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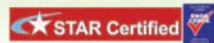
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Playa to plaza

Nonprofit wants to display artwork from Burning Man in Rancho Cordova

Imagine you and your best buds touring a vast field of free interactive art exhibits. There is a three-story “head maze” to explore, a stairway of floating stone steps to climb and a temple made of recyclables to examine.

This isn’t a dream. This is Burning Man.

In addition to all the other things you’ve heard about the one-week event in the Nevada desert, it’s the world’s largest outdoor art gallery with 400 pieces spread over a vast open area referred to as the “playa” (Spanish for the beach).

While Burning Man Project, the nonprofit organization that produces the event, partially funds a small percentage of the art, more than 80% of the artists self-fund their projects or use crowd-funding campaigns. As many people know, “The Man” and “Temple” art structures burn at the end of the week. What many people don’t know is that the vast majority of works created for Burning Man are taken home by the artists. While a handful have found long-term or temporary placement as public art in San Francisco, San Jose, Las Vegas and Reno, the vast majority are hidden from the public.

Sacramento Valley Spark, a nonprofit inspired by the 10-principles of Burning Man, is working to place interactive art created for Burning Man within the region and to open the “Sacramento Playa Art Park” in Rancho Cordova this fall.

Rancho Cordova cares about art and creating opportunities for its residents. On Feb. 3, Sacramento Valley Spark received a \$16,000 ceremonial check from the city’s 2019-20 community enhancement fund. The allocation will fund preliminary work developing the project and our July 25 summer arts celebration “Summer Spark,” which is expected to raise thousands of dollars towards the art park.

While the one-day event will offer art, mutant vehicles, music and food trucks, the one-year installation aims to take a vacant property and turn it into a vibrant amenity for the community—a place that inspires the old and



Ed Fletcher is a Sacramento documentary filmmaker and board president of Sacramento Valley Spark.

young to dream, that encourages us to be our truest selves and that invites us to participate in making our community a better place.

We envision a space with six to eight car-sized one-year exhibits, with three to four shorter-term art experiences that emphasize local participation, including chalk exhibitions, walls to spray paint and perhaps flower art.

Sacramento Valley Spark will host quarterly gatherings at the location to further showcase “Burner” culture and creations on an

accessible scale. However, true success in creating community space is seeing existing and spontaneous groups—poets, Pokemon enthusiasts and others—use the space in imaginative ways. That’s when it becomes “ours.”

Sacramento Valley Spark will work to find permanent homes for the art, but at the end of the one-year engagement, the Sacramento Playa Art Park moves on and the space takes on a future life shaped by our positive human interactions.

Creating this transformative space will not be cheap or easy. We need to secure the site, prepare the site, find the artwork, pay the artists, transport and mount the work and many other steps. Rancho Cordova’s support is a start, but we’re asking for corporate, community and private support.

We’re asking the Rancho Cordova and surrounding community to embrace this project as we transport a taste of Burning Man playa-to-plaza, minus the dust. □

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