



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia
Public Art Commission



Write legislation/ordinance number here.	Meeting Date: 3/7/2022
Applicant/Petitioner	Public Art Commission
Project Description	<p>The Public Art Commission is commissioning a permanent public art installation at the Hillside Court Community playground currently under construction. The playground is the heart of the Hillside Court Apartments and serves as a central community gathering spot for the neighborhood.</p> <p>The vision for this project is a functional work of art that provides a unique character to the playground experience while also meeting community-identified infrastructure needs.</p> <p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the playground with a distinctive aesthetic experience • Highlight the importance of the site as a community facility • Meet at least one functional infrastructure need that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socializing zones with easy child monitoring • Shade structure with easy child monitoring • Seating/benches with easy child monitoring • Enrichment opportunities using sensory play <p>Proposals that combine more than one functional need will receive priority consideration.</p> <p>Fifteen artists from around the Richmond area responded to the RFQ. Three artists were invited to submit a full proposal and the Artist Selection Panel made its final selection: Nastassja Swift.</p>
Project Location	
1500 Harwood St. Richmond VA	
Hillside Court Apartments	
Council District(s): <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> City-Wide	
(Recommending body) Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions
Staff Contact	Susan Glasser, Secretary, Public Art Commission, 804.644.7319, susan.glasser@rva.gov

Conditions for Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet all terms of the City contract including necessary permits • Modify design to comply with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s <i>Public Playground Safety Handbook</i>; should the modifications require significant design revisions (as determined by the PDR Director, Land Use Administration Principle Planner, and the Public Art Commission Secretary), the revised design may require another review by the PAC and final approval by the CPC • Work with the architecture firm HKS, Inc. to determine optimal placement of structures • Confirm that the plexi boxes will be sufficiently climate controlled to prevent the deterioration of felted sculptures • Have design inspected by a certified structural engineer prior to construction
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RATIONAL FOR PLACING ON RRHA PROPERTY

Councilwoman Ellen Robertson approached the PAC to ask if the PAC could add a piece of public art to the Hillside Court playground revitalization project being developed by RRHA. The City Attorney’s Office and the Secretary of the PAC met with the Department of Budget & Strategic Planning to determine if the PAC could use a portion of its budget to fund a non-CIP project. DBSP confirmed that \$306,396 of the PAC’s FY22 budget is “due to the inclusion of a fund balance amount for Percent for the Arts. Several years ago, City Council added funding to Percent for the Arts and the funding was not appropriated; this caused the funding to move to a fund balance account for Percent for the Arts. In an attempt to clean up our CAFR, DBSP moved the funding from the fund balance and into the project for this year.” It was determined that a portion of these funds could be used for this project.

ARTIST’S QUALIFICATIONS

Nastassja Swift is a multi-disciplinary artist holding a BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University. Nastassja was recently invited to Penland School of Craft’s Winter Residency as a Distinguished Fellow. She was the 2021 Summer Artist in Residence with SPACES in Cleveland, where her community parade and exhibition received support from the Ohio Arts Council. In 2019, her short film, and collaborative performance, “Remembering Her Homecoming,” premiered at the Afrikana Independent Film Festival, and screened at the Virginia Film Festival in Charlottesville. She is the recipient of a 2021 Dr. Doris Derby Award, the Art Matters 2021 Fellowship Award, the Black Box Press Foundation 2021 Art as Activism Grant, and the 2020 Virginia Commission of the Arts Fellowship. Her work has been acquired for the Grace Linton Battle Memorial Fund for the Arts Collection, as well as Quirk Hotel in Charlottesville. Nastassja has been included in the Berlin publication *SomeMagazine*, *RVA Magazine*, *RHome Magazine* and the *Stranger*, a Seattle publication. She has participated in several national and international residencies and exhibitions, including her solo exhibit in Doha, Qatar in 2016, Virginia MoCA, The Urban Institute of Contemporary Art in Michigan, and fellowships at the Vermont Studio Center and MASS MoCA.

Nastassja Swift works and lives in Virginia.

CORRELATION TO PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN

The PA Master Plan states: p. 55: Distribute Public Art Equitably

. . . To engender interest and enthusiasm about public art in the city, the program must be active in neighborhoods outside of the downtown core to engage more citizens. Smaller-scale projects created by artists that interact with neighborhood residents can contribute to the texture and identity of an area and help provide a sense of community by adding landmarks, touchstones, and a unique character.

Priority Sites & Projects (pp. 83-89)

- SITES THAT ADDRESS AREAS OF THE CITY NEEDING ATTENTION: . . . Strategic decision-making about where public art is best sited on the south side will be crucial.
- PUBLIC HOUSING SITES
- YOUTH-FOCUSED SITES

CORRELATION TO RICHMOND 300 MASTER PLAN

Goal 4: Urban Design (p. 99)

Public art is critical to showcase a place's uniqueness, culture, and history. . . . Future public art projects and improved streetscapes in all parts of the city set the tone for high-quality development and create pride for residents as they look forward to the future prosperity of their neighborhood and their personal household.

Objective 4.2 (p. 102)

Integrate public art into the built environment to acknowledge Richmond's unique history and neighborhood identity, and engage the creative community, focusing public art efforts in areas that do not have public art today.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nastassja Swift's Proposal