

City Installs Public Art at Sugar Land Regional Airport in Anticipation of Super Bowl

Mayor Zimmerman calls the project a milestone in the city's public art program

By Bryan Kirk (Patch Staff) - (<http://patch.com/users/bryan-kirk>) February 3, 2017 3:16 pm ET
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SUGAR LAND, TX -- Sugar Land's recent installation of public art sculptures at Sugar Land Regional Airport is expected to enhance the experience of visitors arriving for Super Bowl LI.

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The "Airport Gateway Project" is part of four new short-term projects included in City Council's approval of the City's first Public Art Plan on Dec. 20, 2016.

Located prominently at the State Highway 6 entrance to the Sugar Land Regional Airport, the artwork is expected to welcome travelers and serve as an iconic landmark.

The artwork is called VorTEX and includes seven wind sculptures designed and hand-fabricated at the artist's studio with heights ranging from approximately 15 to 30 feet high.

The project was selected by a panel of citizens that included art, design and aviation professionals.

After a review of proposals from various artists, the panel selected Lyman Whitaker, of Whitaker Studio, to create a dynamic, kinetic sculpture at the airport entrance.

Whitaker, who lives in southern Utah, is known for his hand-fabricated kinetic sculptures.



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He and his studio have completed many large-scale public art installations worldwide. His engineering and creative ability have resulted in well-received, long-standing art projects. Most recently, he was selected by the University of Pennsylvania's Morris Arboretum to install sculptures within their vast gardens.

"Often I am asked if my Wind Sculptures can generate power, and my response is their job is to generate joy," explains Whitaker. "The twist and flow of this installation, VorTEX, gives the observer a chance to check into the weather before taking flight at Sugar Land Regional Airport. Its job is to connect the viewer to the surrounding natural elements."

Funding for the project was approved by the Sugar Land 4B Corporation, an entity created to fund economic development and quality of life projects through restricted sales tax revenue.

"As one of Sugar Land's first commissioned installations, this is a milestone for our Public Art Program and will always hold a special place in the future development of our plan," said Sugar Land Cultural Arts Manager Lindsay Davis. "Other commissioned artworks have been representational and of traditional bronze.

The artist has extensive history with public art projects and was able to maintain the city's goal of being ready for the Super Bowl.

"This public art project represents an important step in the implementation of our Public Art Program," said Mayor Joe Zimmerman. "It not only enhances the beauty of Sugar Land, but it builds our reputation as an art and cultural destination. It's our goal to create memorable, meaningful places that are focal points for our community and enhance the appearance of our public facilities."

Image: City of Sugar Land

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