

SOUTHWEST PARK PUBLIC ART
ARTWORK PROPOSAL
 By **Beliz Iristay**



Commission for
 Arts and Culture



Artist Beliz Iristay has been developing an artwork proposal for Southwest Park. The artwork will take the form of a monumental veladora sculpture made out of stainless steel and ceramics.

As a border artist living in Mexico Iristay has always been fascinated with the widespread use of votive candles known as “veladoras”. These traditional objects of devotion can be seen in roadside shrines, celebrations, and are widely used in Hispanic Botanica- Herbal Dispensaries on both sides of the border. Here, they function as expressions of wishing something for one’s life.

The sculpture will keep the traditional format of the veladora candle, with a front image and a back design. For the front image, Iristay has chosen the “Tree of Life” motif.

The sculpture is meant to honor the Otay Mesa community its identity as a multicultural border community by addressing universal themes. The sculpture celebrates the cultural transitions of immigrant families, their journeys, and honors the traditions of those who are natives to the region.



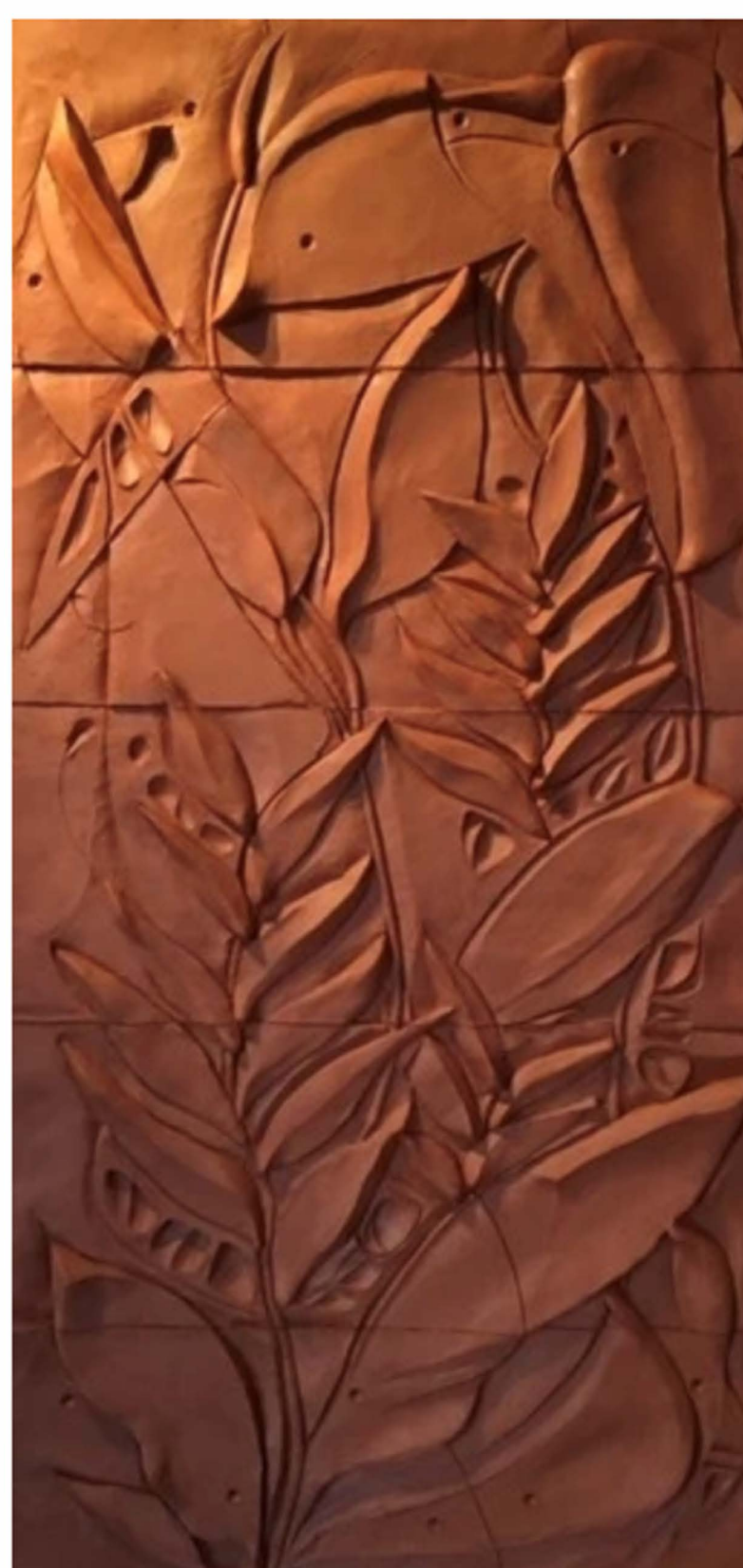
The Tree of Life is a universal symbol that carries multiple meanings including connectivity, orientation, and fertility, it is also a metaphor to the branchings of families and nature.

The back image features motifs inspired by traditional Mexican textiles, specifically the craft traditions of native Otomi peoples, which are more than just decorative art forms, but also play a part as symbols of Mexican culture and heritage.

The veladora sculpture will have an interior lighting feature that will give the sculpture a glow that would evoke a lit veladora candle.



Inspired by parallels in the symbolism of her Turkish heritage and Otomi crafts which feature specific flora and fauna, she has created a pattern uniquely reflective of the Otay Mesa region. Like with Turkish and Otomi symbolism, native flowers as well as native animals like the hummingbird, butterfly, lizard, and raccoon are featured. These designs are symbols for fertility, spirits, migration, and good fortune.



Iristay uses a Cypress tree, a mediterranean symbol for the tree of life. She will frame the main design with high and low relief hand sculpted clay elements like native plants, flowers and animals from the Otay Mesa Region to represent nature and other symbols.

