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AC Transit Picks Artists
For East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project

The AC Transit Board of Directors has approved the selection of lead artists Johanna Poethig and Mildred Howard, supported by Joyce Hsu and Peter Richards, to enhance the 34 stations planned as part of the 9.5-mile East Bay Bus Rapid Transit system.

The Board affirmed the choice of an artist selection panel comprised of arts professionals and city and community representatives, who chose from seven semifinalists who along with many other artists responded to a national call for lead artists and supporting artists and artisans in 2013.

“When this project is built, East Bay communities will enjoy state-of-the-art rapid transit bus service with artistically-enhanced stations that will enliven and upgrade the streets in every neighborhood touched by this project,” said AC Transit Board President Greg Harper.

The team of artists will work to integrate their art with the architecture of the 34 BRT stations in keeping with the theme: Honor the Past and Celebrate the Future. Community members along the East Bay Bus Rapid Transit route will be invited to three workshops this spring to help inform the artists’ work.

Johanna Poethig is a Professor at the Visual and Public Art Department at California State University, Monterey Bay, and is an Oakland resident. Her recent projects include a public artwork for the new Pajaro Park in Monterey County, mosaic medallions for Hamilton Recreation Center in San Francisco and a sculptural installation at Starbird Youth Center in San Jose. Two of her previous major works of public art in downtown San Francisco are a mural for the International Hotel in historic Manilatown and a ceramic tile installation that wraps the eight-story 149 Mason Street Studios.

Mildred Howard, a Berkeley-based artist, has received numerous awards for her critically acclaimed mixed-media and installation work, including an NEA Grant in Sculpture, Rockefeller Artist's Fellowships and the Joan Mitchell Fellowship. Her work is included in major collections, such as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the de Young Museum in San Francisco and the New Museum in New York. Her work has also been widely exhibited internationally. Howard's Moving...
Richmond, a work in which a poem by Macarthur Fellow and poet Ishmael Reed was carved into a forty-foot piece of faceted steel mounted on the wall of Richmond’s BART Station.

Artists Joyce Hsu and Peter Richards will collaborate in a supporting role with Poethig and Howard.

Hsu has received several public art commissions, including a major work at the San Francisco International Airport, and in the cities of Seattle and Cupertino. Her work will enhance upcoming projects for Sacramento’s light rail system and the new Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Oakland.

Peter Richards is the senior artist emeritus at the Exploratorium having worked with its founder Frank Oppenheimer to establish internationally recognized art programs, and serving as the arts program director through 1998. He is best known for creating Wave Organ, a wave-activated sound sculpture located on the San Francisco waterfront. Richard’s recent major work with Susan Schwartzenberg, Philosopher’s Way at McLaren Park was commissioned by the City and County of San Francisco.

The other six semifinalists for lead artist were: Michael Davis of San Pedro, CA; Barbara Grygutis, Tucson, AZ; Leticia Huerta, Helotes, TX; Nancy O’Neil, New Orleans, LA; Catherine Widgery, Cambridge, MA; and Bob Zoell, Pasadena, CA. All of the semifinalists had experience working on transportation projects. Supporting Artists who responded to a separate RFQ and were invited to join perspective Lead Artist teams were: Daniel Galvez, Matthew Geller, Christopher Janney, Sherry Karver, Lordy Rodriguez, URBANROCK Design, and Gus Zoell.

The RFQs for lead and supporting artists were released in late 2013. Development of stations with the integrated artistic elements will occur during major construction of East Bay BRT which is scheduled to begin in Fall 2015.

ABOUT EAST BAY BRT
The East Bay Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project will be a 9.5-mile high-quality, high-capacity public transit system running from downtown Oakland to the San Leandro BART station primarily along International Blvd and E 14th St. Approved by the Cities of Oakland and San Leandro, Caltrans and the AC Transit Board in 2012, BRT will provide reliable public transportation access featuring level boarding, pre-payment, dedicated transit lanes, and other features that have led this technology to be described as “light rail on wheels.” Service is expected to begin in late 2017. For more information, go to http://brt.actransit.org.
The East Bay BRT project is substantially funded by Alameda County Measure B, Regional Measure 2 Bridge Toll Funds, the State of California and the Federal Transit Administration.