City Council Agenda Item Report

FROM: Ryan Cummins, City Manager

MEETING DATE: March 5, 2025

SUBJECT: Temporary Art Installation at Cook Park

DESCRIPTION:

City Council established increasing collaboration with the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), continuing to support local business, and keeping tourism strong, year-round as desirable priorities for this fiscal year.

The CVB recently entered into an agreement with the Saugatuck Center for the Arts (SCA) to be a project manager for placemaking projects. The CVB is interested in a temporary, interactive art installation at Cook Park from October 2025 – March 2026.

City Council discussed the plans in January and was supportive of the proposed project. The CVB has since identified an artist and received a proposal. CVB Executive Director, Lisa Mize, advised the following:

- The artist has done installations in downtown Grand Rapids and the Gerald R. Ford Airport.
- The proposed installation includes 10 "flowers" that will be on both sides of the sidewalk, which allows people to walk underneath the flowers.
- The flowers will be lit with LED lights for nighttime viewing.
- The installation will be "Instagram worthy" and wonderful photo opportunity.
- The story and press release will focus on what the work symbolizes:
    - "Cook Park lost an iconic landmark willow tree this past year and the park is being reimagined. The artist's work symbolizes growth, transformation, and the connection between people and their environment. The City of Saugatuck will need to decide how to replace the willow tree, but in the meantime, Jeffrey Songco's large-scale, colorful sculptures that are both surreal and accessible, will inspire moments of joy, curiosity, and community connection for all who encounter them."

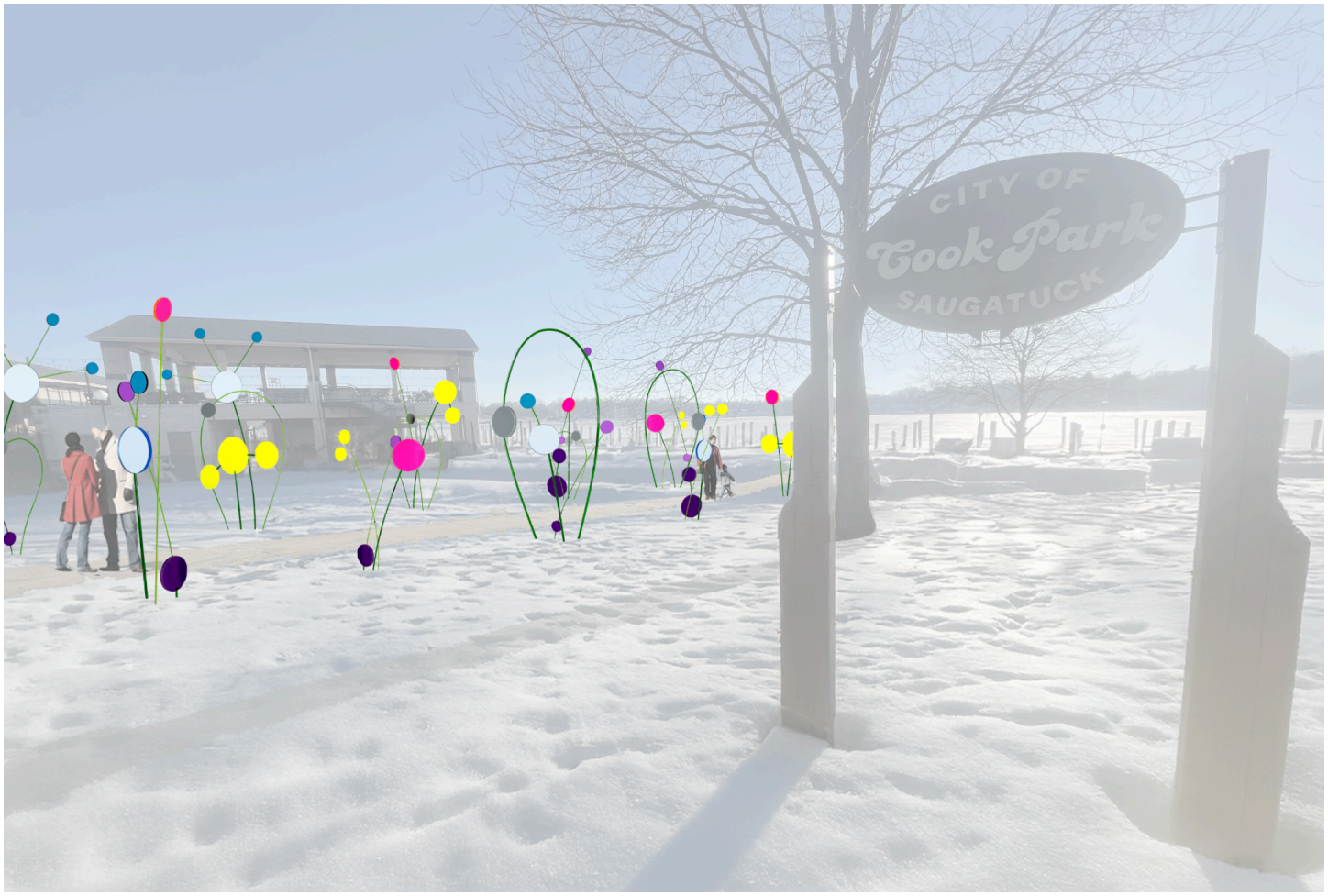
Attached is a copy of the artwork proposal.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REVIEW:
The CVB has submitted an application for the Historic District Commission to review.

The Parks and Public Works Committee will also review.

LEGAL REVIEW:
Legal will be at your meeting if you have any questions.

SAMPLE MOTION:
Motion to approve the temporary Flower World art installation at Cook Park from October 2025 – March 2026, contingent upon the Convention and Visitors Bureau submitting required insurance, receiving Historic District Commission approval, and receiving final layout approval from staff.



Flower World (Framacitinus)

An Artwork Proposal for the Saugatuck-Douglas Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

By Jeffrey Augustine Songco

Artist Information and Curriculum Vitae

Jeffrey Augustine Songco

www.songco.org
jeffrey@songco.org

Born
1983 New Jersey

Lives & Works
Allendale, Michigan

Education
2011 MFA San Francisco Art Institute
2005 BFA Carnegie Mellon University

Permanent Commissions

2024 **Corewell Health,** *Dancing Through*
Corewell Health, *Facets #4*
2023 **Gerald R. Ford International Airport,** *Facets*

Temporary Commissions

2020 **Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.,** *Pride Pad*

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2025 **Lamont Gallery** at Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, NH, *Society of 23's Conservatory*
2024 **Saugatuck Center for the Arts,** Saugatuck, MI, *Mr. Society of 23*
2021 **Mattress Factory,** Pittsburgh, PA, *Society of 23's Trophy Game Room*
2020 **FLXST Contemporary,** Chicago, IL, *Commercial Break*
2018 **SPRING/BREAK Art Show,** New York, NY, *Selections from Society of 23's Locker Dressing Room*
2012 **Steven Wolf Fine Arts,** San Francisco, CA, *Public Displays of Affection*

Selected Group Exhibitions

2024 **Project for Empty Space,** *BODY FREEDOM FOR EVERY(BODY),* Cross-Country Mobile Exhibition
2023 **South Bend Museum of Art,** South Bend, IN, *Biennial 32*
2020 **Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience,** Seattle, WA, *Guilty Party: Contradictions of Asian Subjectivity*
Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, MA, *STILL HERE // Screen Art Series*
2019 **FLXST Contemporary,** Chicago, IL, *All We Want to See is Ourselves*
2018 **Harrison @ Rental Gallery,** East Hampton, NY, *Twenty-first Century Occupational Adjustments and Considerations; Episode 2: One Liners*
2017 **Center for Art and Thought,** web-based, *Queer Horizons*
2016 **Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts**, Grand Rapids, MI, *FUTURE TALK*
2014 **Center for Art and Thought,** web-based, *Queer Sites and Sounds*
2013 **Asian Art Museum,** San Francisco, CA, *Proximities 3: Import/Export*
2012 **Kendall College of Art and Design**, Grand Rapids, MI, *Role/Play*

Awards & Residencies

2021 **Artist in Residence,** Mattress Factory
2017 **Installation Category Juried Award,** ArtPrize
Artist Seed Grant presented by the Frey Foundation, ArtPrize
2012 **Nominee, SECA Art Award,** San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Teaching Positions

2023 **Grand Valley State University,** Allendale, MI, Adjunct

Contributing Writer
Art21 Blog, Bad at Sports, HuffPost, Hyperallergic

Bibliography

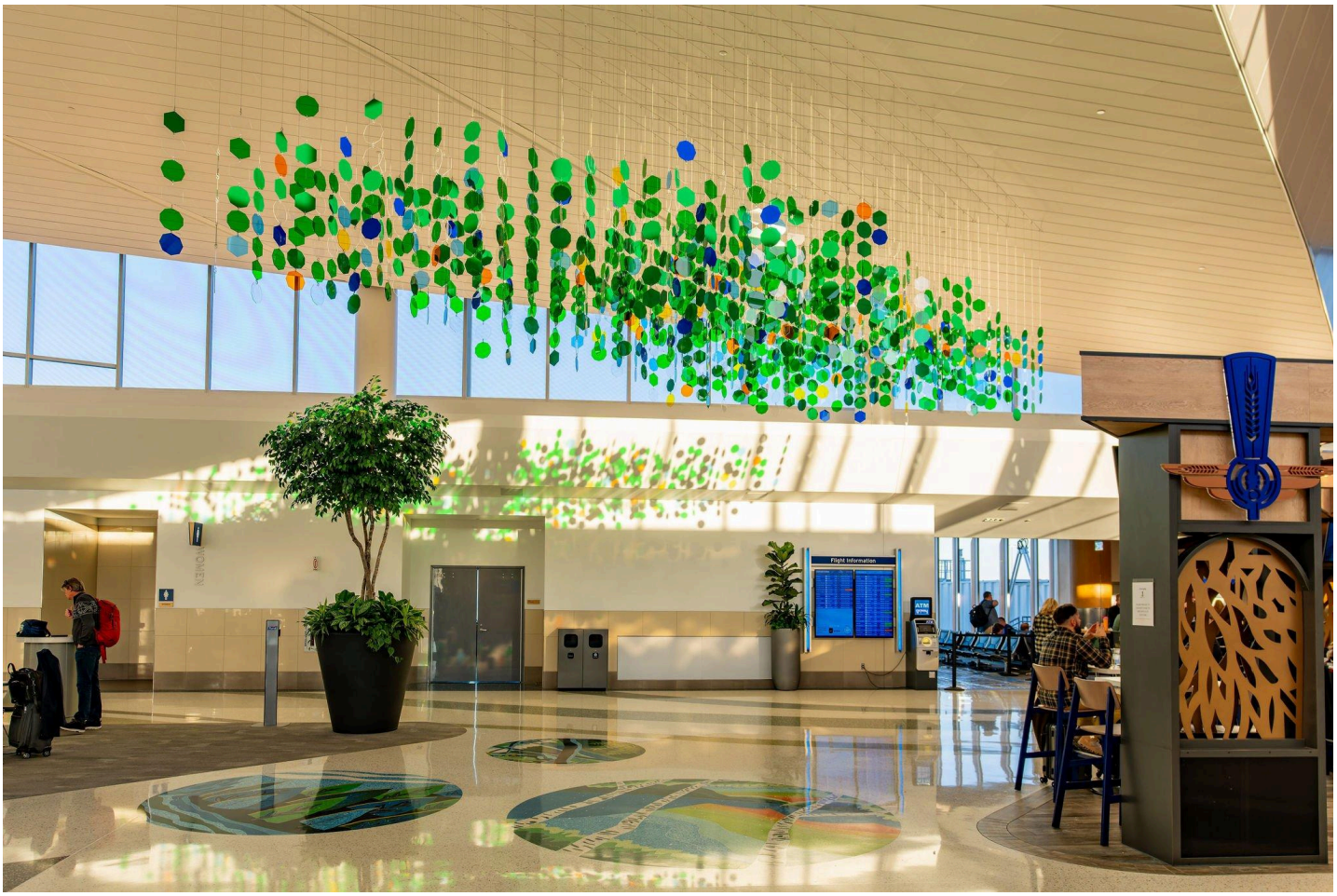
2018 *Jeffrey Augustine Songco Interview,* Asian American Art Oral History Project of DePaul University
2017 *Queering Contemporary Asian American Art,* University of Washington Press

Selected Press
2024 ***Stateside* on Michigan Public Radio,** Stateside: Tuesday, July 30, 2024
Grand Rapids Magazine, Artist explores pageant culture through self-portraiture
2023 ***Gerald R. Ford International Airport,*** Gerald R. Ford Int'l Airport selects artist for Concourse A 2021
BOMB, I Have Had Enough Conversations To Know That Flowers Sell: Jeffrey Augustine Songco Interviewed by Jessica Lanay
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 'Society of 23' art exhibit explores greatness, identity at the Mattress Factory
***Forbes*,** In Jeffrey Augustine Songco's America, You Can Be Both A Bro And A Queen
Pittsburgh City Paper, Fictional frat life plays out in Mattress Factory's "Society of 23's Trophy Game Room"
2020 ***Newcity Art,*** Art Top 5: April 2020
2019 ***Sixty Inches from Center,*** 7 Reflections & Suggested Sounds: ALL WE WANT IS TO SEE OURSELVES at FLXST Contemporary
Hyperallergic, The Curdling of American Masculinity in University Frats
2018 ***W Magazine,*** The Most-Instagrammed Art of Armory Week 2018, from Evaporating Clouds to $1.5 Million TV Sets
HuffPost, New York's Scrappiest Art Fair Lives Inside A Corporate High-Rise
Hyperallergic, Spring Break Is an Oasis for Art Fair Haters
ARTnews, A Tour of the 2018 Spring/Break Art Show
The Art Newspaper, New York's March fairs aim to seize market moment
2017 ***The Daily Beast,*** How Betsy DeVos Became an Unexpected Champion of LGBTQ Art
artnet, How the New Queer Asian American Criticism Is Shifting the Way We See Art
2016 ***Detroit Free Press,*** Discovering the sublime, avoiding the ridiculous at ArtPrize
2014 ***San Francisco Arts Quarterly,*** SFAQ Review: "Proximities 3: Import/Export"

Selected Lectures & Panels
2024 **Grand Rapids Public Library,** Grand Rapids, MI
2023 **School of the Art Institute of Chicago, ECPOSI,** Chicago, IL
Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, NE
2021 **University of Michigan, Institute for the Humanities,** Ann Arbor, MI
Archer Gallery, Clark College, Vancouver, WA
2018 **Open Society Foundations,** New York, NY
Asian Art Museum + Pilipinx American Library, San Francisco, CA, *A Politics of Filipinx Diasporic Queer Curation Now*
DePaul University, Chicago, IL
Failure Lab, Grand Rapids, MI
Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI
2017 **Association for Asian American Studies Conference,** Portland, OR, *Who Cares? Asian American Contemporary Art, Cultures and Queer Communities*
2014 **University of California, Riverside,** Riverside, CA, Queer Sites and Sounds Symposium
2013 **Michigan State University,** Lansing, MI, Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference, *Queer Art and Theology*

Relatable Work

Facets
2023
Acrylic and metal
10 ft. x 23 ft. x 12 ft.
Permanent Commission
Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids, Michigan







Relatable Work

Dancing Through
2024
Metal
10 ft. x 10 ft. x 10 ft.
Permanent Commission
Corewell Health Sports Performance Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan





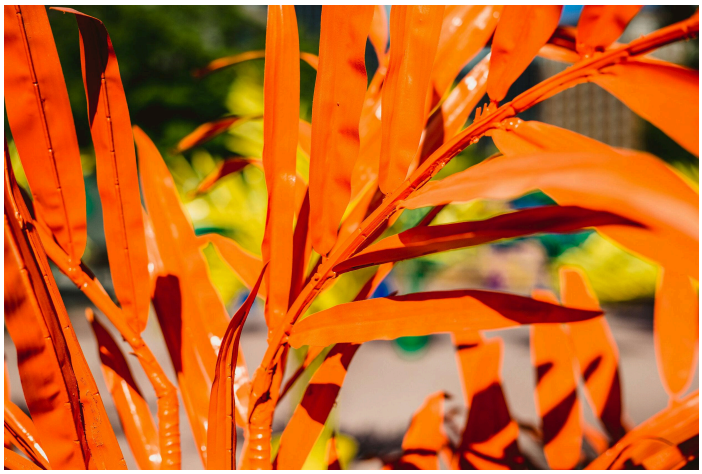


Relatable Work

Tropical Realness
2020
23 artificial palms, paint, sand, wood, concrete
40 ft x 90 ft x 8 ft
Temporary Commission
Monroe Center Social Zone in Grand Rapids, Michigan







Relatable Work

Conservatory Flower Arrangements
2025
Acrylic
Dimensions variable
Sculptural work exhibited at Lamont Gallery at Phillips Exeter Academy







Professional References

Katie Moore
Activation Manager - Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.
Art Project Manager - Gerald R. Ford International Airport
katiemanatee@gmail.com
260-402-2485

Miranda Kranjiak
Public Arts Committee - Gerald R. Ford International Airport
Former Executive Director - Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids
miranda.carol.krajniak@gmail.com
616-706-3857

Pamela Meadows
Gallery Director & Curator - Lamont Gallery at Phillips Exeter Academy
pmeadows@exeter.edu
603-777-3361

Emily Gerlach
Art Consultant - Art Consulting Services GR
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616-325-9330

Written Proposal

Narrative Description

Flower World (Framacitinus) is a series of large-scale powder coated metal sculptures temporarily installed at Cook Park. The colorful abstract shapes represent a landscape of whimsical flowers to bring joy to visitors during the winter months. The outline of each flower 'head' is illuminated with LED strips to enhance the installation's presence at night.

Each sculpture invites viewers to step into a landscape of wonder. The forms depict flowers that might grow in a fantastical garden filled with geometric shapes. Standing as tall as 12 feet, these sculptures are grouped together into small arrangements which are then spaced apart. This composition draws the eye across the landscape to enhance the park's atmosphere with a sense of energy and rhythm, as well as allows visitors to wander around and between the arrangements. LED lightstrips will be surface-mounted along the perimeter of each flower's "head" or "petal" (not the "stems") to highlight the vibrant colors and intricate shapes and create a compelling visual experience both day and night, up close and from afar.

This proposed artwork is a vibrant celebration of nature and movement, blending dreamy imagination with dynamic forms. The artwork is inspired by my small-scale acrylic sculptures that are currently exhibited at Lamont Gallery at Phillips Exeter Academy. As a Filipino-American artist, I like to think of this work as portraits of my own identity — a scene of tropical flowers in full bloom during the cold winter months. The artwork — titled *Flower World (Framacitinus)* — plays with two ideas: "flower world" suggests an out-of-this-world place and "framacitinus" is a fictional term I playfully coined from parts of Latin words to name this flower genus which roughly translates to "Brotherhood Friendship Exotic Alien".

This work symbolizes growth, transformation, and the connection between people and their environment. It is "rooted" in my vision of blending cultural and personal heritage with public engagement through art. By introducing large-scale, colorful sculptures that are both surreal and accessible, I aim to inspire moments of joy, curiosity, and community connection for all who encounter them.

Sculptural Elements and Fabrication

This artwork will be created with the following materials: powder coated steel and LED lights. Much like my Relatable Work sample titled *Dancing Through*, steel will be cut into circles, smoothed, and painted. The circles will be welded to hollow steel rods to create each "flower". Electrical wiring will travel through these rigid steel rods to power the LED lightstrips that are surface-mounted to the perimeter / outside edge of each circle.

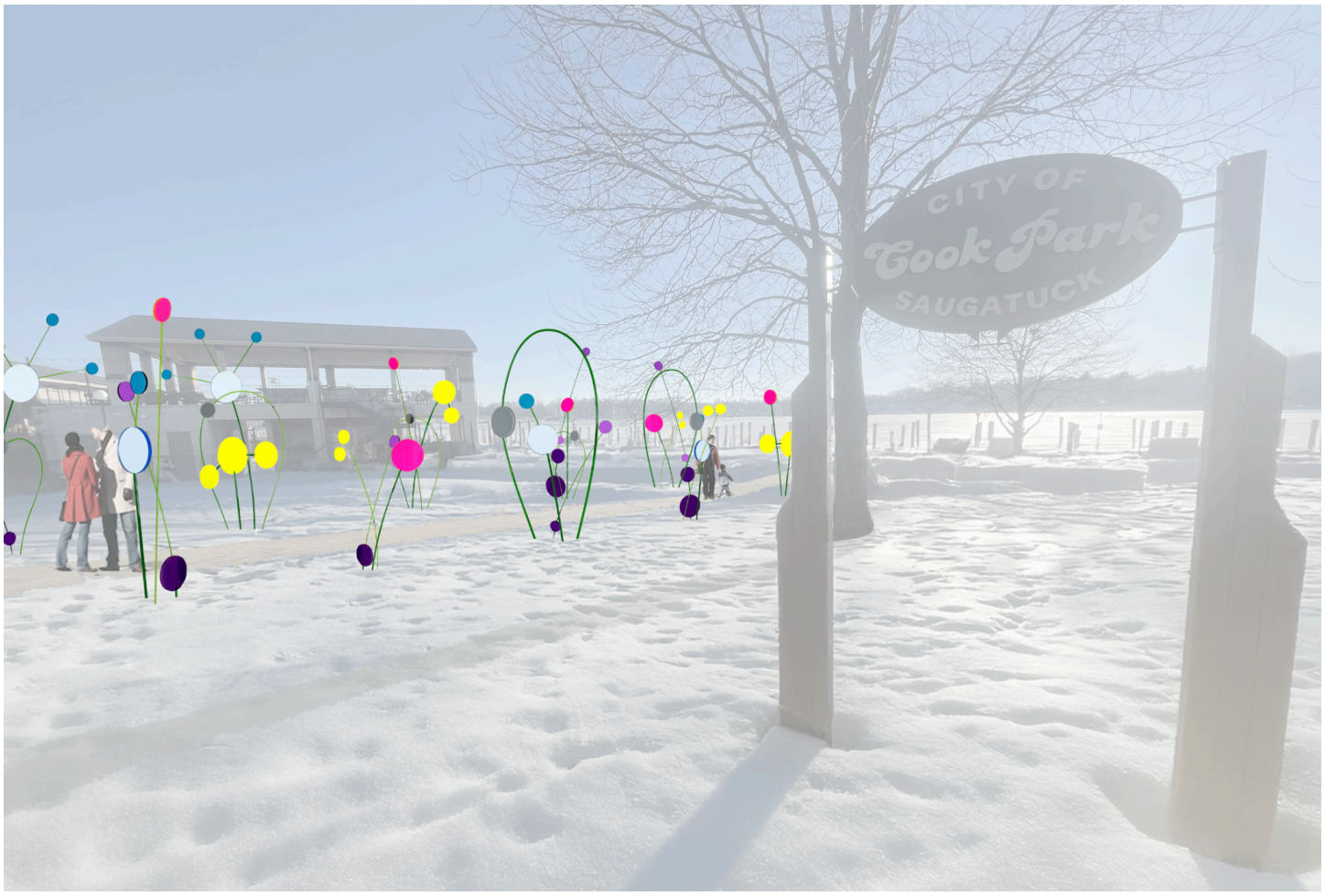
The installation as a whole is designed to withstand physical manipulation from visitors as they may and will touch the sculptures. However, vandalism from graffiti or marker tagging is unavoidable.

This artwork will ultimately be fabricated by a metals fabrication studio in Grand Rapids that I have worked with to create both *Dancing Through* and the supporting structures for *Facets*. The fabricator has an incredible team and works with an additional Grand Rapids-based vendor to powder coat the metal.

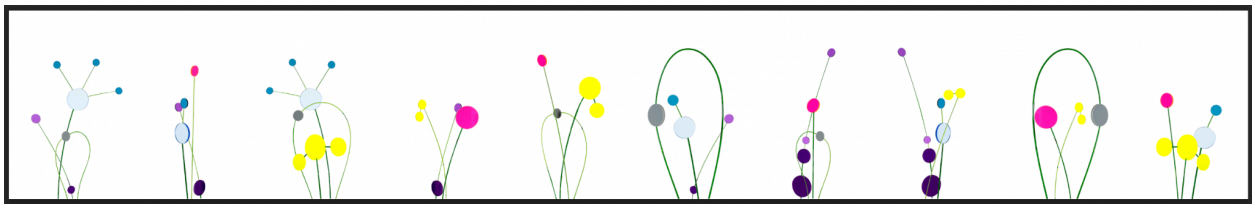
Installation and Removal

This metals fabrication studio team will also execute the installation of the sculptures on or around October 2025 and execute the de-installation of the sculptures on or around April 2026. As a reference, this team also installed the supporting structures for *Facets* at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport with complete expertise and professionalism in compliance with the strict rules and regulations of the airport.

Renderings: *Flower World*

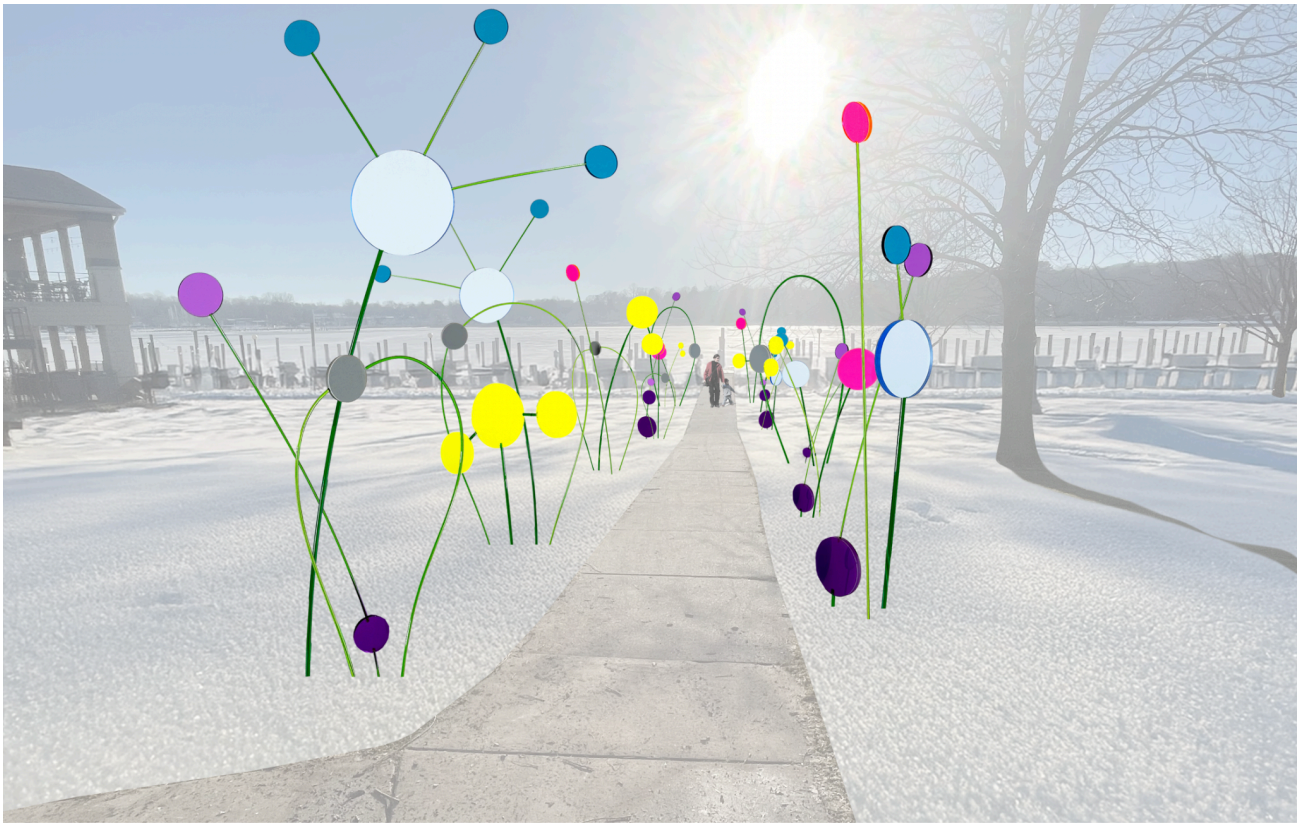


- The rendering above depicts the flowers temporarily installed along the sidewalk bisecting Cook Park.
- 1 group of flowers has 3 flower stems with various colors. Here, there are 10 groups of flowers that are staggered on either side of the sidewalk creating an illusion of a large tunnel which visitors can pass through.
- By keeping the sculptures on both sides of the sidewalk, simple snow removal on the sidewalk during winter months will suffice in allowing visitors to safely access and experience *Flower World*.

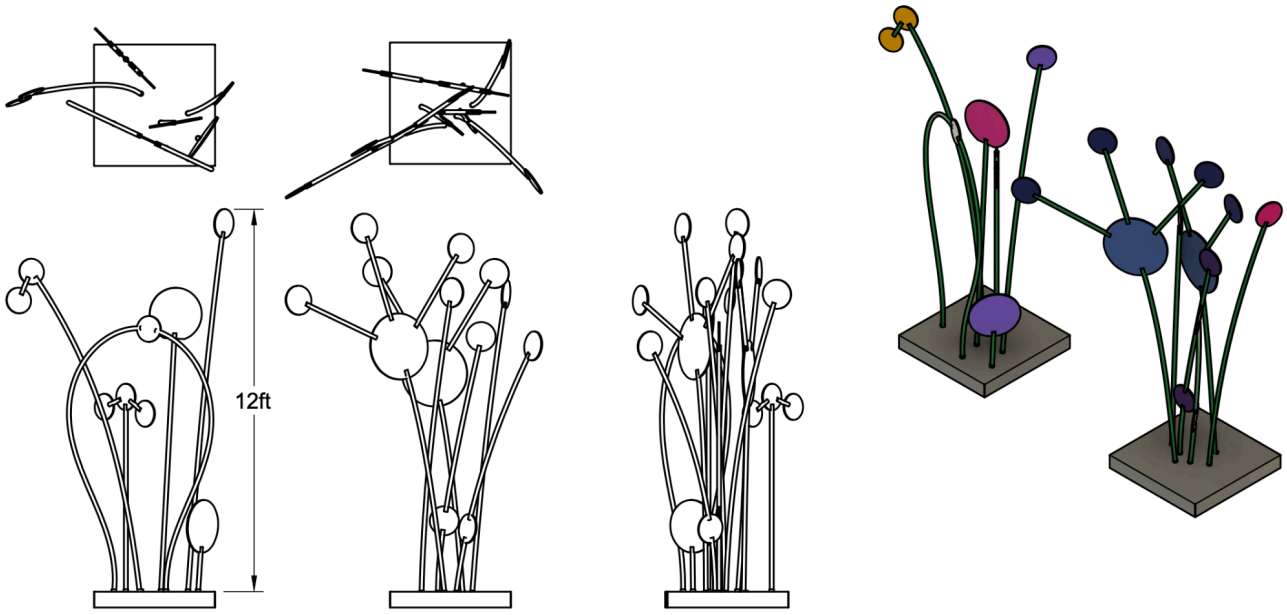


Renderings: *Flower World*

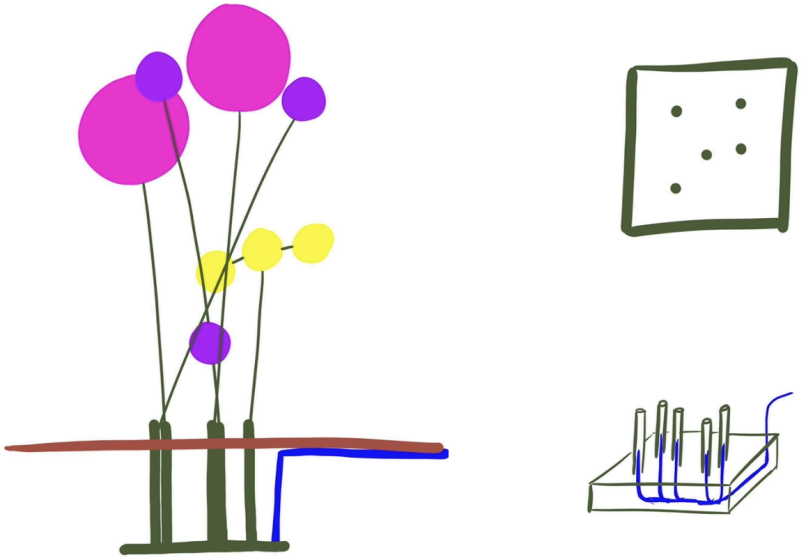




Renderings: *Flower World*

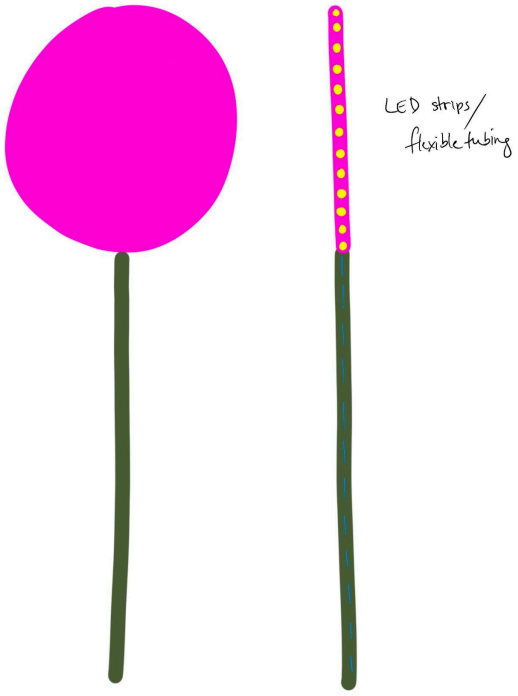


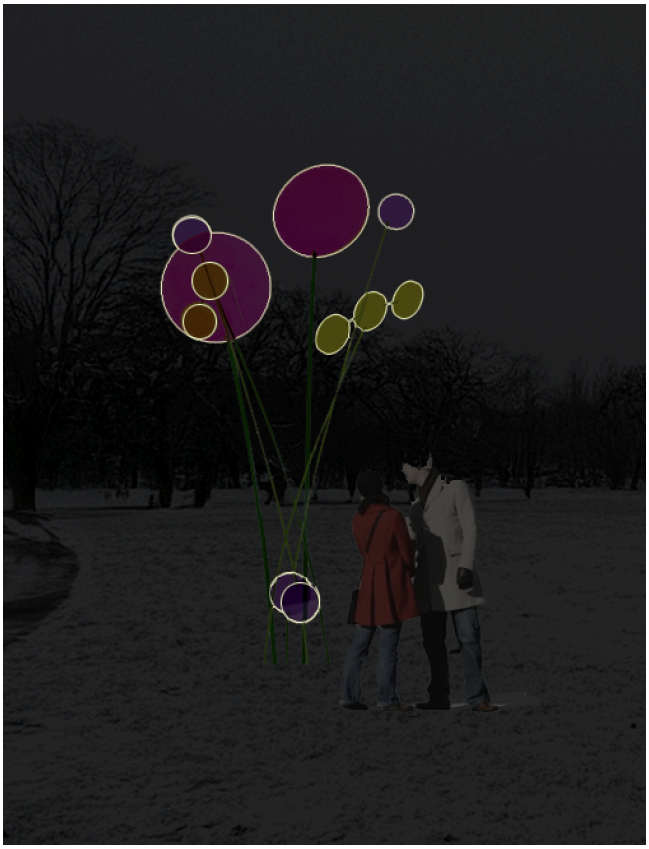
- At its tallest, the sculpture will be 12 feet. Each “stem” is bolted to a metal base that will be buried underground.



- At this early proposal stage of the project, I have considered a solution to temporarily install the sculpture which includes electricity. The base of a “flower arrangement” will be buried underground with enough surface area and soil weight to prevent the sculpture from leaning. The hollow rods will slip into and connect to hollow sleeves welded to the base. An electrical cord will feed into the base and connect to wiring within the hollow rods. The main electrical line (a simple extension cord) can be buried underground to reach the primary power source in the park.
- By using this method, the artwork exists as a temporary installation and no concrete pour is needed.
- An electrician may be requested to bury the main electrical line.

Renderings: *Flower World*





- LED lightstrips will be surface-mounted to the perimeter / outside edge of flower “head” or “petal”. An electrical cord will run through the hollow rod to power the lights. These lights do not shine light on the entire installation but rather create a different visual artwork at night.







- Additional outdoor lighting may be added to the site such as cylindrical lighting posts or staked uplights. Grounded lights may require maintenance after heavy snow accumulation.

Rough Timeline

Date	Description	Duration
March 1	Formalize proposal with SCA and SDACVB	2 months
May 1	Order and fulfill materials	1 month
June 1	Fabricate artwork	2 months
September 15	Prepare site	2 weeks
October 1	Install artwork	1 week
April 2026	De-install artwork	1 week

Rough Budget

Description	Cost
Flower sculptures (materials + labor)	$30,000
Installation (labor)	$2,500
De-installation (labor)	$2,500
Artist's Honorarium	$15,000
Total	**$50,000**

Optional Costs

The following costs are not required but may be considered if SDACVB chooses to invest further in the project. These options include the purchase of the sculptures for permanent display and site updates to enhance the installation's longevity.

Description	Cost
Sculpture purchase	$30,000
Site updates (including concrete pours and updated electrical)	$15,000
Total	**$45,000**