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JOHN NOLEN DRIVE RECONSTRUCTION | PUBLIC ART FOR LAKEWAY PROJECT

Meet the international artists vying to leave their mark on the LakeWay

George Wiebe | Wisconsin State Journal

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A rendering of the skyline pier, a wide pedestrian space jutting out from the southwest section of John Nolen Drive of the LakeWay redevelopment, it has been removed amid concerns about cost.

SASAKI



Madison is moving ahead with plans for public art along the southern shore of the Isthmus, where major changes are already reshaping one of the city's most visible lakefront corridors.

City officials have welcomed a group of artists selected to develop designs for a public art project along the **SkyLine**, a planned linear park on the southeast side of the John Nolen Drive causeway. The installation will be part of a broader transformation that includes the ongoing reconstruction of the causeway and the future LakeWay project, which aims to improve the pedestrian and cyclist experience along the bridge separating Lake Monona from Monona Bay.



From left, Spanish urban artist SpY; Spanish art historian Eugenio Fontaneda Berthet; Vancouver-based artist Jill Anholt; Harriet Lumby of the U.K.-based art studio This is Loop; and Jin Choi and Thomas Shine of Boston- and London-based Choi+Shine.

Six artists, representing the four international design firms chosen from a group of 79 applicants, were given a tour of the city, including a drive around the Isthmus and the UW-Madison campus, and a boat tour of Lake Monona.

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The four studios and some representations of their art are:



Orb, by the Spanish urban artist SpY, is a ball with dozens of mirrors that reflect the surroundings of the audience. There are multiple versions of the sculpture, including one in Cairo and another in Montreal.

SpY Studio

- **SpY Studio:** Spanish urban artist SpY and his team of technical specialists and craftsmen have worked on large-scale public installations worldwide, emphasizing a sharp, direct style that seeks to engage audiences.



Light Showers, designed by Vancouver-based artist Jill Anholt, doubles as a sculpture and rainwater purifier in Toronto.

Jill Anholt Studio

- **Jill Anholt Studio:** The Vancouver-based artist Jill Anholt is known for her use of light and interactivity. She has experience integrating her work into urban infrastructure with a focus on sustainability.



Pulse, by the U.K. art and design studio This is Loop, is a 140-foot walkway with reflective arches lining the path.

This is Loop

- **This is Loop:** Harriet Lumby and Alan Hayes make up the artistic duo behind the U.K.-based This is Loop. The pair's work is known for combining art, technology and architecture. The Loop team says their interest in science and discovery is a major influence on their style.



The Land of Giants is a meeting of infrastructure and art. A series of electric pylons shaped like human figures holding up electric cables, designed by the art duo at Choi+Shine.

Choi+Shine

- **Choi+Shine:** Jin Choi and Thomas Shine are the closest in the group to being local artists. With studios in Boston and London, Choi and Shine's work often blends their use of steel in mesh-like patterns with public infrastructure

projects.

All of the finalists have experience working on public art and are internationally recognized, with work spanning multiple continents.

None of the artists has submitted ideas for their plans along the SkyLine yet. Preliminary designs are due in September, followed by a public survey asking Madison residents to vote for their preferred work.

“There is an embarrassment of riches to choose from. I was pleasantly surprised that so many accomplished artists from around the world expressed interest in our project,” said Ald. Mike Verveer, who sits on the **Madison LakeWay Public Art Selection Ad Hoc Committee**. “It was extremely difficult for us to narrow the 79 submissions down to four finalists. I look forward to their proposals with great anticipation.”

The artists were given a chance to introduce themselves to Madisonians at an informal gathering Wednesday, during which they each gave 5-minute presentations of their previous work in rapid succession, something Shine said felt akin to “speed dating.”

Installation of the winning design is expected to begin sometime in 2027, according to the city’s Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development.

The art will only cover a section of the SkyLine project, Madison LakeWay Partners CEO Jayme Powers said.

Powers said she hopes money for similar art projects to line the LakeWay will be available sometime in the future.

The project already faces financial headwinds. The SkyLine Pier, a wide pedestrian walkway jutting from the causeway out into Lake Monona overlooking the Isthmus, had to be **scaled back after organizers failed to secure enough money** to see the originally proposed design through.

Work on the **LakeWay project is expected to begin** as the first phase of the John Nolen Drive reconstruction winds down next summer.

By George Wiebe | Wisconsin State Journal
