

LOCAL

Register your view on public art

BY IVETTE M. YEE
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WEST PALM BEACH • Luminescent sea turtles or shimmering, 3-D waves?

Residents have through Monday to offer their say on which piece of art should grace the Palm Beach County Convention Center.

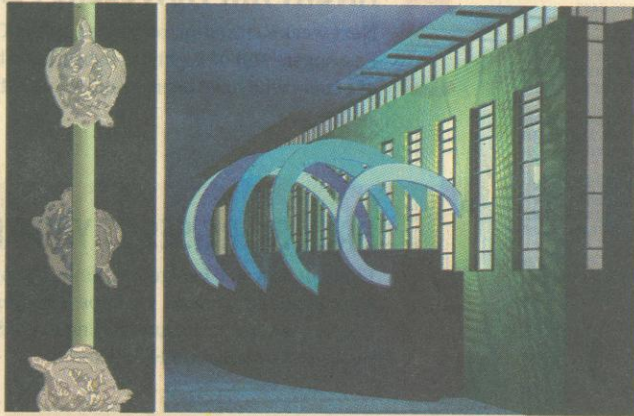
In April, Palm Beach County Art in Public Places issued a call for artists to create a large-scale installation that combines light and sculpture at the convention center, across from the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts.

"We really need something that makes the convention center stand out visually, and art certainly does that," said Bill Nix, vice president of the Palm Beach County Cultural Council and Public Art Advisory Committee member.

"The goal is to create a gateway, an attention-grabber that would have a presence day and night," said Elayna Toby Singer, public art administrator.

Eight artists submitted proposals. Baltimore artist Paul Deeb and Arizona artist Barbara Grygutis were finalists for the \$625,000 project.

"I looked at the convention center and inside there's striking interiors



CONTENDERS: The two public art proposals being considered for the Palm Beach County Convention Center are, from left, by Baltimore artist Paul Deeb and Arizona artist Barbara Grygutis. The county will consider public opinion before choosing the project. Photos/County Art in Public Places

VIEW ART PROPOSALS AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Palm Beach County Art in Public Places is seeking comments about a new project for the County Convention Center, 650 Okeechobee Blvd., in West Palm Beach. Two designs are under consideration and are on display at the convention center and online at www.pbcgov.com/fdo/Art/communityinput.htm

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County seeks public input on art project

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and a water theme so I wanted to key into that," said Grygutis, who is also working on public art in Las Vegas and Canada. Her design, *Wave*, features blue and green spirals that seem to be coming from the building and emanate light at night.

Deeb's concept features 75 poles outside of the center and are adorned with highly polished and texturized sea tur-

tles. The poles are illuminated at night and shine from a distance by day.

"I had a lot of fun doing this," said Deeb, who owns a lighting design firm and has worked on art projects in Miami and Dallas. "Public art is about a community hiring an artist to say something about who they are."

The county is asking residents to share their opinions about the art on www.pbcgov.com/fdo/Art/communityinput.htm or

through comment cards at the convention center, 650 Okeechobee Blvd. The county already has received some thoughts.

While some people praised the art, others criticized the amount of money the county is spending when services are being cut.

"Get serious please; use the money for something important," said a resident from the 33409 ZIP code, which includes the West Palm Beach area.

The county did not release the names of people who commented.

"[That money] could be used for teachers, schools, books, a skateboard park, my salary," wrote someone from the 33406 ZIP code, also the West Palm Beach area.

Singer said a part of a Cultural and Recreational Facilities Bond approved by voters in 2002 will pay for the project. About \$375,000 will come from the public art allocation and \$250,000 from the conven-

tion center's capital construction budget.

The county also has allocated money from the \$1 million bond to six other public art projects, including \$75,000 for an artistic wall treatment at the South County Civic Center, west of Delray Beach, and \$150,000 for a countywide Black Heritage Trail.

Singer said the Public Art Committee realizes the county's tough budget year, but that the dollars for the convention center project were

blessed by voters years ago.

On Sept. 28, Deeb and Grygutis will make presentation to the Public Art Committee. The committee will receive public comments, and make a recommendation to the County Commission, which will have the final vote.

The new public art could be up by next summer.

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