

Inland Southern California



 [Print it](#) |  [Discuss it](#) |  [E-mail it to a friend](#)

Oranges are a sweet museum moneymaker

PUBLIC ART: Some of the sculptures are headed for auction. Many others find homes with sponsors.

05:25 PM PDT on Wednesday, September 13, 2006

By **DOUG HABERMAN**

The Press-Enterprise

RIVERSIDE - The oranges were too sweet to give back.

The Art Alliance of the Riverside Art Museum came up with the Giant Orange ArtVenture as both a major public art project and a fundraiser.

The group had hoped to auction off as many as possible of the 32 decorated fiberglass oranges installed downtown in June, president and project co-chairwoman Kathy Allavie said.

But, the plan hit a snag. Most of the sponsors are so fond of the oranges they paid \$5,000 to sponsor that they want to keep

ORANGE ODYSSEY

A look at where some of the works from the Giant Orange ArtVenture in downtown Riverside are going to end up.

"Picked by Hand" by Ed Fuentes, now by the main library, will go to the Casa Blanca Family Learning Center.

"The Seeds" by Beatriz Mejia-Krumbein, now on Main Street near University Avenue, will go to the Centro de Niños

them or have decided to donate them. Only five came back to the alliance to be auctioned off.

So the alliance came up with a new plan.

The group commissioned 30 smaller oranges to be auctioned off Oct. 13. Four of the giant oranges also will be auctioned off and a fifth will be a raffle prize.



Caitlin M. Kelly / The Press-Enterprise

Kathy Allavie, president of the Art Alliance of the Riverside Art Museum, holds up a smaller orange in front of Lorien Suarez's larger artwork. The group now plans to auction off 30 smaller oranges, while four of five giant oranges will be auctioned off and a fifth will be a raffle prize.

Typical of the sponsors is the Marriott in Riverside. The hotel is holding on to its orange, by painter Leslie Brown, a part-time art instructor at Riverside Community College, general manager Tom Donahue said.

"We love it!" he said. "It's a great piece of art."

Best Best & Krieger, a law firm that grew to early prominence representing citrus growers, feels

child-care center planned at Bordwell Park.

"The Journey of Eliza's Orange Trees 1874" by Patricia Ortlieb, will remain in front of the Riverside Metropolitan Museum.

"Under the Citrus Sun" by Greg and Cathy Maxwell, now on 10th Street by City Hall, will go to the Riverside Plaza.

"The Awakening Muse" by Leslie Brown will remain at the Marriott Riverside.

"The Gemmed Orange" by Jana Stevens Furzer will be kept by Citizens Business Bank at Main and Mission Inn Avenue.

"Our Emerging City" by Ada Passaro, now on Main near University, will go into the lobby of Best Best & Krieger's building.

"The Life at Riverside" by Durre Waseem, now outside the Riverside Art Museum, will be housed at Service Plus Credit Union.

"Reflections" by Daniel Foster, now outside the Provident Savings Bank at

the same about its orange by Riverside artist Ada Passaro, which highlights an orange tree and some key city buildings, partner John Brown said.

10th and Main, will be kept by the bank.

Source: Art Alliance of the Riverside Art Museum

"We've come to the conclusion it's somewhat emblematic of our 115 years as a law firm here in the Inland Empire," he said.

The orange will end up in the Mission Square office building the firm occupies, Brown said.

The giant oranges are 4 feet in diameter. The smaller oranges are 12 inches in diameter -- about the size of a pumpkin.

Of the 30 smaller oranges, some are exact replicas of giant oranges by the original artists, some are new works by artists who created a giant orange, and some are new works by new artists.

Nate McManus, 25, is one of the new artists. His orange sports city symbols, including the Fox Theater, Police and Fire Department badges, and a Raincross.



Caitlin M. Kelly / The Press-Enterprise

Nora Unrath, 45, holds her small orange titled End of a Perfect Day, depicting sites in Riverside. Unrath painted the big orange, titled Museum of Modern Oranges, displayed on the corner of Tenth and Lime streets.

He enjoyed donating his time and energy for the sake of public art, he said.

"I just thought it was a good cause," McManus said.

The alliance raised \$100,000 for the museum from the sponsorships of the giant oranges and is hoping to take in more than \$15,000 from the auction, Allavie and project co-chairwoman Phyllis Crabtree said.

The museum's executive director, Daniel Foster, said he's very happy about the money.

"To the best of my knowledge, this is the best fundraising event in the history of the museum," he said.

But even more important than the money is what a catalyst the venture could be, Foster said.

He said he is hopeful that it will represent the first of many public art projects in Riverside, whether it's fresh sets of decorated oranges or something new.

"Wouldn't it be nice to have this every day, permanently?" Foster said.

Reach Doug Haberman at 951-368-9644 or dhaberman@PE.com