



# Mercer Island Arts Council

2040 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE | Mercer Island, WA 98040 | [www.mercergov.org/artsCouncil](http://www.mercergov.org/artsCouncil)

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## Frequently Asked Questions *Darwin's Dream* by Rachel Holloway

### **How was the mural on West Mercer Way funded?**

This new public art project was funded via the City's 1% for Art in Public Places Fund (Municipal Code 4.40.200), which consists of funds set aside from capital improvement projects (CIP) to support public art acquisitions. Much of the City's public art collection has been acquired via this fund; other recent public art commissions and acquisitions include the new street banners in Town Center (2018), the mosaic murals at Luther Burbank Park playground (2016), and the dragon play structure at Deane's Children's Park (2013).

City Council approved the mural at West Mercer Way for the 2015-2016 CIP budget, but the project was delayed until 2017, at which time the City began the process for selecting an artist.

### **How was the artist selected?**

This artist selection process and implementing projects as part of the 1% for Art in Public Places Fund are administered by the Mercer Island Arts Council as governed by a set of guidelines adopted in 1992. Per those guidelines, artists should be reviewed by an artist selection panel that consists of six members. These members each represent one of the following interests/areas:

- A practicing artist
- A Mercer Island citizen with special interest in the proposed site
- A Mercer Island Arts Council member
- A Mercer Island Design Commission member
- A lay citizen of the City
- A Mercer Island City Councilmember

A City staff person also serves on the selection panel in a non-voting capacity. For the new mural, the City released a Call for Artists open to practitioners based in the Greater Puget Sound area in June 2017. The City received 28 proposals from area artists, which the artist selection panel reviewed in July 2017. The panel ultimately selected Mercer Island artist Rachel Holloway, who City Council and the City Manager approved in February 2018.

### **Who is the artist?**

Rachel Holloway has been a muralist, scenic artist, and production designer for the film industry for more than a decade. A fine artist by training, she has lived on the Island for several years (and even lives near the mural site!). Local artists Eliza Brown and Sophie Stilon also assisted Holloway with mural production.



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### **What does the mural design represent?**

Holloway's design, based on her own original painting, reflects "the little magical pockets of nature here on the Island." She took care to pay homage to native northwest flora and fauna, including common plants such as dandelions and ferns and animals like snow geese. As with any arts process, Holloway took artistic liberties in creating the piece and drew from her own life experience while also reflecting the natural surroundings of the area; for example, cow parsnip can be found in northwest landscapes like Mt. Rainier National Park but is also native to Holloway's home country of Wales, which has many other native plants like those found in the northwest.

### **How was the mural produced?**

Parks & Recreation staff worked closely with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to bring this project to fruition, as the retaining wall falls under WSDOT jurisdiction. Other City teams, including Parks Maintenance and the Right-of-Way team, provided important assistance to make sure the artists were protected while painting the mural near a heavily trafficked area.

To paint the final work, Holloway created larger-than-life stencils of her original painting to adhere to the wall and airbrushed the design to the retaining wall. After the artist team finished painting the mural, they sealed it with an anti-graffiti clear coat to prevent future damage to the artwork.

### **How much did the mural cost?**

The final budgeted amount for the project was \$30,000; this includes the artist fee and all labor, supply, permit, and other costs associated with producing the mural. This budget came from the 1% for Art in Public Places fund.