



Deaccession of AIPP Artworks

Arts Commission

October 16, 2023

Deaccession: *to officially remove an artwork from the listed holdings of AIPP collection.*

**Acquisition and
Deaccession Policy
(2008)**

“Deaccessioning is an integral and necessary part of the responsible collections management. It’s intended to be a careful and deliberate procedure.”

Proposed artworks for deaccession:

- **Rundberg YMCA Community Garden Fence:** materials have degraded making the entire structure unable to serve intended function, becoming an eyesore and a public safety hazard

AIPP Artwork Deaccession proposal October 16, 2023



North Austin YMCA

Community Garden Fence (in red, shed remains on site)

Date installed - 2014

1000 W Rundberg Ln, Austin, Tx 78758

Photo from July, 2023

AIPP Artwork Deaccession proposal October 16, 2023



MEMORANDUM

TO: Constance White, Art in Public Places (AIPP) Program Manager

FROM: Kimberly McNeeley, CPRP, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

DATE: October 6, 2023

SUBJECT: Deaccession of 'YMCA Community Garden Fence' Art in Public Places project.

Kimberly McNeeley
Digitally signed by Kimberly McNeeley
Date: 2023.10.06 14:34:50 -05'00'

This memo is being provided as a written opinion to the Economic Development Department's Art in Public Places (AIPP) program in accordance with the requirements of the City of Austin Art in Public Places Deaccessioning Policy (7. D. 7.) regarding the 2014 installation of the 'YMCA Community Garden Fence' located at 1000 W. Runberg Ln. Austin, TX 78758.

The artwork/fence was designed to provide enclosure and minimal security to the community garden located on parkland adjacent to the YMCA facility located at 1000 W. Runberg Lane. The garden contract is managed by the Parks and Recreation Department (the Department). The YMCA and the Department jointly support the programming of the garden. The Department approached AIPP to consider the removal of this element because of its condition and non-functional use. The Department Environmental Program Coordinator and Program Manager, North District Recreation Centers, have been working with a YMCA representative and AIPP to address concerns and resolve the condition of the artwork/fence. Per the Department and the YMCA, a request for the deaccession of the artwork/fence was made to AIPP. On August 8, 2023, the artwork's condition was assessed by Conservator Julie Unruh. The assessment found that the artwork is compromised and no longer functions as intended. A summary of the conditions identified in the report is as follows:

- The artwork cable sheaths have deteriorated significantly reducing long-term stability.
- The cables are and can be further deformed by bending, resulting in reduced security. Some were observed to be broken.
- Vegetation growth has led to deterioration of the artwork causing deformation of cables.
- It was observed that some of the 'wires' have slackened since installation, contributing to the ease of trespassing into the garden.
- General deterioration of the plastic sheaths was observed which detracts from the artwork aesthetic.
- More details can be found in the Report dated August 10, 2023, prepared by Julie Unruh (Attachment A).

In addition, the Department and the YMCA have received numerous concerns from the community regarding the lack of security for the garden and its users.

As a result of the artwork condition and user concerns, the Department is supportive of the deaccession of the 'YMCA Community Garden Fence' artwork. Should you have any questions, please contact my office at (512) 974-6717.

cc: Jodi Jay, MBA, CPRP, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department
Liana Kallivoka, PhD, PE, LEED Fellow, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department
Constance White, Art in Public Places Program Manager
Sean Harrison, Art in Public Places Collection Manager
Jennifer Steverson, Environmental Program Coordinator, Parks and Recreation Department
Reynaldo Hernandez, Project Manager & AIPP SPOC, Parks and Recreation Department

Attachment A: Unruh_2023_YMCACommunityGardenFence_ConditionAssessment.pdf

AIPP Artwork Deaccession proposal October 16, 2023

JULIE UNRUH

Conservator of Art and Archaeological Objects

August 10, 2023

Via email: ryan.runcie@austintexas.gov

Client: Ryan Runcie, Project Manager
Art in Public Places
Cultural Arts Division | Economic Development Department

Artist: Thoughtbarn, LLC
Object/Title: YMCA Community Garden Fence
Object Date: 2014
Medium: Weathering steel; galvanized steel cables encased in colored plastic sheaths; steel cable locks.
Examination date: August 8, 2023

Description

"YMCA Community Garden Fence" is an installation on the south and east sides of the YMCA community gardens at 1000 West Rundberg Lane. It consists of a weathering steel frame strung diagonally with galvanized steel cable elements that are enclosed in several colors of plastic sheaths. As depicted in design documents and installation photos, the intended effect is one of a vibrant, rhythmic pattern of repeating, brightly colored elements. The artwork was envisioned as both decorative and functional: it demarcates the gardens and is intended to prevent trespassing.

Assessment Summary

"YMCA Community Garden Fence" was installed in 2014. Conservator Julie Unruh assessed the condition of the artwork on August 8, 2023. The gates to the interior were locked, so the assessment was conducted by viewing from the exterior side only.

The current condition can be summarized as follows:

- The original appearance (as recorded in the proposal documents and installation photos) is compromised: the plastic sheaths covering the wires are faded, discolored, cracked, and corrosion-stained, and cables are bent or broken.
- The fence does not provide security due to slack and broken cables that allow access to the gardens.
- It has not been possible to maintain landscaping to the extent needed to preserve the original vision.

Conditions Noted

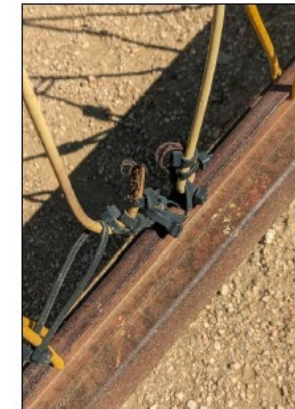
The colored sheathing over the wires has faded, giving the artwork a dull appearance rather than the bright and colorful appearance as installed. Fading is concentrated on the upper (sun exposed) surfaces.



Some plastic sheaths exhibit significant deterioration and cracking. Because the cracks allow water ingress, the sheaths are corrosion-stained at cracks and elsewhere in the interior of the sheaths.

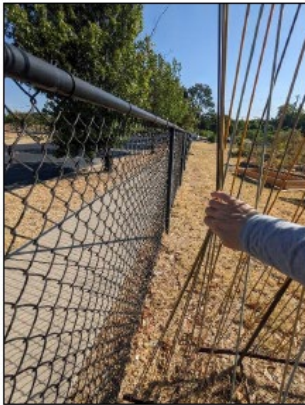


At least eight wires are noticeably bent and at least two wires are broken. In some places loose and broken wires have been better secured with cable ties; this fix disrupts the rhythm and aesthetics of the piece. Note that if only the broken cables are replaced, the color of the new cables will not match the now-faded color of the original cables.

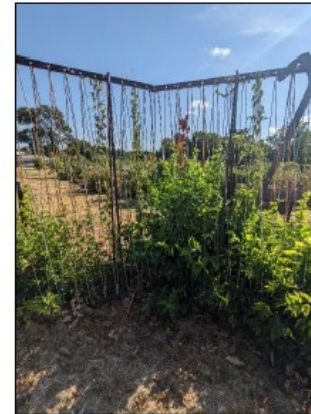
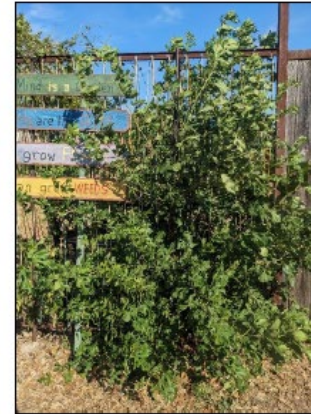


AIPP Artwork Deaccession proposal October 16, 2023

Some of the wires appear to have slackened since installation. As a result, the artwork no longer serves its intended function as a barrier to trespassing; for example, a small person could squeeze through the cables at the southwest corner without trouble. In the northeast corner, what appears to be a security grate has been installed behind the fence, interrupting the rhythmic pattern of the cables. Slack cables have been tightened with cable ties, additionally disrupting the intended visual effect.



There is significant non-intentional, non-landscaped plant growth between the elements of the weathering steel frame, including a small mulberry tree and climbing vines. These plants obscure the artwork and in some cases contribute to deformation of cables.

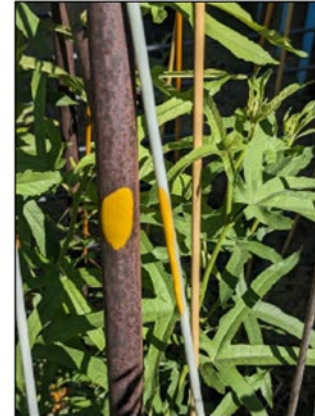


AIPP Artwork Deaccession proposal October 16, 2023

The weathering steel frame has corroded as expected, and the current corrosion layer is serving a protective function. However, the weathering steel frame may restrict access to city utilities at the 6th bay from the southwest corner.



There are minor accumulations of bird droppings, paint splatters near the gazebo at the northeast corner, and trapped debris.



Summary

The sculpture is compromised at three points in particular:

- The cable sheaths do not have good long-term stability, especially in a high-ultraviolet light exposure setting.
- The cables are flexible, and can be deformed, bent, and broken, resulting in reduced security.
- The design requires regular landscaping maintenance to maintain the intended appearance.

Improving the artwork's condition may require design revisions, materials replacements, and a plan for landscaping maintenance.

Julie Unruh
August 10, 2023



AIPP Artwork Deaccession proposal October 16, 2023



Deaccession Worksheet CITY OF AUSTIN Public Art Collection

Accession Number:
Artist: Thoughtbarn (Begg and Gay)
Title: YMCA Community Garden Fence
Date created: 2014
Dimensions:
Edition # (if applicable): NA
Provenance: commissioned
Cost:
Current location: 1000 W Rundberg Ln, Austin, TX 78758

Department or individual recommending deaccession

PARD

Attachments:

- ☐ Visual images (within conservators report)
- ☐ Written opinion of the User Department Director

Reasons for Deaccession (check all applicable)

- ☐ Expert opinion has deemed the work of art to be of inferior quality in its historical, social and cultural implications.
- ☐ The work of art is duplicative of a substantial holding of work of that type or of that artist.
- ☐ The work of art has been documented by a licensed conservator or curator as fraudulent or not an authentic work.
- ☒ The work of art possesses substantial and irrevocable faults of workmanship that have been documented by a licensed conservator.
- ☒ The work of art has deteriorated beyond usefulness or original artistic intent, or is irreparably damaged to an extent where repair is either unreasonable or impractical.
- ☒ The work of art requires excessive or unreasonable maintenance on an on-going basis, far exceeding the anticipated maintenance requirements.
- ☒ The work of art has been assessed to represent a threat to public safety or is hazardous to other items in the collection or staff.
- ☒ A suitable and appropriate place for display of the work of art no longer exists.
- ☐ The work of art is not on display or has not been consistently displayed for a period of five or more years.



Deaccession Worksheet CITY OF AUSTIN Public Art Collection

- ☐ The work of art has consistently received adverse public reaction for a period of ten or more years.
- ☐ The City has received a written request for deaccessioning from the artist or one or more artist who co-authored the artwork, citing a specific reason for the request.

Conditions that initiated deaccessioning consideration (to be completed by AIPP Administrator)

The original appearance (as recorded in the proposal documents and installation photos) is compromised: the plastic sheaths covering the wires are faded, discolored, cracked, and corrosion-stained, and cables are bent or broken.
- The fence does not provide security due to slack and broken cables that allow access to the gardens.

Legal restrictions (CoA Legal Department opinion)

From: Pigott, Ron <Ron.Pigott@austintexas.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 2:40 PM
To: Harrison, Sean <Sean.Harrison@austintexas.gov>
Cc: White, Constance <Constance.White@austintexas.gov>
Subject: RE: Deaccession draft for YMCA Fence

Hi Sean –

This document looks good. I agree with the conclusion that the artwork should be removed.

On #6, I agree with the comment that it does not trigger automatic public input. Records should show if the artwork was culturally significant at the time it was commissioned. If this one isn't, the public comment on the loss of a cultural items isn't needed.

Ron Pigott | Pronouns: he/him/his
City of Austin Law Department

Purchasing restrictions (CoA Purchasing Office opinion)

See MEMO from PARD Director.

Background: Conditions of acquisition (method, date, cost)

Commission, 2014, \$92,000

Appraisal (value, date of appraisal, name of appraiser)(if intent is to sell or trade artwork)

NA

AIPP Artwork Deaccession proposal October 16, 2023



Deaccession Worksheet CITY OF AUSTIN Public Art Collection

AIPP evaluation of the work of art itself and its importance and relevance within the context of the overall AIPP collection

J. Unruh

August 10, 2023

Condition Assessment, "YMCA Community Garden Fence"

Conditions Noted

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AIPP recommendation regarding appropriateness or need of public opinion and cultural significance and need for a public hearing related to the deaccession.

NA

Written opinion by the User Department (PARD)

See Memo from PARD Director



Deaccession Worksheet CITY OF AUSTIN Public Art Collection

AIPP suggested course of action

Dismantling and removal of structure and component parts to be sold through Austin City Surplus, Resource Recovery, as metal scrap, or recycled as best suited.

Optional: Artist statement

Sean Harrison

10/6/2023

Signature, AIPP Administrator

Date

Constance White, AIPP Manger

10/6/2023

Signature, Cultural Arts Division Manager

Date