

# **METRO-OWNED ARTWORKS CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT REPORT**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



**METRO  
ARTS  
NASHVILLE**

### INTRODUCTION

This baseline condition assessment and history of Metro-owned public artworks was completed by Metro Arts during the summer and fall of 2017. The creation of such a master inventory and conditions assessment came as a recommendation in the Metro Public Art Community Investment Plan adopted in May 2017 and discussion with several Metro departments during 2016 when the Donated Artwork Policy was developed and adopted. Metro Arts is aware that there are ongoing maintenance challenges with public artworks found on Metro property. Often these works do not have a formal “owner” and they are not being cared for and oftentimes long-term neglect turns into major expense. Our department has cautioned against the city accepting donations of permanent artworks prior to considering the long-term cost and personnel implications of taking care of these assets. Questions about the extent and the condition of the Metro-owned public artwork collection also arose as Metro Parks and the Hillsboro-West End Neighborhood Association began to address the repairs needed at Pedro Silva’s iconic artwork *Sea Serpents*, known locally as *The Dragon*, in Fannie Mae Dees Park.

This Executive Summary includes a brief description of the assessment and immediate recommendations for Metro-owned artworks<sup>1</sup>. A detailed inventory, which includes a brief history and description of the current condition of each, is included in the longer report.

### ASSESSMENT SCOPE

Starting from an existing Metro Arts database of Art in Public Places in Nashville-Davidson County, staff identified artworks on Metro property and visited these artworks to gather preliminary data. These included primarily three kinds of artwork: bronze sculptures, painted murals, and mosaic murals. The initial assessment took place over the summer and fall of 2017. All artworks were assessed from ground level without additional access (scaffolding or lift). Due to limited access, no dimensions were recorded. Conditions were recorded in written and photographic form, with representative photos included in this document. Notes are provided on the artist, commissioning agency, and any previous conservation work, if known. When available, a brief history of the artwork was collected. Accession and maintenance records held by individual departments may yield additional details but were not accessed for the purposes of this report.

### A NOTE ABOUT COST ESTIMATES

A budgetary cost estimate is provided which should be considered very rough and for general planning purposes only. It addresses immediate conservation needs, not ongoing routine maintenance. Once artworks are prioritized for conservation, a detailed scope of work document should be prepared specific to each work in order to solicit cost proposals from qualified conservators in order to proceed with treatment. These initial cost estimates build upon professional conservator estimates from 1993 and 2005 and comparable conservation work Metro Arts has managed while maintaining the Metro Arts Percent for Public Art Collection.

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<sup>1</sup> The findings of this assessment are intended to assist in the development of a long-term maintenance plan, budgeting, and schedule for the conservation of the Metro-owned public artwork. This should be considered a first-round assessment for the purposes of prioritizing the needs of the collection and developing a master plan for implementing work. No work should be performed based solely on these observations, which are not fully comprehensive. Once artworks are prioritized, a more thorough and current examination of conditions should be performed for each object immediately prior to the development of a scope of work and subsequent treatment. Artworks may require evaluation by a conservator and possibly an engineer.

### ARTWORKS THAT ARE NOT INCLUDED

The following artworks or artifacts may be Metro-owned but are not included in this inventory:

- **Artworks in a managed collection.** Several Metro departments have staff dedicated to professional standards of collections management for artwork. Because they are subject to routine condition assessments, these artworks are not included in this survey. Those departments and collections include: Nashville Public Library collection at Main, Collection in the Parthenon, Centennial Arts Center, grave art in the Nashville City Cemetery, Music City Center, and Arts in the Airport.
- **Small-scale monuments and memorials that are not original artworks.**
- **Metro Historical Commission and Tennessee Historical Commission markers.**
- **Artworks not easily accessible to the general public.** Artworks on Metro properties where access is restricted for security, such as interior murals in school cafeterias or libraries, are not included in this survey.

### CONDITION DETERMINATION

Conditions are assigned based on a scale developed from the authors' overall assessment of the collection as a whole and determined by weighing such factors as the artifact's age, usage, maintenance history and other factors in addition to its physical state during the assessment. Although subjective in nature, the ratings have been determined through an attempt to produce an accurate ranking of the object or structure within the context of both the collection as a whole and an understanding of similar materials and conditions in general use. The ranking takes into consideration both the object, element or structure's current state of preservation, and its likelihood for further deterioration.

These conditions assessments should be confirmed by in-depth inspection by a fine arts conservator and, if necessary, a structural engineer prior to and during treatment. All work should be performed or directed by a Professional Associate or Fellow of The American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) specializing in the treatment of public and outdoor art.

The following terms are used in the report to designate condition:

**Excellent:** The artwork represents an ideal of preferred state given the object or structure's age and usage. Little or no immediate treatment concerns are evident and there is little likelihood of deterioration over the intermediate to long term.

**Good:** The artwork represents a reasonably acceptable state given its' age and usage. While some conditions requiring treatment may exist, none represents a source of major immediate concern. There is an expectation of modest deterioration over the immediate to long term.

**Fair:** The artwork represents an average state given the object, element or structure's age and usage. Conditions requiring treatment exist including some that should be treated soon. There is no immediate concern for catastrophic loss, but continued deterioration should be expected over the intermediate to long term.

**Poor:** The artwork represents a below average state given the object, element or structure's age and usage. Major conditions requiring treatment exist including some that should be treated immediately. There is some concern for catastrophic loss over the immediate term and continued deterioration over the short term.

## Conditions Assessment Report for Metro-Owned Artworks

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**Deteriorated:** The artwork represents a state of advanced loss and failure given the object, element, or structure's age and usage. Major conditions requiring treatment are endemic and require immediate stabilization treatment. There is concern for catastrophic loss over the short term. Because of the advanced state of deterioration, some artworks may need to be deaccessioned.

**Conservation in Progress:** The artwork's advanced state of loss and failure has already been assessed and identified as a priority. Conservation efforts are underway.

### TREATMENT PRIORITY

Along with condition designation, each work has been assigned a treatment priority based on its condition assessment. The priority is designed to help Metro fund conservation within the limits of budgets and staff capacity. Additional considerations include: the artwork's historical and cultural significance, visibility of location, value to community, required maintenance, and intended permanence of artwork. Community support groups, when known, are listed.

The works have been assigned one of the following treatment priorities:

**Low:** Artworks categorized as low may be new with no conservation required at this time. They may be designed to require no maintenance or be temporary. They may be in a less visible public location. They may have little to no historical or cultural significance. They may have little to no community support. Artworks of low priority still require a routine cleaning and may require conservation in the future.

**Medium:** Artworks categorized as medium have some condition issues and will require some conservation in the near future. They may be in a more visible public location. They may have some historical or cultural significance. They may have community support.

**High:** Artworks categorized as high are overdue for conservation and require extensive work. They are so historically or culturally significant that their conservation is a priority. They may be in a highly visible location. They may have community support.

**Deaccession:** Artworks whose condition has deteriorated to the point that conservation is not a realistic option should be deaccessioned.

## CONDITION ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRIORITIZATION OF CONSERVATION

**High Priority.** The majority of these eleven (11) artworks date to the establishment and early years of Centennial Park and Shelby Park (1903-1922). The other artworks corresponded to: the death of industrialist Jere Baxter (1907), the Courthouse construction (c. 1937), consolidation of Nashville and Davidson County (1962), and establishment of Fannie Mae Dees Park (c. 1980). Many of these artworks are by nationally-recognized artists: Belle Kinney, Enid Yandell, George Julian Zolnay, David Harriton, and Pedro Silva. Of them, Belle Kinney and Puryear Mims are Nashville artists. Park Board Member Major E.C. Lewis, though not a professional artist, was the creative mind behind several concrete follies that are iconic artworks in Centennial and Shelby Parks. The severely deteriorated state of these artworks is the result of their age and lack of routine conservation. **Rough cost estimate: \$1,660,000 for immediate needs only.** Additional funds will be required for routine cleanings and ongoing conservation.

**Medium Priority.** These six (6) artworks date from the Art Deco artwork of the Courthouse (c. 1937) to more recently installed sculptures at Hermitage Park (2002). All six are nationally-recognized artists: Dean Cornwell, Lin Emery, Alan LeQuire, Gary Ernest Smith, Russell Faxon, and Joe Sorci. Of them, Alan LeQuire and Joe Sorci are Nashville-based artists while Russell Faxon maintains a studio in Bell Buckle, Tennessee. These artworks have condition issues that require conservation in the near future. **Rough cost estimate: \$13,500 for immediate needs only.** Additional funds will be required for routine cleanings and ongoing conservation.

Title	Date	Dept	Location	Artist(s)/Fabricator	Broad Classification	Condition	Conservation Priority	Rough Estimate	Possible Associated Community Group
King John, Moses, Justinian, Justice	c 1937	General Services	Metro Courthouse	Harriton, David	Sculpture	Poor	High	\$250,000	
Jere Baxter	1907	MNPS	Jere Baxter Middle School	Kinney, Belle	Sculpture	Poor	High	\$150,000	
Founding of Nashville	1962	Parks	Cumberland River Greenway	Mims, Puryear	Sculpture	Fair	High	\$100,000	Greenways for Nashville
Gold Star Monument to WW I Veterans	1922	Parks	Centennial Park	Zolnay, George Julian	Sculpture	Poor	High	\$250,000	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park
Gunboat Tennessee Monument	1910	Parks	Centennial Park	Lewis, E.C.	Sculpture	Poor	High	\$200,000	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park
Robertson Monument	1903	Parks	Centennial Park	Venable Brothers	Sculpture	Poor	High	\$80,000	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park
Sea Serpent (The Dragon)	c 1980	Parks	Fannie Mae Dees Park	Silva, Pedro	Sculpture	Conservation in Progress	High	\$100,000	Hillsboro West End Neighborhood Association
Shell Spring	c 1906	Parks	Centennial Park	Lewis, E.C.	Sculpture	Deteriorated	High	\$100,000	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park
Thomas Monument	1907	Parks	Centennial Park	Yandell, Enid	Sculpture	Poor	High	\$250,000	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park
Water Fountain Shelter	c 1909	Parks	Shelby Park	Lewis, E.C.	Sculpture	Deteriorated	High	\$100,000	
Woman's Monument	1904	Parks	Centennial Park	Southern Marble	Sculpture	Poor	High	\$80,000	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park
Industry, Agriculture, Commerce, Statesmanship	c 1937	General Services	Metro Courthouse	Cornwell, Dean	Mural	Fair	Medium	\$5,000	
Ariel	1979	Parks	Centennial Park Art Center	Emery, Lin	Sculpture	Fair	Medium	\$1,000	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park
Cleared for Landing	2002	Parks	Hermitage Park	Sorci, Joe	Sculpture	Fair	Medium	\$1,000	Donelson-Hermitage Rotary Club
Owen Bradley	1999	Parks	Owen Bradley Park	Smith, Gary Ernest	Sculpture	Fair	Medium	\$4,000	Music Row Neighborhood Association
Timothy Demonbreun	1996	Parks	Cumberland River Greenway	LeQuire, Alan	Sculpture	Fair	Medium	\$1,500	Greenways for Nashville
The Readers	2000	Public Library	Sally Beaman Park	Faxon, Russell	Sculpture	Fair	Medium	\$1,000	Friends of the Green Hills Library

**Conditions Assessment Report for Metro-Owned Artworks**

**CONDITION ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRIORITIZATION OF CONSERVATION**

 **Low Priority.** These thirty-seven (38) artworks represent artworks which has received recent conservation attention, require little to no maintenance, or are relatively new. **While no funds are recommended for immediate conservation, additional funds are necessary for routine cleanings and future conservation.**

 **Deaccession.** Artworks whose condition has deteriorated to the point that conservation is not a realistic option should be deaccessioned.

	Title	Date	Dept	Location	Artist(s)/Fabricator	Broad Classification	Condition	Priority	Rough Estimate	Possible Associated Community Group
18	Chief Justice Adolpho A. Birch Jr.	2016	General Services	Davidson County Criminal Court	Hanlon, Brian	Sculpture	Excellent	Low	\$0	
19	Courage, Loyalty, Law, Justice, Security, Wisdom	c 1937	General Services	Metro Courthouse	Chambellan, Rene Paul	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	
20	Lioness, Snake, Bison	c 1937	General Services	Metro Courthouse	Chambellan, Rene Paul	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	
21	Sir Draco Star (Eli)	2007	General Services	Nashville Children's Theatre	Kneiss, Zophia	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Nashville Children's Theatre
22	Buffalo	2009	MDHA	Buffalo Park	Cemrock Landscapes Inc.	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Dickerson Road Merchants' Association
23	Polar Bears	1930	MDHA	Gernert Studio Apartments	Mattei Plaster Relief Ornamental Company	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Edgehill Neighborhood Coalition
24	[Belmont Student Benches ]	1999	MDHA	12th Avenue South on sidewalk	Hall, Susan	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	12 South Neighborhood Association
25	Cumberland View Community Mural	2015	MDHA	Cumberland View Housing	Rudloff, Andee and neighborhood	Mural	Good	Low	\$0	
26	Fall Awake Bench	1999	MDHA	12th Avenue South on sidewalk	Collins, Julie, Caleb Gray, and Tiffany Torree	Sculpture	Fair	Low	\$0	12 South Neighborhood Association
27	All Roads Lead to Family	2004	MNPS	McGruder Family Resource Center	Whitfield, Anthony and community center youth	Mural	Excellent	Low	\$0	Catholic Charities of Tennessee
28	Bell Garden Community Mural	2015	MNPS	Bellevue Middle School Bell Garden	Michael Cooper and neighborhood	Mural	Good	Low	\$0	Bellevue Edible Learning Lab Inc.
29	NorWall Mural	2016	MNPS	McGruder Family Resource Center	Love III, Joseph "Doughjoe"	Mural	Good	Low	\$0	Catholic Charities of Tennessee
30	A Splash of Color	2000	Parks	Watkins Park Community Center	Doug Stevenson, Ronnica Stanley, and Lynn Harroff "Roff"	Mural	Fair	Low	\$0	
31	[Birdbath]	c 1998	Parks	Centennial Park Art Center Garden	Rice, Tom	Sculpture	Excellent	Low	\$0	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park
32	Bridging Two Rivers	2016	Parks	Two Rivers Park	Bard, J. Dante and Troy Duff	Mural	Excellent	Low	\$0	Greenways for Nashville
33	[Cast Bronze Sculptures on the Outdoor Signage]	1999	Parks	Warner Park Nature Center	Billingsley, Cindy	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Friends of Warner Parks
34	Collaboration of Communities	2010	Parks	East Park Community Center	McBride, Michael J. and mental health consumer volunteer artists	Mural	Excellent	Low	\$0	
35	Confederate Private Monument	1909	Parks	Centennial Park	Zolnay, George Julian	Sculpture	Poor	Low **	\$100,000	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park
36	Edmondson Memorial	1981	Parks	Edmondson Park	Ridley, Greg	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	
37	The Guardian	2000	Parks	Warner Park Nature Center	Sorci, Joe	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Friends of Warner Parks
38	[Hawk Weathervane]	1999	Parks	Warner Park Nature Center	McDonald, Joe	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Friends of Warner Parks
39	Incline	1999	Parks	East Bank Greenway	Sorci, Joe	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Greenways for Nashville
40	[Industrial Salvage Mosaic]	1999	Parks	East Bank Greenway	Sorci, Joe	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Greenways for Nashville
41	[Industrial Salvage]	1999	Parks	East Bank Greenway	Sorci, Joe	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Greenways for Nashville
42	Reach for the Stars	1996	Parks	Easley Community Center at E.S. Rose Park	Shimmin, Mimi, Doug Stevenson, Pam Vallett, and neighborhood children	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	
43	[Sleeping Bird Garden Sculpture]	c 1998	Parks	Centennial Park Art Center Garden	Rice, Tom	Sculpture	Excellent	Low	\$0	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park
44	[Spiderweb Mobile]	2000	Parks	Warner Park Nature Center	Outlaw, Adrienne	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Friends of Warner Parks
45	[Stone Ring Garden Sculpture]	c 1998	Parks	Centennial Park Art Center Garden	Andrews, Mike	Sculpture	Excellent	Low	\$0	Conservancy for the Parthenon and Centennial Park

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46	[Sylvan Park Community Mosaic]	2002	Parks	Richland Park	Stevenson, Doug	Sculpture	Fair	Low	\$0	Sylvan Park Neighborhood Association
47	Tennessee Woman Suffrage Monument	2016	Parks	Centennial Park	LeQuire, Alan	Sculpture	Excellent	Low	\$0	Tennessee Woman Suffrage Monument Inc.
48	Threshold	1999	Parks	East Bank Greenway	Sorci, Joe	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Greenways for Nashville
49	[Tile Mosaic in the Stone Amphitheater]	1998	Parks	Warner Park Nature Center	Davidson, Bernice	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Friends of Warner Parks
50	[Tile Mosaic on Reception Desk, Restrooms, and Kitchen]	1998	Parks	Warner Park Nature Center	Shimmin, Mimi and volunteers	Sculpture	Good	Low	\$0	Friends of Warner Parks
51	[Warner Park Nature Center Benches]	1995	Parks	Warner Park Nature Center	Hood, Vic	Sculpture	Fair	Low	\$0	Friends of Warner Parks
52	[Wetlands Murals]	2000	Parks	Warner Park Nature Center	Tupper, Kathy	Mural	Good	Low	\$0	Friends of Warner Parks
53	Dr. John Jackson Lentz	2016	Public Health	Lentz Public Health Center	Kooienga, William	Sculpture	Excellent	Low	\$0	
54	Rolling Hills	2000	Public Library	Hermitage Branch Public Library	Ulibarri, Jerry	Mural	Excellent	Low	\$0	
55	Ed Temple	2015	Sports Authority	First Tennessee Park	Hanlon, Brian	Sculpture	Excellent	Low	\$0	
56	Can-Do	1999	MDHA	12th Avenue South on sidewalk	Lucking-Reilley, Mary Threalkill, James, Peggy Anderson, Marvin Stewart, and neighborhood children	Sculpture	Deteriorated	Deaccession	\$0	12 South Neighborhood Association
57	Caldwell School Mural	1994	MNPS	Caldwell Elementary School		Mural	Deteriorated	Deaccession	\$0	
								<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,773,500</b>	

\*\* Conservation work on the Confederate Private Monument is not recommended as a priority at this time in light of the current national conversation on Civil War monuments.

### FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Identify Metro funding sources** for conservation. Funds may be available within departmental budgets and within 4% funds. Determine if any artworks should be accessioned into the Percent for Art Collection, and if so, determine if Percent (bond) funds may be spent on conservation.
2. **Identify community funding sources.** Some communities have an Adopt-A-Monument Fund that allows individuals and organizations to support conservation efforts. This could be administered through a friends group or a Metro department. There may also be affinity groups with a connection to certain monuments.
3. **Apply for grants from outside funders who support the conservation of historic public artworks.** Some of these funders include the Tennessee Historical Commission, National Endowment for the Arts, Andrew Mellon Foundation, Bank of America Merrill Lynch and others. This type of grant research and management would require personnel resources.

### NEXT STEPS

#### IMMEDIATE STEPS

1. **Determine funding resources and personnel structure** for management of Metro-owned artworks.
2. **Hire professional conservator to provide recommendations and cost estimates for select artworks.** Cost estimate for conservator's report on high priority artworks is \$45,000-\$50,000 and on medium priority artworks is \$20,000-\$25,000.
3. **Finalize prioritization of artworks for conservation with results of conservator reports.** This may be based on condition, estimate for conservation, significance to community, and value to Metro department responsible for its care.
4. **Develop a Metro-wide collections management policy that includes:**

- a. **Deaccessioning artworks.** Artworks in a deteriorated condition and without strong significance to the community may need to be deaccessioned.
  - b. **Accessioning public art that Metro owns into the Public Art Collection.** This is an option which may be appropriate for some artworks. This is a recommendation in the Metro Public Art Community Investment Plan.
  - c. **Stewardship of Metro-owned artworks not accessioned into the Public Art Collection.** This should identify who will manage and how these artworks will be managed as well as recommendations for maintenance and conservation funding.
5. **Develop a policy for accepting memorials on public property, whether or not they are part of the Public Art Collection, in collaboration with the Metro Historical Commission.** This policy should include criteria (aesthetic, subject matter, technical considerations) for reviewing proposals and recommendations for how maintenance and conservation of memorials should be funded. This is a recommendation in the Metro Public Art Community Investment Plan.

### OTHER OPPORTUNITIES AND OPTIONS

6. **Explore conservation training partnerships both locally and nationally.** The Middle Tennessee region has very few object conservators and it is often difficult to find professionals who may conduct this work. The creation of a conservation corps is a recommendation in the Metro Public Art Community Investment Plan, which may seed additional professionals in the community and interest from youth in this career path. By working with other local institutions engaged in conservation education and training, we can involve local artists, fabricators and other skilled builders in developing skills specific to conducting conservation assessments and conserving outdoor sculpture. These partnerships would require additional personnel resources and funding.
  - a. **Fisk University's new Museum Studies Certificate Program, which includes tracks in Conservation.** Metro Arts has been in discussions with Fisk about potentially partnering with students on conservation projects. They are exploring a program with Yale and two other universities in order to bring more diversity into the museum field.
  - b. **Opportunity Now.** Metro Arts' placements for youth in arts-related industries has already been one of the most popular offerings in Mayor Barry's program to provide young people in Davidson County access to employment. Youth have already participated in the Dragon restoration project. Employment placements related to conservation, museum studies and public art could expand with additional personnel and funding.
7. **Provide identification plaques at existing artworks.** While a few of the artworks are labeled, most are not. Many of the artworks would be better appreciated and understood with some historical context. Consider exploring this or other programming as a project with the Robert Churchwell Museum Magnet Elementary School or John Early Museum Magnet Middle Prep School. This type of programming would require additional personnel resources and funding. Cost estimate for 8"x10" etched stainless steel plaque is \$350. Cost estimate for entire collection (57 artworks) is \$19,950.