

ARTISTS UNVEIL PLANS FOR BALLPARK PROJECTS



The preliminary design for the 5th Street Panels project.

After an extensive nationwide search that began last fall, the ballpark's Public Art Steering Committee has selected St. Paul sculptor and muralist Craig David and Phoenix artist Al Price to design and install two major public artworks at Target Field. David will create murals for the Fifth Street Panels along the ballpark's northeast side, while Price will design and install a large sculpture inside the transit station's Vertical Circulation building.

The people's murals

The Fifth Street Panels will stretch for eighty-four feet on the ballpark's exterior, immediately adjacent to the public viewing knot-holes, on the same side of the ballpark where the trains will come in. Here, at what he calls "the people's corner" of the ballpark, David will create a series of three mosaic murals in stone, framed by images and narrative about both baseball and everyday people. Although they will have separate themes of Transit, Baseball, and Sustainability, the three panels will share an overarching theme of the people of Minnesota. As David sees it, this focus is particularly fitting given his intended audience. "A lot of time public art projects are very contemporary, and really cognitive, but I love to create pieces that the average person can relate to and can call their own, so this was a great opportunity because of that," he says.

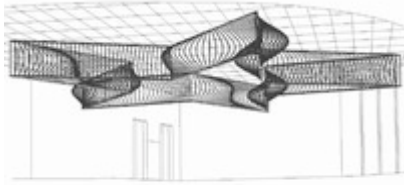
David predicts that the murals will really resonate with the public. "Because they will be made for the people, and about the people and their causes, I think that the public is really going to love these things," he says. He cites as an example the panel on sustainability, which he says will be primarily about water and the environment. "There probably won't be any adults in that piece, but just a portrayal of children in the environment, because if you want to have sustainability your entire population has to have experience in the environment," he explains. "So this piece will be about kids experiencing nature and having some real, fundamental and lifelong relationships with it." David hopes to engage in some community storytelling during the design process, especially for the panel on baseball, so that the public's input can help to inform the final design. "I'm always inspired by what people have to say, and so I'm hoping that some of the community's stories can work their way in," says David.

David's previous work includes *The History of the Neighborhood House*, four 15' x 15' mosaic murals recently installed on the façade of the Wellstone Center for Community

Building in St. Paul, and *The Listening Vessel*, an interactive granite sculpture at Lake Hiawatha in Minneapolis.

A suspended North Star

For the Vertical Circulation building project, Al Price intends to build a suspended sculpture fabricated from twenty overlapping, stainless steel panels, hung from the building's ceiling in the configuration of a five-pointed star. Evoking the "North Star," the sculpture's fluid lines and shifting configuration will suggest both a baseball in flight and the agility of the game's players. "As a sculptor fascinated with motion and creating forms that imply motion, I was excited to design a sculpture that relates to baseball, a sport that involves athleticism and movements



VERTICAL CIRCULATION BUILDING @ TARGET FIELD
NORTH STAR LINES (WORKING TITLE) SCHEMATIC
© 2010 AL PRICE ARCHITECTURE

SIDE VIEW LOOKING UP

The preliminary design for the Vertical Circulation Building project.

both explosive and balletic," Price explains. "The sculpture seeks to describe that kinetic excitement while using a vocabulary of lines and arcs - the geometry seen on the field and in the air."

The piece's curved and polished steel panels will create halos of light and spectacle as the viewer moves between the building's two levels. "The typical transit station user will experience the sculpture from many vantages as they move through the space," continues Price. "The magic appears to the moving viewer as "moiré flash bulbs"--elliptical targets that expand, contract, dissipate and disappear --only to reappear at another location. The reflections on the stainless steel will also change depending on the time of day, amount of light, and the various colors within the space."

With his extensive background in public art, Price understands the importance of integrating art with an intended site so that it adds welcome shape to the urban landscape. To this end, Price says that he looks forward to the community open house and student workshops that are planned as part of the project. He and his assistant also spent time exploring Minneapolis before developing the proposal. "As an artist with an affinity for patterning, I felt at home as we moved through your city," he says. "We were impressed by its cosmopolitan architecture, its high quality museums and collections, the preternatural politeness of the population . . . and the tenacity of the bicyclists pedaling through the snow and bitterly cold wind." He describes arriving at the Sculpture Garden just after dusk: "Oldenburg's Cherry and Spoon Bridge was glowing in a misty atmosphere, a world class Sol Lewitt was straight ahead and a turning Calder was on the right," he recalls. "We were profoundly moved then, and have remained smitten with your city. I am honored to have my sculpture included in Minneapolis's impressive public art collection."

Narrowing a talented field selection

In selecting these two artists from a pool of eighty-four, the Committee measured their proposals against a broad set of criteria. The Committee looked for projects that offered excellence in urban design and a uniquely appropriate cultural or artistic perspective. Equally important was the artists' commitment to bringing the community into the process in some meaningful way, and the project's contribution to the area's economic

vitality. Finally, each artist had to demonstrate that the work could be delivered on time, within budget, and in a form that would be sustainable over the long term.

According to MBA Commissioner Barb Sykora, who chairs the public art committee, both projects met these criteria and then some, and both will be great enhancements to the ballpark. "I'm very excited with what the artists came up with," says Sykora. "The public art will really help create the look and feel that baseball fans, commuters and others experience around Target Field. We're trying to make everything about the ballpark really outstanding, and the public art will be no exception."

The two projects have a combined budget of \$350,000. Funding for the Fifth Street Panels' \$200,000 budget comes from the MBA's District Enhancement and Public Art Incentive Fund. The panels will be installed in time for Opening Day 2010. The Northstar Commuter Rail Line is funding the \$150,000 Vertical Circulation building project, which is scheduled for completion in September 2009.