

Commissioner Szeto

1. Please provide a breakdown of targeted outreach activities to the veteran community regarding artist solicitation for interior station art at Westwood/VA Hospital Station.

The Artist Call for the 2020 Metro Artist Pool was targeted to artists, including veterans who are artists, to be used for all Metro art opportunities across the region for up to 5 years, including the Westwood/VA Hospital Station. See list attached.

2. Who provided veteran representation on the artist review panel?

A ten-person art panel of community stakeholders, which included a veteran and a veteran's family member, selected the artists for the Wilshire/Rodeo, Century City/Constellation, Westwood/UCLA and Westwood/VA Hospital Stations.

The veteran representative was artist, Michael Amescua, appointed in consultation with the VA.

3. Please provide a list of organizations that have been consulted specific to the artist solicitation for interior station art at the Westwood/VA Hospital Station?

See attached list (same as Question #1). Public engagement for the art in the station is ongoing. Recent past events with the interior stations artists have included an art making workshop for veteran residents at VA whose artwork will be included in the final artwork design for the station, read more:

<https://thesource.metro.net/2022/07/29/vaworkshop-metroart/>

An “urban sketching workshop” in the local area followed by an online artist talk, both in collaboration with the Brentwood Art Center, who provide free arts programming to veterans at the West LA VA.

In addition to the station artworks, community-based arts organization Piece by Piece has been hosting a series of hands-on art workshops engaging veterans and community members that recently received national recognition, read more:

<https://thesource.metro.net/2022/11/11/veteranslegacyworkshops/> and <https://art.metro.net/artworks/veteranslegacy/>

Upcoming: Metro will be holding a *Meet the Artists* event for the Westwood/VA Hospital Station and members of the public will have a chance to respond to the artworks in progress.

Sign up for Metro Art's at [Metro.net/art](https://metro.net/art) to stay up to date with artist opportunities, workshops and public programs.

Commissioner McFadden

1. Was there consideration to have military members (or veteran service members) participate in the nomination?

A ten-person art panel of community stakeholders, which included a veteran and a veteran's family member, selected the artists for the Wilshire/Rodeo, Century City/Constellation, Westwood/UCLA and Westwood/VA Hospital Stations.

The veteran representative was artist, Michael Amescua, appointed in consultation with the VA.

2. For this station specifically, could it be adjusted to support a community member that meets the veteran/service-member requirements?

There is no requirement for the artist to be a veteran/service member. The Westside Purple (D Line) Extension Project is federally funded and the artist selection was open to all people legally authorized to work in the United States.

Metro has worked with veterans and veterans' service organizations to ensure that the artwork at the Westwood/VA Hospital Station is reflective of the local environment, considering the people and places that will be served and connected by the future station. Artworks for the station include an abstract artwork reflective of the environment around the station, a collage of iconic architecture and natural flora that includes artworks by veterans created through a mentorship process, a panoramic landscape of the history of the area that includes historic and present-day buildings on the VA campus, and monumental scale portraits of veterans honoring their pre-military, military and post-military lives.

3. What was the criteria used to select Mr. Birk? Was his previous works taken into consideration?

The station artwork proposals included a design concept and preliminary community engagement plan. The art panel evaluated the proposals based on artistic merit and relevance to the station. The highest-ranking proposals were recommended for the commissions.

Birk submitted images of his recent public art commissions; he did not include artworks from his private gallery art portfolio. The *Depravities of War* series from 2007 was not in his application.

4. Can we establish a review board, counsel, etc. to consider the artist for this station

Currently, the artists are under contract and artworks are underway to meet the project delivery schedule. Metro will be holding a Meet the Artists event for the Westwood/VA Hospital Station and members of the public will have a chance to respond to the artworks in progress. If there are concerns about the artwork designs, Metro will work with the public and the artist to address these concerns.

Commissioner Allman

1. Metro's press release from May 3, 2022 included individuals as part of the artist review panel for the Purple (D Line) Extension Transit Project. Which of the following panelists served in the U.S. Armed Forces? **See highlighted name.**
 - a. Arthur Lewis, Creative Director, United Talent Agency Artist Space;
 - b. Anna Sew Hoy, Chair, UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture, Department of Art;
 - c. Cate Thurston, Associate Curator, The Skirball Cultural Center;
 - d. Connie Butler, Chief Curator, The Hammer Museum at UCLA;
 - e. Jean Tardy-Vallernaud, Founding Chair, Century City Arts Council;
 - f. Ken Gonzales-Day, artist;
 - g. LeRonn P. Brooks, Associate Curator, The Getty Research Institute;
 - h. Michael Amescua, artist;**
 - i. Stephanie Vahn, Chair, Beverly Hills Arts and Culture Commission; and
 - j. Thao Nguyen, Art and Design Agent, Creative Artists Agency.

2. Have any of the following artists selected for art projects at the Westwood/VA Hospital station served in the U.S. Armed Forces?
 - a. Sandow Birk
 - b. Victoria Fu + Matt Rich
 - c. Francesco Simeti
 - d. Eloy Torrez

No, there is no requirement for the commissioned artist to have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. The Westside Purple (D Line) Extension Project is federally funded and the artist selection was open to all people legally authorized to work in the United States.

3. How many artists were identified as veterans in the initial pool of applicants for consideration?

There is no requirement for the commissioned artist to have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. The Westside Purple (D Line) Extension Project is federally funded and the artist selection was open to all people legally authorized to work in the United States.

Information on whether an artist has served in the U.S. Armed Forces was not collected for the Artist Pool solicitation.

4. Did Metro, or the artist review panel, take into consideration previous exhibits from prospective artists that were not submitted as part of the application process?

No, to ensure Metro procurements are fair and equal, the panel can only review the submitted materials.

5. What is the process to name a Metro Station?

Metro's station naming process/policy is here: <https://www.metro.net/about/station-naming/>

6. What is the process to rename a Metro Station? Has Metro ever renamed a station in its history, before or after the station reaches operational status?

Marlon Walker, Manager, Metro Construction Relations, is looking into this and will respond when he has further information.

7. Does Metro have the authority to modify Metro-commissioned artwork selections prior to or after installation? If so, under what conditions?

Currently, the artists are under contract and artworks are underway to meet the project delivery schedule. Metro will be holding a *Meet the Artists* event for the Westwood/VA Hospital Station and members of the public will have a chance to respond to the artworks in progress. If there are concerns about the artwork designs, Metro will work with the public and the artist to address these concerns.

8. What was the total art budget for the Purple Extension Transit Project? Please provide a breakdown by station and percentage of budget expenditures to date.

Artist contracts for for the Wilshire/Rodeo, Century City/Constellation, Westwood/UCLA and Westwood/VA Hospital Stations range from \$70,000 to \$149,000 depending on the scope and scale of the artwork opportunity.

Please see the Metro Art Program Policy on the Metro Art at [Metro.net/art](https://metro.net/art) for more information.

9. Why was the Brentwood Art Center event “Conversations on Art: Sandow Birk” limited in capacity when it was a virtual streaming event? Was Metro aware of the limited capacity prior to the event and, if so, why did not advocate for a more open forum?

The artist collaborated with the Brentwood Art Center, a local arts and culture institution who provides free arts programming to veterans at the West LA VA. The Brentwood Art Center hosted the event and capped attendance as they typically do for their virtual artist talks. The event was recorded and posted online.

10. Controversial images from Mr. Birk’s “Depravities of War” exhibit no longer appear on the artist’s website or have been edited. Has Metro communicated (email, phone, video conference, etc) with Mr. Birk at all since December 9, 2022? If so, did Metro suggest that the artist alter or censor his work?

Metro was unaware the artist had made changes to his website until viewing the recording of the January 3, 2023 Veterans Advisory Commission Meeting where it was brought up.

11. What is the review process before finalizing production of art commissioned by Metro? Are there drafting or production schedules outlined in the artist’s contract? If so, can you please provide the current schedule for Westwood/VA Hospital station?

The Westside Purple (D Line) Extension Project schedule is online:
<https://www.metro.net/projects/westside/>

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Commissioner Anderson

1. Did Metro consider the media optics, nationally and in Los Angeles, if Mr. Birk's earlier work came to light? In other words, has anyone in selection, taking into consideration the nominated artists "Depravities of War" public art display, asked themselves "How would this look on Fox News?" Or, even the Los Angeles Times, and then, Fox News.

Birk submitted images of his recent public art commissions, he did not include artworks from his private gallery art portfolio. The *Depravities of War* series from 2007 was not in his application.

2. Did the artist selection panel consider the potential for traumatizing veterans by selecting an artist whose body of work attempts to illustrate commonality between military veterans ("Hero") and suicide bombers ("Hero 2")?

The art panel did not review this body of work in the artist's application.

3. I add that in the Brentwood Art Center presentation the artist's choices of a Navy dirigible ("USS Los Angeles") and the old Pueblo of Los Angeles to be risible as a theme aligned with what the artist called a military audience. Really?

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