

**CULTURAL ARTS COMMITTEE
CITY OF PALM DESERT
STAFF REPORT**

MEETING DATE: March 12, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: CONSIDER PURCHASE OF RISING INVERSION SCULPTURE

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the City Council approve expenditure in the amount of \$100,000 for the purchase of *Rising Inversion* by artist Cristopher Cichocki (cha-house-key), to be installed in Ironwood Park, upon approval of grant funding from the Arts in California Parks program.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

At its October 9, 2024, meeting, the Cultural Arts Committee (CAC) reviewed the potential acquisition of *Rising Inversion* for inclusion in the City's Public Art program. The artist, Cristopher Cichocki, presented details about the sculpture, and staff introduced a matching grant opportunity through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town program, which supports projects integrating arts, culture, and design into community development. However, the City's application was deemed ineligible due to administrative criteria.

Staff identified an alternative funding source for this project through the Arts in California Parks grant program, which opened on February 18, 2025. The Letter of Intent is due March 19, 2025. This grant supports early-stage project development, emphasizing partnerships, community engagement, and planning.

Originally commissioned for the Laguna Art Museum's 11th annual Art & Nature program, *Rising Inversion* is a 3,000-pound sculpture measuring 12 feet tall by 40 feet long, with a depth ranging from five feet at the center to one foot at the edges, creating a visually striking, spherical form. The artwork is coated with a phosphorescent pigment, allowing it to absorb sunlight during the day and emit a soft glow at dusk, gradually fading as the evening progresses.

The suggested location for the installation of *Rising Inversion* at Ironwood Park is in a secluded desert area, allowing the land art to merge nature with creativity. This innovative installation would also bring public art to a park that currently has none.

Staff is seeking the CAC's support to recommend that the City Council approve matching funds for the purchase and installation of *Rising Inversion* at Ironwood Park, located at 47800 Chia Drive, contingent on approval of grant funding from the Arts in California Parks program.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The total project cost, including acquisition and installation, is estimated at \$200,000. If the City is awarded the Arts in California Parks grant, staff recommends allocating \$100,000 from the Public Art Fund to meet the required matching contribution.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation of Rising Inversion by Cristopher Cichocki
2. Arts in California Parks Grant Program Information
3. *Rising Inversion* Proposed Location at Ironwood Park