



WAUKEGAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Artist Zachary Oxman chosen to sculpt Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury Statue Committee will begin fundraising immediately for the project

Waukegan, IL – The Ray Bradbury Statue Committee (RBSC) is pleased to announce that it has selected artist Zachary Oxman to create a statue to commemorate the life and achievements of Ray Bradbury. The statue, titled “Ray Bradbury: Fantastical Traveler,” will celebrate the beloved author on the grounds of the Waukegan Public Library. Oxman, from Rockville, Maryland, was chosen from a pool of over forty-one domestic and international submissions. In June, he presented his proposal to the RBSC at the Waukegan Public Library alongside two other finalists, where he impressed the committee with not only his talent and vision for the sculpture, but his passion for Bradbury’s legacy, too.

“Zack’s proposal captured everything we had hoped to see when we first drafted the RFQ,” said Richard Lee, chair of the Ray Bradbury Statue Committee and Executive Director of the Waukegan Public Library. Oxman’s presentation to the RBSC included a virtual reality element that allowed committee members to “see” the statue as it would appear in front of the Library, at the corner of County and Clayton Streets in downtown Waukegan. For Lee and other members of the Committee, this brought Zack’s vision to life in a completely unexpected way. “We wanted to celebrate Ray’s connection to Waukegan as well as his incredible talent as a storyteller, and Zack’s presentation helped us picture exactly how his work would accomplish that.”

Bradbury-as-storyteller certainly resonated with Oxman, who explained that he was encouraged to respond to the initial RFQ because he sees himself as sculptural storyteller, who shares stories through his art. “Ray Bradbury challenged genres and wasn’t afraid to approach tough subjects,” Oxman said. It’s something Oxman found compelling as a reader, coming late to Bradbury’s works, and as an artist who frequently engages with the same topics in his art.

Oxman’s planned sculpture, which will be cast in stainless steel, depicts an elder Bradbury astride a rocketship and waving a book as he journeys forth. Through soaring lines and fantastic scale, Oxman’s sculpture will pay homage to Bradbury’s vivacity. Oxman described the inspiration for the piece as a “flash” – an idea that began with the rocketship, appropriate, of course, for the author who frequently cast his imagination into space. The juxtaposition of an older Bradbury with the unstoppable movement of the rocketship was deliberate. “Bradbury’s writing,” Oxman explained,



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“was not rooted in the possible world, but rather in a fantastical one. I wanted to evoke that whimsicality.”

“There’s so much life and vitality in Zack’s portrait of Ray as a ‘fantastical traveler,’” said Lee. “I think he really captured Ray’s spirit and imagination.” Ray’s capacity for invention spun his childhood memories of Waukegan – and its library – into Green Town, the quintessential old-fashioned American town at the heart of several of his most famous works.

The RBSC will begin fundraising immediately for the project, aiming to raise \$125,000 through a multi-faceted campaign that will attract Bradbury fans from across the country. Gifts to the project may be made at <http://waukeganpl.org/BradburyStatue> through Generosity, a crowdfunding website. The goal, Lee said, is to bring those fans to Waukegan to see where Ray’s imagination first took root and then found its wings – or, as it happens, its rocketship.

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About the Waukegan Public Library: The Waukegan Public Library is dedicated to empowering and enriching the lives of Waukegan residents through learning, from early childhood to adulthood. The main library is located in downtown Waukegan at 128 N. County Street. The Hinkston Park Branch is located at 800 N. Baldwin, in the Waukegan Park District Field House. More information about library services can be found at www.waukeganpl.org.

Sources: