



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 25-1090, **Agenda Item #:** 10.

6/5/2025

Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of an agreement with Virginia Lee Montgomery in an amount not to exceed \$400,000 for artwork for the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Midfield Concourse Art in Public Places Project. Funding: \$60,000 is available in the Capital Budget of the Aviation Department. Funding for the remaining years of the agreement is contingent upon available funding in future budgets.

Lead Department

Office of Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment.

Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$60,000 is available in the Capital Budget of the Aviation Department. Funding for the remaining \$340,000 of this contract will be added as the construction phases begin.

For More Information:

Angela Means, Director, Office of Arts, Culture, Music & Entertainment, 512-974-1624; Morgan Messick, Assistant Director, Office of Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment, 512-974-7873.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

In August 2024, the Art in Public Places (AIPP) Panel and Arts Commission approved the “Art in Public Places Sites and Opportunities Plan for Austin-Bergstrom International Airport,” which identified and scoped three phases of AIPP opportunities within the current Airport Expansion & Development Program (AEDP).

On April 7, 2025, the AIPP Panel approved the selection process recommendation for the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Midfield Concourse AIPP Project, naming Virginia Lee Montgomery as the selected artist and Carlyn Ray (Glassblower) as the alternate for the \$400,000 commission. (Motion by Chair Lemmo second by Panel Member Davis; approved 5-0-0, with one vacancy and Arts Commission Liaison Maldonado absent).

On April 21, 2025, the Austin Arts Commission approved the selection process recommendation for the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Midfield Concourse AIPP Project, naming Virginia Lee Montgomery as the selected artist and Carlyn Ray (Glassblower) as the alternate for the \$400,000 commission. (Motion by Vice Chair Schmalbach, second by Commissioner Houston; approved 6-0-1, with Commissioners Kracheni, Hussain, Gray, and Maldonado absent).

Additional Backup Information:

This commission is part of Phase II of the C’s AIPP initiative aligned with the AEDP at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS). Developed in partnership between the Office of Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment (ACME) and the Department of Aviation, this multi-phase program was approved by the Arts Commission in August 2024.

Phase II builds upon Phase I by prioritizing Texas-based talent. Of the seven Phase II commissions, four were awarded to Austin-based artists. The Midfield Concourse project represents the city’s continued commitment to

advancing fairness and creative excellence by integrating diverse artistic voices into major civic infrastructure projects.

Artist Selection Process: Midfield Concourse AIPP Project

The Midfield Concourse AIPP opportunity was one of seven Phase II projects administered through an open Request for Qualifications (RFQ) competition exclusively for Texas-based artists:

Application & Outreach:

- RFQ released: January 3, 2025
- Submittal Deadline: February 2, 2025
- Outreach included City social media channels, the Economic Development Department newsletter, and PublicArtist.org.
- Artist info and pre-submittal meetings were held on January 22 and 23, 2025.
- 195 applications were received, and 112 met the minimum qualifications.

Panel Review & Interviews:

- A selection panel composed of public art professionals and community representatives reviewed applications on March 4, 2025.
- Finalist interviews were conducted on March 21, March 25, and April 1, 2025.

Final Recommendation:

- Recommended Artist: Virginia Lee Montgomery - Austin, TX

The recommendation was approved by the AIPP Panel on April 7 and affirmed by the Austin Arts Commission on April 21, 2025.

About the Artist

Virginia Lee Montgomery is an award-winning experimental filmmaker and multimedia artist based in Austin, Texas. Working across video, performance, sound design, and sculpture, Montgomery is known for her surreal, synesthesia-inspired artworks that fuse mysticism, science, and personal narrative. Her interdisciplinary approach and visionary aesthetic make her ideally suited for an ambitious, site-specific installation within the Midfield Concourse.

Project Context Within the AUS AIPP Plan

This project is one of seven Phase II AIPP commissions at AUS. While Phase I prioritized national talent, Phase II focuses on Texas-based artists, with strong local representation. Phase III will be dedicated exclusively to Austin-based creatives.

This phased structure:

- Promotes national excellence,
- Elevates Texas and Austin-based artists,
- Aligns with the airport's long-term capital delivery schedule.

All AIPP commissions are expected to be completed by 2030, in alignment with the full opening of the expanded AUS terminal.

