



**MEMO TO:** Mike Nearing, City of Ann Arbor  
**FROM:** Omari Rush, Ann Arbor Art Center  
**DATE:** December 27, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** Stadium Boulevard - Artist Recommendation

The Ann Arbor Art Center has been honored to manage the selection of art for Stadium Boulevard as part of that road's reconstruction.

**Recommendation: Brian Brush, 'Leaven'**

As a result of our process and having considered all the feedback we received from the public, City of Ann Arbor staff, and our project advisory committee, the Ann Arbor Art Center recommends the installation of Brian Brush's artwork 'Leaven' on the two new retaining walls of Stadium Boulevard.

Brian Brush labels himself a "creative nomad," primarily splitting time between New York City, Montreal, and project sites around the world where he creates large-scale spatial and sculptural installations with a focus on the relationship between light, material, and cultural identity of place. He earned a degree in environmental design from Montana State University and later received master's degrees in both architecture and urban planning from Columbia University. Currently, Brian is growing his public art practice, BRUSH, and is pursuing a Ph.D. as a Fulbright Scholar through McGill University. Brian has twice been awarded the Public Art Network Year in Review Award by Americans for the Arts and his work has appeared in publications including *Metropolis Magazine*, *Interior Design* magazine, *The Architect's Newspaper*, *ArchDaily*, *Fast Company's Co.Design*, *Atlantic Cities*, and Phaidon Press's recent book, *Room: Inside Contemporary Interiors*. In September 2016, Brian presented his work in "Mediating the Identity of Place" as an invited speaker at the Media Architecture Summit in Toronto.

Leaves and limestone retaining walls previously prominent at the installation site inspire Brian's proposed Ann Arbor installation, 'Leaven.' This artwork visually softens the hard boundary of the new concrete retaining walls with a vine-like relief sculpture of aluminum diamond-shaped 'leaves' that reflect diffused images of the ever-changing adjacent environment. Below are notable characteristics of the proposed artwork:

Material: Anodized aluminum is the installation's primary material. The anodization process prevents corrosion and screw anchors and spacers will be stainless steel. The aluminum's 3-millimeter thickness and the installation's spacers will limit pedestrians' ability to bend the art.

Reflection: The aluminum reflects softened and diffused light, rather than bright and sharp light. Cars travel parallel to this art, which limits direct reflection of headlights off of the installation.

Safety: Edges of the aluminum will be sanded and buffed and the installation doesn't extend beyond three inches from the walls' surfaces. Both characteristics reduce safety (snag) hazards.

**Advisory Committee**

A committee of community leaders, artists, arts professionals, and Ann Arbor residents advised the Art Center throughout this process and were selected by the Art Center given their backgrounds, expertise, and diverse perspectives:

Lisa Borgsdorf, University of Michigan (U-M) Museum of Art  
Lori Brewer, Brewer's Towing



Allison Buck, City of Ann Arbor Public Art Commission and Ann Arbor Film Festival  
Justin Herrick, Entrepreneur and Restaurant Owner  
WAP John, Grafaktri, Inc  
John Kotarski, City of Ann Arbor Public Art Commission  
Lucie Nisson, Mosaic Artist and POP-X Founding Partner  
Leslie Raymond, Ann Arbor Film Festival  
Lori Roddy, Neutral Zone  
Mike Savitski, Savitski Design  
Mia Shin, Pioneer High School  
Versell Smith, Corner Health Clinic  
Mary Thiefels, Neutral Zone  
MaryAnn Wilkinson, U-M Taubman College/U-M Museum of Art  
(Key Art Center Staff: Marie Klopf, President and CEO; Omari Rush, Director of Community Engagement; and Megan Winkel, Gallery Director)

### **Our Process**

1. Call for Art Submissions: Our call for proposals described the project, the site, and ideal characteristics of and restrictions related to proposals. We used CaFÉ as the submission portal, open July 1 - August 31, 2016. We promoted the call in social media, articles were written about the opportunity, and we created a special webpage to share information and responses to frequently asked questions. We received 57 proposals.
2. Internal Review: Art Center and City staff reviewed all proposals and determined 29 met minimum submission requirements. (About 10% of the proposals were submitted by Ann Arbor area artists.)
3. External Review: Ten community members performed a detailed review of the 29 proposals and scored them. The top three scoring proposals moved forward: 1st - Brian Brush, 2nd - Lisa Sauvé/Synecdoche Design, 3rd - Katherine Larson.
4. Public Vote: We surveyed the public, asking them to vote on their favorite of the three proposals. We promoted this in a variety of ways, for instance, in social media, on the radio, and through a two-minute video we produced (with 2,700 views). There were almost 2,000 votes and the two proposals with the most votes moved forward: Brian Brush (31%) and Katherine Larson (41%).
5. Artist Interviews: Art Center and City staff interviewed Brian and Katherine about their proposed installation design, materials, process, and timeline. Both interviews generated in staff enhanced feelings of confidence in selecting either artist.
6. Town Hall Meetings: Two town hall meetings were held as an opportunity for the public to give the Art Center direct feedback about the final two proposals. Nine community members attended and uniformly preferred Brian Brush's proposal for this project site.
7. Final Jury Vote: Members of the project advisory committee convened as the final jury to 1) review all of the feedback from throughout the process, 2) discuss the two proposals, and 3) make a final vote. Brian Brush was unanimously voted the winner.

### **Timeline (subject to modification)**

January 2017: Public Art Commission votes on a resolution in support of Brian Brush, and if approved, then City Council votes on selecting Brian Brush.

Winter 2017: (Pending City Council approval) Final City of Ann Arbor contracting with Brian Brush regarding installation details and timelines.

Fall 2017: (After the entire road reconstruction project has been completed) Brian's six-week installation process begins.