

Los Alamos Art in Public Places Board- Public Art Decommission Report- DRAFT

1. Artwork Information

- **Title of Artwork:** “Aquatic Figures”
 - **Artist Name:** Richard Lange
 - **Year of Acquisition:**1988
 - **Medium/Materials:** Painted Mural
 - **Current Location:** Larry Walkup Aquatic Center
 - **Acquisition Method & Cost:** Purchased for \$50,000 as a result of a competition conducted in July 1987
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2. Removal Request Details

- **Request Initiator:** APPB Members
 - **Date of Request:**
 - **Summary of Request:** *After 2024 internal art audit was completed, discussion was had about the condition of this mural and the possible coordination of potential removal with the closure of the Aquatic Center for the pool resurfacing project.*
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3. Criteria for Consideration

(Check all that apply and provide supporting details)

Documented adverse public reaction over time

- ✓ Damage beyond practical repair or repair cost exceeds value

Excessive/unreasonable maintenance requirements

Duplication within collection

Faults in design or workmanship

Fraudulent or inauthentic work

Threat to public safety

No suitable display location

Rarely or never displayed

Explanation of Criteria Met:

Art Audit reports have documented paint deterioration as far back as 2014, indicating long-term degradation. The mural's materials show clear signs of decomposition and structural decline. At 38 years old, the artwork has exceeded its intended 20-year lifespan, making restoration impractical. Additionally, Aquatic Staff have expressed a need to repurpose the space for alternative uses, further reducing the feasibility of maintaining the mural in its current condition.

4. Public & County Feedback

- **Summary of Public Input:** *Survey results from the November 2025 Public Art Questionnaire indicate limited public engagement with the artwork. Of 99 respondents, the majority (approximately 60) reported being “not familiar” with the piece, expressed indifference (“take it or leave it”), or felt it “doesn’t add value to the collection.” Additionally, 40% stated they “would not be disappointed” if the artwork were removed, while 25% were “unsure” about its removal. These findings suggest low overall attachment and minimal perceived significance within the community.*

Summary of Other Feedback: *Per 2/20/26 email from Aquatic Center Manager: The mural at the Walkup Aquatic Center is flaking onto the pool deck, and during swim meets, teams use painters' tape to mount their heat sheets, which also causes paint to peel off the wall. Considering that this is public art, staff are not allowed to touch up the mural. Furthermore, touching up the white paint around the mural is also cumbersome, so as not to disturb the mural.*

If the mural were deaccessioned, the potential uses for this space include more accessible points for safety and rescue equipment needed on the pool deck. Staff could also use the space to hang life jackets and other equipment on the walls to clear up the cluttered deck.

5. Artist Notification & Input

- **Date Artist Notified:** *Currently working on finding contact information*
 - **Artist Response:**
(Include advisory input on relocation, restoration, or modification if received)
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6. Legal Review

- **Compliance Check:**
 - County & State Laws: ✓ / ✗
 - VARA Rights: ✓ / ✗
 - Contractual Obligations: ✓ / ✗
- **Legal Department Comments:**

7. Recommended Actions

(Select one or more and explain rationale)

- Relocate the work
- Sell or trade the work
- Offer artist buy-back
- Auction through County procurement process
- Ethical disposal if other options fail or are inappropriate for artwork

Alternative Actions Considered:

8. Financial Impact

- **Estimated Costs (Relocation, Restoration, Disposal):**
 - **Appraised Value:** *N/A*
 - **Potential Revenue from Sale/Auction:** *N/A*
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9. Formal Recommendation

- **APPB Vote:** (Date & Outcome)
 - **Disposition Method Recommended:**
 - **Council Approval Status:**
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10. Documentation & Compliance

- Attachments:
 - Condition Reports
 - Meeting Minutes (APPB & Council)
 - Public Engagement Records
 - Final Disposition Details