the work would have some redesign work done to make it more flowing and ribbon-like.

• The selection memorandum was passed around and signed by all FARC members and attendees.

• Ms. Suits explained the next step would be to place the artist under contract and then begin the redesign work. Fabrication would not begin until the redesign has been completed and approved by Dept. of Veterans’ Affairs staff.

• Ms. Suits thanked the Committee members for their service.

• The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.