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Public displays

By ELENA LESLEY
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Public art's most appealing quality? It's accessible. The works a community displays can become a part of its identity - and a draw for tourism and investment. That's what Tarpon Springs leaders were thinking when they decided to make public art mandatory in the small north Pinellas city. The ordinance, which comes up for a final vote Tuesday, would require all new projects in the city that cost \$1-million or more to have public art. Developers would have to spend 1 percent of a project's budget on public art or donate three-fourths of a percent to a city public art fund. Here's a look at some notable public art projects across the bay area.

Breaking News Video

Components of Public Safety I and II (2003)

Ybor City: Artist Bradley Arthur created the \$120,000 sculpture outside the Hillsborough County sheriff's operations center using guns taken off the streets through the sheriff's buyback program. A similar statue sits outside the sheriff's District 3 office. Shortly after the sculptures were unveiled, they started to rust. County officials accused Arthur of delivering a "defective" product; the artist countered it added to the artistic effect.

Face the Jury (2006)

St. Petersburg: Each of the intimidating red chairs outside the St. Petersburg Judicial Center is meant to symbolize the uniqueness of every juror. A defendant's chair that faces the 12 is much more generic, demonstrating how anyone could be a defendant. Artist Douglas Kornfeld created the work for \$90,000.

Wave (1989)

Tampa: This \$50,000 piece by artist Mary Ann Unger originally sat outside City Hall, but was moved in 1998 to Bayshore Boulevard near Rubideaux Street for aesthetic reasons. The artist said she had never intended for the piece to be viewed from an upward angle, and in its old location, it stood on a 6-foot brick base. The new location, closer to the water, also seemed more fitting given its name.

Sponge Diver statue (2002)

Tarpon Springs: The statue, created by John Mazzolini, was a gift to the city from a group of taxpayers. The bronze statue at the Sponge Docks has since become an iconic Tarpon Springs image, used in the city's promotional materials.

Reading Power (2002)

St. Petersburg: This \$20,000 mural is in the main reading room at the Johnson Library. Artist Jeff Whipple used actual library workers and patrons as models for the figures flying through the air and hanging in space while reading.

Helix Port (2006)

Palm Harbor: Artist Erick Johnson intended the two sculptures near Alt. 19 and Florida Avenue to reference natural forms, yet many residents felt the \$85,000 work didn't fit with downtown. They felt the contemporary look clashed with the area's historic buildings.

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