



**Design Review Board (DRB)
Staff Report**

Art Installation

Case # 20-15: Fourth Bluff Park Temporary Public Art
Fourth Bluff Park
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant: Carol Coletta
Memphis River Parks Partnership
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Background: The Memphis River Parks Partnership (MRPP) has been implementing public space enhancements in Fourth Bluff Park (also known as Memphis Park) as a part of the Remaining the Civic Commons project. Changes to the layout and landscaping of the park, including new paths, trees, and a dining area, were approved by the Design Review Board at its July 10, 2019 meeting (case #19-80). The temporary public art installation proposed in this application will continue the MRPP's efforts to add more points of interest and activity to this key public space. The art is planned to be installed in mid-April, and will stand until the end of October.

Project Description: The proposed temporary art installation consists of two paired sculptures by Brooklyn artist Hank Willis Thomas. The first sculpture, "Ernest and Ruth" is an 83 in. (h) by 96 in. (w) steel-plate sculpture in the form of a comic speech bubble. The bubble is 48 in. deep and hollow (with steel plates forming the outline of the bubble), and is designed to allow passers-by to sit inside of it, or pose behind it. The second piece, "Harriet and Annie (Capri)" is a similar 84 in. (h) by 108 in. (w) and 24 in. deep sculpture in the form of a jagged exclamation bubble. As with "Ernest and Ruth," "Harriet and Annie (Capri)" is designed to be interacted with. Each sculpture will be bolted to an existing concrete pad for stability.

Staff Report: The Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines emphasizes that public projects should enhance the public realm, and recommends public art as one possible strategy to achieve this goal. The proposed temporary art installation will enhance the public realm by drawing

people into an important public space, and encouraging creative interactions between the public and the built environment.

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval of the temporary art installation as proposed.**