

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

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MEETING DATE: June 11, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION TO PURCHASE A SCULPTURE FROM THE 2025  
DESERT X EXHIBITION

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Discuss purchasing one of the following sculptures from the 2025 Desert X Exhibition:

1. *Unsui* by Sanford Biggers
2. *Plotting Rest* by Kapwani Kiwanga
3. *Soul Service Station* by Alison Saar

**BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

At its meeting on April 9, 2025, the Cultural Arts Committee (CAC) expressed interest in acquiring a sculpture from the 2025 Desert X Exhibition, with specific reference to *The Act of Being Together* by artist José Dávila. Due to budgetary impact, size, weight, and logistical complexity, the Committee decided against the acquisition.

The Committee however requested that staff continue dialogue with Desert X for three alternative artworks from the exhibition that align more closely in terms of scale and installation feasibility.

Sculpture Options:

1. *Unsui* by Sanford Biggers
  - Purchase price: \$400,000.
  - Installation costs would be estimated at \$100,000.
2. *Plotting Rest* by Kapwani Kiwanga
  - Purchase price: not available.
  - The sculpture is scheduled for installation in New York City.
3. *Soul Service Station* by Alison Saar
  - Purchase price: \$600,000.
  - Desert X noted that this artwork may require excessive maintenance due to the installation being built for temporary exhibition.

Given current program obligations and long-term considerations pertaining to the public art budget, staff recommends the Committee consider deferring the acquisition to a future exhibition cycle.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The estimated cost for *Unsui* by Sanford Biggers, including acquisition and installation, is approximately \$500,000. This would be a major investment within the FY 2025/2026 Public Art Budget and would likely require reprioritization of other planned projects.

Acquisition of *Soul Service Station* by Alison Saar would exceed \$600,000, not including installation and unknown future maintenance expenses. Due to the temporary nature of this sculpture, staff recommends against pursuing this option may present significant conservation challenges over time.