

Sculpture Trail journey to continue

By Mark Fleming, mark.fleming@baytownsun.com Aug 23, 2022



Mayflower is a sculpture by Susan Geissler of Youngstown, N.Y. inspired by childhood memories of Geissler and her siblings testing new rain gear. This sculpture is sponsored by Joan and Ruben Linares.

The 20 sculptures of the Baytown Sculpture Trail have been a centerpiece for Baytown's Downtown Arts District for about six months now, drawing visitors to the area around Town Square to view the artworks from sculptors across the country.

Plans are in motion now for the second chapter of the sculpture trail, as more than 500 artists from across the country and beyond have been invited to submit works for consideration in the exhibit's second year, which will bring a whole new set of sculptures to the heart of the city.

Steve Knight, who heads up the Sculpture Trail effort for Historic Baytown's Arts, Culture and Entertainment District, said the group plans to have even more sculptures for the new exhibit opening in March, with 25-30 expected to be selected.

“We’re expecting for our second year to get a better response than we did the first year,” he said. “We’re hoping to have a lot more to choose from.”

Contributors for the first year came from across the United States and into Canada, with several from Texas. Knight said with research over the year he was able to invite more Texas artists to submit entries this time around.

“I wound up with something like 150, and the first one I had maybe 20,” he said. “We would like to get more entries from Texas artists.”

Based on similar projects elsewhere, the plan has always been to have a rotating exhibit of sculptures drawn from a nationwide call, replacing the works on display annually.

The first set now on display was installed in March and will be removed about the beginning of March in 2023, to be followed by the installation of the new set in time for an opening reception March 18.

Sculptors are invited to submit photos of proposed entries, from which the new set will be chosen. As with the current exhibition, Knight said the plan is to have about half abstract sculptures and about half figurative — that is, in the form of people, animals or familiar objects.

Also like last year, the sculptures must be at least 36 inches tall to be considered. The tallest one in the current exhibition is 14 feet tall. Any medium appropriate for outdoor installation can be used — there are sculptures of iron, aluminum, bronze, stone and wood.

Submissions are being accepted through Oct. 16, then the new group of sculptures will be selected.

The city’s Parks and Recreation Department provides the concrete base for each sculpture and the costs of bringing the pieces to Baytown and hosting the exhibit are paid by sponsors working with the ACE District, which is made up of businesses and arts organizations.

Knight said he expects most of last year's sponsors will also sponsor exhibits for the new year, but more sponsorships are needed for the greater number of sculptures. To be named as a sponsor on the plaque accompanying a sculpture, sponsors contribute \$1,500, \$2,500 or \$5,000, but gifts of any amount help to cover the cost of the exhibit.

Donors of \$500 or more are listed in the event brochure, Knight said.

All of the sculptures on display are available for purchase, though they would stay in place until the end of the show.

Visitors can vote on their favorite sculpture at the red boxes on light poles in the 200 block of West Texas Avenue. The City of Baytown plans to purchase the sculpture that wins the people's choice award and keep it for display somewhere in the city. Voting ends Jan. 1.

Knight said a "Best of Show" will also be selected at the end of this month, with jurors provided by True North, a sculpture exhibit on Heights Boulevard in Houston.