



Staff Report  
 City of Richmond, Virginia  
**Public Art Commission**

Richmond Planning &  
 Development Review

Meeting Date: 11/16/2023

PAC2023-059	
Applicant/Petitioner	The Valentine Museum
Project Description	<p>Gift of Art to the City’s Public Art Collection offered by The Valentine Museum.</p> <p>The Valentine acquired a work of art via a donation from the Commonwealth Public Art Fund which is intended to enhance the block of E. Clay Street that is home to the Museum’s main campus. They would like to gift this work to the City of Richmond.</p> <p><b>The Hole Truth</b> is a two-piece, interactive sculpture designed for installation at The Valentine Museum and funded through the Common Wealth Public Art Fund. The work is composed of two human-scale abstract shapes, each with a hole through its center, and each faced with a mirrored surface. The pieces are interactive, drawing passers-by into the works themselves with their reflective surfaces and strategically situated holes that allow audiences of different heights and abilities to connect with the work in amusing and thought-provoking ways. Beyond serving as playful and welcoming invitations into the museum, the works offer a metaphor for the museum itself. They ask us to question what we include in our storytelling, what we leave out, and what that says about ourselves, our surroundings, and our history.</p> <p>The work consists of power-coated, welded aluminum used to fabricate the main structures. Mirror-finished stainless steel plates will be affixed to the aluminum surfaces to create the reflective surfaces.</p>
Project Location 1015 E. Clay Street	
Council Districts <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
Staff Contact	Susan Glasser, Secretary, Public Art Commission, 804.644.7319, <a href="mailto:susan.glasser@richmondgov.com">susan.glasser@richmondgov.com</a>
Conditions for Approval	<p>The staff recommends accepting this gift with the condition that The Valentine be responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the two sculptures (light cleaning of surfaces, graffiti removal, et al.).</p> <p>It is understood that the exact location of the two sculptures (displayed together or on opposite ends of the block) is still pending following further discussions with the City.</p>

## ARTIST'S QUALIFICATIONS

Mickael Broth (born 1982, Washington DC), also known as The Night Owl, is a Richmond, Virginia-based sculptor, artist, muralist, and writer. Mickael was awarded a Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Professional Fellowship in 2008 for his gallery work and has shown widely around the United States; from museums and galleries to alternative spaces and abandoned buildings. His work is held in numerous private and corporate collections. He has painted over three hundred public murals throughout Richmond, the United States and Europe since 2012, in addition to helping curate multiple public art festivals.

Through his mural work Mickael has been commissioned by all manner of clients, from small local businesses and nonprofits to municipal governments and Fortune 500 corporations. He has been an active member of the community, working with youth groups, as well as leading volunteer groups in the creation of collaborative public art projects. Mickael serves on the board of directors for the RVA Street Art Festival and has been instrumental in the curatorial direction of the organization since its formation in 2012.

In 2017, he was awarded a commission by the City of Richmond for the creation of a 15' tall welded aluminum sculpture that has been installed in front of the Hull Street Library in Richmond's Manchester neighborhood.

## RELEVANT CITY ORDINANCE

Ordinance 97-3-41 states "That all artworks acquired with City funds or any gift or donation of artworks to be located on public property shall be reviewed for acceptance by the Public Art Commission and the Planning Commission for the City of Richmond.

Further, the Gifts of Art Policy included in the referenced ordinance specifies that "If the value of the work is above \$2,000, the Public Art Commission will send a recommendation to the City Planning Commission for their approval or rejection and recommendation to City Council." The proposed gift has been valued at \$37,500

## CORRELATION TO THE PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN

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

. . . 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.

Local Artists and Projects: (p.58)

This plan strongly recommends that the Public Art Program . . . support high quality public art projects by local artists.

## 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

Donating Gifts of Art Application