

## Staff Report

**PURCHASE OF “POWER TENNIS” SCULPTURE  
FOR INTERMODAL FACILITY**

April 23, 2013

**SUMMARY**

The Ames Transit Agency (CyRide) Board has approved using \$39,000 of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding allocation for the new Intermodal Facility to purchase sculptor Bill King’s “Power Tennis.” This series of four sculptures is currently on display at ISU (See attached photos). Council authorization is needed to authorize this purchase.

**BACKGROUND**

Over the past 18 months, the Public Arts Commission (PAC) has collaborated with CyRide to identify a sculpture for display outside the new Intermodal Center. The PAC’s original 2012/13 budget included \$3,500 for what was planned to be a three-year display of a competitively selected sculpture. Then, if acquisition funding could be identified and the sculpture was deemed appropriate, the artwork would be purchased for permanent display. A lighted concrete display pad for this artwork was installed as part of the Intermodal Facility construction project.

Upon completion of the PAC’s selection process last fall, a sculpture titled “Two Moons” by Lina and Gus Ocampos was selected. However, the sculpture became unavailable while local details on the acquisition were being finalized.

During this same time period, “Power Tennis” was on loan to ISU’s University Museums until May 1, 2013. This artwork is by internationally renowned sculptor Bill King, whose work is in many collections and gardens across the country. (See [http://www.williamkingsculptor.com/William\\_King](http://www.williamkingsculptor.com/William_King)). Mr. King is one of twenty one recipients of the International Sculpture Center’s Lifetime Achievement Award, a prestigious honor in the field. This four piece sculpture represents a work of art in the later career of the artist, and symbolizes the activity of figures playing tennis. Stylized portrayals of the human form is important to Mr. King and is present in work throughout his career. Many of his sculptures capture the activity of human interaction as a moment or snapshot in time. (Additional information from the University Museums on Mr. King and this sculpture is attached.)

Mr. King has agreed to sell this artwork to CyRide and the City for \$39,000. If this purchase can be confirmed before April 30, the University Museums will no longer need to return the sculpture to Mr. King in early May. The value of the sculpture significantly exceeds the purchase price. During the time ISU has had this sculpture on loan, the group of four figures was insured for \$200,000.

The Transit Board of Trustees approved this purchase at its meeting of February 22, 2013. The funding source for the purchase will be unused FTA construction funding, requiring no local match, in the amount of \$39,000. FTA officials encouraged CyRide to utilize this end-of-project funding to acquire artwork for the facility.

Funding for installation of the sculpture can come from the \$3,500 in PAC funding already approved by Council for the “temporary” Intermodal Facility artwork. A small amount of additional funding may be needed for signage or other installation needs. If so, the PAC can bring that request to Council at a later date using a portion of the existing 2012/13 PAC appropriation.

Actual installation will be performed by ISU’s Facilities Planning & Management staff, which is very experienced in placing large sculptures. The exact placement of the four pieces will be done under the direction of Jim Barton, Mr. King’s long-time associate.

#### **ACTION**

Both the Public Art Commission and the CyRide Board have approved this acquisition, and Council authorization is now needed for staff to sign a purchase agreement with Mr. King.



Artist: William King, (American, b. 1925)

Title: Power Tennis, 1992

Aluminum

A talented tennis player in his youth and with a tall lanky body built for the game, King enjoys caricaturizing the fast moving double's game. The server appears to pirouette on its toe as the imaginary tennis ball is put into play. Players are crouched, ready to move left, right, up or down in order to slam the ball back to the opponent.

In 1990 William King (American, b. 1925) was commissioned to create a sculpture for the then new Lied Recreation Facility's entrance. The resulting sculpture, Stride, depicts three, twenty-foot tall stylized figures who appear to race after an imagined ball, and reflect Iowa State students' playful, competitive interactions. In 1991 Forward by King, another heroic scaled sculpture, was added to the permanent collection, and has become an iconic campus sculpture of students whether walking in tandem to classes, concerts, events, and to graduation. William King is an internationally acclaimed artist known for his simplified figurative sculpture, which is often presented with a warm and subtle touch of humor.

For much of William King's long career, his sculpture has been identified with Pop Art, a movement challenging prevailing art traditions by imposing the artist's use of ordinary, mass-produced imagery in popular culture while using those images simultaneously as fine art objects visually reflecting a consumer society. The satirical nature and humorous overtones of King's sculpted figures are suited to common aspects of daily life. Now eighty-six, King has exhibited figurative sculpture for over fifty years. His familiar, often long-legged, figures embody a unique blend of social satire, fantasy, an affectionate eye for everyday life, and have long been recognized as a distinctive contribution to American art. These witty figures, often self-portraits in various guises, combine precise observation about the body language of contemporary life and social situations with an abstract feeling for materials and form.

The artist lives and works in East Hampton, NY. He is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a past president of the National Academy. In 2007, The International Sculpture Center presented its Lifetime Achievement Award to William King, one of only twenty-one artists to receive this distinguished recognition. King's art has been the subject of over 60 solo exhibitions.

Power Tennis expresses a state of mind not only of William King, but also others such as Ames residents, school age children and Iowa State students' emotions and thoughts – fairness, sportsmanship, new and perhaps lasting relationships, challenge, triumph, success, play, and humor.