

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

MEETING DATE: July 9, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: CONSIDER PURCHASE OF RISING INVERSION SCULPTURE BY
CRISTOPHER CICHOCKI

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the City Council approve expenditure in the amount of \$150,000 for the purchase of *Rising Inversion* by artist Cristopher Cichocki (cha-house-key), to be permanently installed at Ironwood Park.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Rising Inversion is a large-scale, site-specific sculpture originally commissioned by the Laguna Art Museum for its 11th annual Art & Nature program. Fabrication of the artwork was fully funded by the Museum, and the sculpture is now available for purchase at a cost that reflects the significant investment already made in its creation.

The artwork, measuring 12 feet tall by 40 feet long and weighing approximately 3,000 pounds, is constructed in a spherical formation with a depth ranging from five feet at the center to one foot at the edges. The surface is coated with a phosphorescent pigment that absorbs sunlight during the day and emits a soft glow at dusk, gradually fading as night falls—creating an immersive and interactive public art experience.

Ironwood Park, located at 47800 Chia Drive, is a tranquil desert setting with no existing public art. The proposed placement of *Rising Inversion* will offer residents, visitors, and park users an opportunity to engage with large-scale contemporary art in a serene and contemplative outdoor space.

In addition to its artistic merit and interactive quality, *Rising Inversion* holds special significance as the work of Cristopher Cichocki, a Palm Desert native whose internationally recognized career in contemporary art reflects the City's ongoing commitment to nurturing and celebrating local talent.

Grant Funding Background:

In 2024, staff submitted *Rising Inversion* for consideration under the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town grant. The project was deemed ineligible due to administrative criteria unrelated to the artistic quality or community impact of the proposal. In 2025, the project was again submitted under the ARTS in California Parks grant program, but it did not advance to the application stage. No specific reason for this decision was provided.

Despite these grant outcomes, the value of the sculpture and the opportunity it presents for community engagement and cultural enrichment remain clear. Staff therefore recommends direct acquisition of the artwork using approved Public Art funds.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The total cost for the acquisition and installation of *Rising Inversion* is \$150,000. Funds have been approved and are available in the Capital Projects Public Art Projects account. The artist will be responsible for all site preparation, transportation, logistics, and installation of the sculpture, ensuring minimal impact on City resources.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation for *Rising Inversion* by Cristopher Cichocki
2. Cristopher Cichocki Bio
3. LA Times article
4. Palm Springs Life article
5. Proposed Location at Ironwood Park