

Public art selections made for Convention Center overhaul

By [The Daily Memphian Staff](#)

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Ben Butler's design - a suspended acrylic sculpture depicting the meanderings of the Mississippi River over time - has been chosen as the artistic centerpiece of the renovated Memphis Convention Center main entrance.

Butler is one of four Memphis-based artists announced Friday, Nov. 15, for a public art component of the nearly \$200 million convention center modernization.

The selections were made by the UrbanArt Commission in partnership with the convention center board and city of Memphis.

The UrbanArt Commission, which led the process, said it received 215 applications for four projects in response to an August call for artists. Chosen artists included 50% artists of color and 17% women, it said.



Artist Ben Butler's sculpture design for the Memphis Convention Center entrance. (Submitted)

In addition to Butler's \$400,000 commission, the other selections were:

- Kaleob Elkins and Franklin Wallace, \$90,000 mural project along Front Street inside new West Meeting Rooms. The design features programmable lighting.
- Kong Wee Pang and Jay Crum, \$55,000 mural project at parking level concourse. The design is a future Memphis cityscape with references to the river and Memphis' musical history.
- Jared Small, \$50,000 mural project at Front Street entrance at West Meeting Rooms. Small's design traces Memphis history from the early Chickasaw Nation to Beale Street.

“The artists selected for the Memphis Convention Center showcase the breadth of talent within our city,” selection committee member Rachel Knox, program officer at the Hyde Family Foundations, said in a news release. “I’m proud for these artists to have such a prominent platform for individuals visiting our city.”

The convention center’s interior and exterior transformation is on track for completion in the fall of 2020.



Mural design by Kaleob Elkins and Franklin Wallace for Memphis Convention Center. (Submitted)

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