

# REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)



## Highway 25 Utility Box Mural Project- Hollister, CA Clean California Program, 2023

**Submission Deadline: Sunday, January 15, 2023 (11:59pm PST)**

The San Benito County Arts Council seeks local artists or artist teams to submit their qualifications to create and install a site-specific mural on one of five utility boxes along Highway 25 in Hollister, California. This project is part of a State Highway Beautification Project, sponsored by the California Department of Transportation and the Clean California Program.

### Project Background

Launched by Governor Newsom as part of his California Comeback Plan, Clean California is investing \$1.1 billion for state and local governments to clean up trash and debris statewide, beautify community gateways and public areas along highways, streets and roads, and to provide good jobs to thousands of Californians.

This Clean California Beautification Project is located along Highway 25 near the east entrance to Pinnacles National Park, in the community of Hollister, in San Benito County. This bypass route serves as the “main street” through multiple residential neighborhoods, and retail and industrial developments. This project is an opportunity to soften the stark appearance of the many sound walls along this corridor by adding landscaping to increase shade and reduce urban heat island effects, to suppress weeds and discourage graffiti, and to add seasonal color, resulting in a more aesthetically pleasing, vibrant and comfortable pedestrian and bicycling environment. It is also an opportunity to add aesthetic and artistic elements which enhance pedestrian scale and create a more distinctive community identity which highlights the cultural heritage of the area.

The San Benito County Arts Council and Caltrans have commissioned artist James Peterson of Art Contraptions to create and install a site-specific outdoor sculpture at the corner of Meridian St. and Highway 25. The sculptural piece will be installed in Spring 2023 and will include aesthetic elements that reflect and enhance community identity, as well as integrate with the overall goal of this Caltrans project to beautify the route and encourage pedestrian and bicycle usage for local residents and visitors. *As part of this beautification project, the project team is currently seeking local artists/artist teams to create and install 5 Utility Box Murals along this stretch of highway between Santa Ana Rd. and Sunnyslope Rd.*

### Utility Box Mural Specifications

#### **Box Dimensions**

Approx. 33” x 37.5” x 65” (See Figure 1 & Figure 2 for sample images); only large boxes will be painted

#### **Box Locations**

1. Route 25 at Tres Pinos Road (SW corner)
2. Route 25 at East Park Street (SE of crosswalk)
3. Route 25 at Hillcrest Road (SW corner)
4. Route 25 at Meridian Street (NW corner)
5. Route 25 at Santa Ana Road (NE corner)

## Box Themes

To engage the local community in this project, a community input survey was distributed to Hollister residents in March 2022, revealing the following artwork preferences:

- Respondents favored realistic representation (62%) in the artwork, followed by whimsical styles (24%) and abstract styles (14%)
- Respondents favored the depiction of local histories and assets, such as the Pinnacles National Park, agriculture (63%), followed by the natural world and the environment (42%) and diverse communities and cultures (37%)
- Warm colors and earth tones were found more appealing than cool tones or vibrant colors
- Recurring artwork themes included:
  - Nature-inspired: local flora and fauna, native plants and wildlife, birds (hawks & hummingbirds), mustard fields, San Benito ecology (benitoite)
  - Agriculture: apricots, walnuts, cowboys/vaqueros, horses/cattle, Rodeo
  - Indigenous history and people
  - Local history & assets: Pinnacles National Park (condors), mountains & hills
  - Youth & families: diverse communities, Latinx culture, local schools, 4H, parks, theater/dance

## Artwork Installation Process

1. The artist must do all washing, priming, painting and sealing.
2. The box is sanded down with 120 grit sandpaper in order to remove any debris as well as provide a textured surface for the paint primer.
3. The box is hand washed with mild soap and water to remove any remaining dirt or debris.
4. The box is allowed to dry thoroughly.
5. The box is primed with a water based metal primer and left to cure for a period of two weeks.
6. The box is then painted with acrylic paints. Nova color acrylic paints with a lightfast of 1 are highly recommended in order to withstand the natural weather conditions.
7. The artwork is then left to cure another week.
8. The artwork is sealed with anti-graffiti sealant.

## Artwork Qualities

- Aesthetics. Artwork must be of high aesthetic quality, including consideration of content, craftsmanship, uniqueness and relevance to the artwork's location.
- Thematic Responsiveness. Artwork must compliment the character of the neighborhood and be responsive to the themes and styles identified in the community public art survey. Submissions of artwork that are overtly sexual, political or religious in nature will not be reviewed by the review panel.
- Artist Experience. Artwork must be the work of artists or artist teams who can demonstrate experience with past works, especially with large-scale public art projects.
- Durability. Artwork must be comprised of durable and safe materials that can withstand long-term exposure in an outdoor environment, be resistant to vandalism, and be mindful of maintenance requirements. Specific product types and brands will require approval by Caltrans prior to installation.
- Concept Quality. Artwork must exemplify artistic excellence and creativity and must be a completely original concept.
- Technical Practicality. Artwork must be feasible to install as proposed, in consideration of site and structure characteristics, and appropriate for public viewing, use and access.
- Caltrans Requirements. Artwork must conform to Caltrans Transportation Art Guidelines, including all required copyright waivers.



**Figure 1 Sample Box at Sunnyslope & Highway 25**



**Figure 2 Sample large box at Meridian & Highway 25**

## General Specifications

Artwork should consider the general context and translate well from various viewing angles. Artwork design must include each of the four (4) primary viewpoints.

Artist applicants must review Caltrans Transportation Art Guidelines ([see Attachment 1](#)) and ensure that their work can meet all artwork requirements. Artists cannot paint any hinges, locks, handles, dials, gauge windows, antennae, etc. – i.e. service cabinet must remain fully functional. Applicants must read, acknowledge and accept the Rules and Terms to Apply when responding to this RFQ.

Note: The terms of the contract are non-negotiable and failure to accept the terms of the contract will result in disqualification from the project at the proposal phase. Moreover:

- Selected artist will be required to waive their rights of integrity to commissioned artwork as pertains to its removal or repair as set forth in the California Art Preservation Act and the Visual Artists Rights Act and as described under the Caltrans Transportation Art Guidelines.
- All artwork materials must have a minimum lifespan of five (5) years as specified in the Public Art License Agreement, and artists or artist teams must be prepared, if selected, to provide a maintenance plan for the work as part of the final submission.

## Eligibility

Artist applicants age 21+ and based in San Benito County are eligible to apply.

## Budget

The budget for this project is \$1,500 per Utility Box Mural. Total budget includes all design, materials, installation, assistants and other project costs.

## Submission Requirements

All applications must be submitted online via the San Benito County Arts Council's website at <https://www.sanbenitoarts.org/public-art-projects-artist-application>. Hardcopies are not accepted. Submittals of application materials sent to staff email will not be accepted. **The deadline for the online submittal is 11:59 pm on Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Please Note:** Failure to submit using the San Benito County Arts Council's online application form or failure to include all required materials herein may result in the application being deemed incomplete and ineligible for consideration. We encourage you to submit all required application materials, including all written materials and images, well in advance of the deadline. In this way, if you/your team have a technical issue with the online application process, there may be opportunity to contact the San Benito County Arts Council to address the issues before the deadline.

*The Arts Council will host a virtual **Artist Workshop on Thursday January 5<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm** review the submission process and help artists prepare a successful application. Click here to register for the free online event: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/artist-applicant-workshop-utility-box-mural-project-tickets-490511863187>*

## Submission Package

Applicants must be prepared to provide the following information and acknowledgements as part of a complete submission:

### **ARTIST INFORMATION (applicants must provide the following information)**

- Artist Contact Information
- Artist Bio

- Work Sample Links (5-10) that relate to this RFQ, including:
  - Artwork that connects to the themes and styles reflected in the community input survey
  - Experience with public art projects of a similar budget size and scope
  - Evidence of working with other collaborators or collaborative teams
- Artist Statement about what interests you in this project and what you propose to paint

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (applicants will be asked to agree to the following)**

- Registration. Artists must agree to register with the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) within 4 days of being notified of selection, or by 1/24/23. The Arts Council will reimburse artists for the \$400 registration fee.
- Assistants. The selected artist(s) must provide a list of any assistants anticipated to be on-site during installation. List must include names and contact information. All assistants must be 21 years of age.
- Ownership of Materials. Waiver of proprietary rights for artwork. All documents, including sketches, plans, simulations, specifications, reports, and all other materials, including models, submitted as part of the proposal will become the property of the Caltrans upon submittal.
- Selected artist(s) agrees to being photographed and/or filmed as part of the design and installation process for purposes of publicity and project documentation.
- Selected artist(s) will be required to waive their rights of integrity to commissioned artwork as pertains to its removal or repair as set forth in the California Art Preservation Act and the Visual Artists Rights Act and as specified in the Caltrans Transportation Art Guidelines.
- All artwork materials must have a minimum lifespan of five (5) years, and artists or artist teams must be prepared, if selected, to provide a maintenance plan for the work as part of the final submission.

**Review and Selection Criteria**

- *Artistic Merit.* The aesthetic quality of the artist’s past work, including content, craftsmanship, uniqueness and relevance to its environment.
- *Experience.* The degree to which the artist’s past work relates to the goals and parameters of the Highway 25 Public Art Project.
- *Ability.* The artist’s demonstrated ability to translate art concepts into durable and safe materials that can withstand long-term exposure in an outdoor environment.

Review panel will consist of 5 members. Applications will be reviewed the week of January 15<sup>th</sup>- January 20<sup>th</sup>, and artist applicants may be contacted via phone to verify submission information. Final selected artist will be notified by January 20, 2023 and will be expected to register with the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) by January 24, 2023. The San Benito County Arts Council will provide technical assistance on the DIR application, if needed, as well as reimburse artists for the \$400 DIR registration fee.

**Timeline**

5 pm January 5, 2023	Virtual Artist Applicant Workshop
January 15, 2023	RFQ submissions due
January 16-20, 2023	Formal review by public art selection committee
January 20, 2023	Finalists notified & virtual interviews scheduled
January 24, 2023	Selected artist to register with Dept. of Industrial Relations
Jan-Feb. 2023	Selected artist to review/sign contract with SBC Arts Council
Feb.-March 2023	Artists to develop final design; needs approval from Arts Council & Caltrans

April-May 2023	Artwork installation (exact dates of installation will be determined after project construction work is awarded and are subject to change within this time period)
June-July 2023	Community Celebration

**\*FINAL DESIGN** (Selected artist will be asked to create the following between February-March 2023)

- Visual proposal including:
  - Detailed, well-rendered, color concepts - hand drawn or computer-generated simulation - of the proposed artwork.
  - Proposed artwork title
  - Brief description of concept and inspirations for the artwork
  - Color palette
  - Materials description

**Contact**

Please direct questions about the project to Jennifer Laine, Executive Director, San Benito County Arts Council at [info@sanbenitoarts.org](mailto:info@sanbenitoarts.org) or 831-636-2787.

Direct all questions related to use of the online RFQ application to [heidi@sanbenitoarts.org](mailto:heidi@sanbenitoarts.org).

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## Caltrans Transportation Art Guidelines

The full text of the Caltrans Transportation Art Program Guidelines can be found at: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-j-transportation-art>

Artists are advised to read the Caltrans Transportation Art Guidelines and Application fully. Artists selected for this project will not have to submit an Encroachment Permit Application, (this will be done for you), however, **you will be required to sign all copyright waivers as noted in the application packet.**

A summary of key artwork requirements is as follows:

### What can be proposed?

Transportation Art is a visual expression that reflects the local communities' unique aesthetic, environmental, scenic, historical and cultural values. Transportation Art includes graphic or sculptural artwork, either freestanding or placed upon a required engineered transportation feature.

### Transportation Art **must not**:

- Display text, symbols, or icons such as flags, logos, or commercial symbols, except as allowed in Sub-article "Sponsor Recognition" of the [Project Development Procedures Manual \(PDPM\)](#) Chapter 29, Section 9.
- Simulate color combinations of colors usually reserved for official traffic control devices described in the [Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD\)](#).
- Imitate, obscure, or interfere with traffic control devices.
- Restrict sight distance.
- Create a distraction to transportation system users.
- Include distracting illumination.
- Include reflective or glaring surface finishes.
- Include moving elements (kinetic art) or simulate movement.
- Interfere with airspace above the roadway.
- Be placed upon trees, rocks or other natural features.
- Adversely affect existing structures, drainage patterns or stormwater runoff quality, landscaping or natural vegetation.

### Transportation Art **must**:

- Include graphics or sculptural artwork that expresses unique attributes of an area's history, resources, or character.
- Be integrated with an engineered transportation feature or be a freestanding structure.
- Be appropriate to its setting and be in proper scale with its surroundings.
- Be located where maintenance can be safely performed as specified in the encroachment permit, the maintenance agreement, and in conformance with Caltrans' procedures.
- Be composed of materials that are durable for the projected lifespan.



- Be fully funded for design and installation, and for maintenance, restoration, and removal by others for its projected lifespan.
- Conform to provisions of the [California Outdoor Advertising Act](#).
- Be designed to minimize ongoing maintenance needs. Approved Caltrans protective graffiti coatings may be required if appropriate.
- Be consistent with Headquarters Division of Maintenance-Structure Maintenance and Investigations inspection requirements, including the following:
  - Paint used on structures should not fill or obscure cracks. Latex or other flexible type paints may not be used on concrete structures except with written permission from Caltrans.
  - Painted art is limited to the surface areas of the utility boxes.
  - Artwork must not hinder inspection of structures.
  - To facilitate Caltrans' safety inspections, mural art may be placed on removable panels.
  - Chipping, blasting, or modifying existing concrete surfaces is prohibited.