



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

Temporary Public Art

Case # 21-31: Mud Island Park Seasonal Activation
Mud Island Park
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant: Memphis River Parks Partnership
22 N Front St, Ste 960
Memphis, TN 38103

Background: Since its inception, the Memphis River Parks Partnership (MRPP) has used art installations and other temporary activations to draw new visitors to Memphis’s riverfront. In 2019, the Design Review Board approved the installation of 10-foot-high letters reading “Memphis” in the heart of Mud Island Park. This installation quickly became a popular spot for pictures and remains an important attraction for visitors to the park.

The MRPP is now proposing a new seasonal art installation for Mud Island Park, which will be displayed from Memorial Day weekend (beginning May 28) until the end of November 2021.

Project Description: The proposed art installation consists of three vinyl mesh panels displayed on a tiered scaffolding structure located on Mud Island Park’s south lawn. Together, the panels will read “WE HAVE NO TIME FOR THINGS WITH NO SOUL.” The face of the installation will measure 46 ft. (h) by 40 ft. (w), and the scaffolding will have a total depth of 23 ft. 8 in. The text will be displayed across three separate panels, each composed of vinyl mesh, and installed on a different tier of the scaffolding. The first panel will read “WE HAVE,” followed by “NO TIME FOR THINGS WITH NO,” and then by the last panel which will simply read “SOUL.” The top and bottom panels will feature black text on a yellow background, while the middle panel will feature yellow text on a black background. A line of 54 colorful nylon flags with poles ranging from 8 ft. to 10 ft. high will stretch to the north and south of the installation, leading visitors to the southern end of the island.

Staff Report:

Pop-up activations, including art installations and other temporary improvements, are an increasingly common strategy for refreshing public spaces while exploring more permanent improvements. This pop-up approach allows public space managers to experiment incrementally, observing what resonates with the public and draws visitors, and then letting the results guide future programming and improvements. The current proposal for a seasonal art installation on Mud Island Park builds on the Memphis River Parks Partnership's previous work at this park, including the popular "Memphis" installation which is located just east of the proposed installation. DRB staff supports the proposed temporary art as a way to continue exploring new approaches to attracting visitors to the riverfront.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed temporary art installation, to be displayed in the period between May 28 and November 30, 2021.