



KINETIC & COMMUNITY ENERGY INSPIRES NEW PUBLIC ARTWORK GRAVITY & GEAR IN PCMARC

Last fall the Public Art Advisory Board released an RFP for an original art installation for the interior of the PCMARC. The board sought a piece that would “promote a sense of play, discovery, and community.” They selected the concept from local resident Mike Wong, who proposed a kinetic sculpture composed of repurposed materials. Mike is a mentor for PCCAPS (Park City Center for Advanced Professional Studies) and collaborated with two PCCAPS students, Sky Martin and Joshua Lansky. Mike and Sky sat down to discuss the piece and the process of designing and installing it.

Park City Municipal Corporation: What are your respective backgrounds, and how do they inform *Gravity & Gear*?

Sky Martin: I grew up on a boat and was homeschooled by my parents. (After 9/11 my parents decided that they wanted to enjoy life, so we all set sail around the world—traveling to Europe and the Caribbean). There are no doctor’s offices or boat-repair shops on board (to say nothing of TVs or cell phones), so we became pretty resourceful. Eventually we settled in Park City, and I became involved in the PCCAPS program, which has provided such great exposure to real-life math and science challenges.

Mike Wong: I also graduated from Park City High

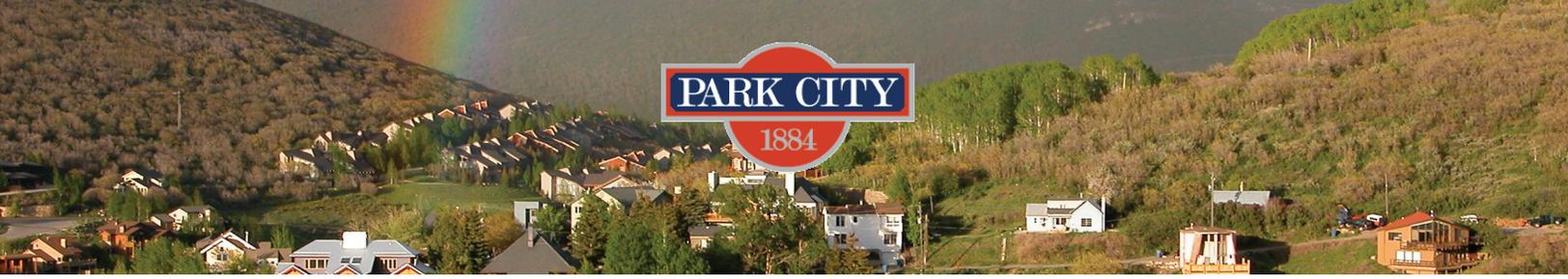
School (in 1996). I’m an industrial engineer by training and have my own company called Iko LLC, which I co-founded with students from PCCAPS a few years ago. The students and I developed the concept for the IKOS toy—interlocking pieces that form a sphere—and even designed the packaging as part of the project.

PCMC: How did you conceive of the idea for the piece?

Mike: When I saw the criteria from the Public Art Advisory Board for a “dynamic, engaging piece that represents the community,” I started brainstorming ways to incorporate the IKOS balls into a kinetic piece. I’m also on the board of Recycle Utah, and I see how much old sporting equipment—especially skis—comes through the center. I thought I could use that as source material. Then I thought, since it would be sited in an athletic facility, “Why not have kids on bikes be the main power source?” I serve as a mentor with PCCAPS and wanted to engage the students in the process. The idea came together from there.

Sky: As soon as (PCCAPS Director) Chris Humbert brought up the idea to the students, we all fought to be on the project team. Chris asked interested students to write a paragraph explaining their interest and chose two of us: Josh and me.





PCMC: Take us through your design process.

Mike: We used a child’s marble run building kit to prove out the physics of the initial idea.

Sky: I then built the piece virtually in SketchUp (3D modeling software). The marbles are a quarter-inch in diameter, and the IKOS balls are six inches in diameter, so I scaled everything up accordingly.

PCMC: How do you use the SketchUp model during construction and installation?

Sky: It’s really important to have a reference for each element. We need to identify the specific coordinates of each component and where to site it. We also weren’t able to simulate the straightness of the skis in the marble run, so SketchUp was key to figuring out this element. The virtual model also lets us see the piece from various vantage points to make sure it’s visually pleasing from every angle.

PCMC: Are others involved in the project?

Mike: Absolutely—this is really a community endeavor. The PCHS students, Public Art Advisory Board, and City staff have all been wonderful collaborators. In addition, ARW Structural Engineers (who were part of the initial MARC construction team) designed the support structure that will hold the piece. Craig Mogel of Germania Construction donated all 100 feet of Glulam that we needed, which was so generous. Jim Hofmeister, another PCHS graduate who teaches welding at the Kimball

Art Center, taught Sky how to weld and is letting us use his plasma cutter (which reaches temperatures of 50,000 degrees) to cut the steel to size. We’re also working with Dave Lovett, a licensed contractor. There are a lot of moving pieces to make this project happen, both literally in the sculpture design and in the project coordination.

PCMC: What is the project schedule?

Mike: We hope to finish the installation by the end of July. Because the MARC is a public building, we can only work after the facility has closed. This means we do all our work late at night and early in the morning.

Sky: The piece’s dimensions (8’x15’x30’) don’t allow it to fit through a doorway, so we need to assemble it all on-site.

PCMC: How will people be able to interact with it?

Mike: They’ll be able to observe it from various spaces in the PCMARC (from the entryway lobby or from the running track), and they’ll also be able to interact with it by riding a stationary bike to see IKOS move throughout the sculpture. The piece will be literally be powered by our community. We’re also designing it as an additive installation: if people have sporting equipment they would like to donate to the piece—tennis rackets, skis—let us know. We want this to be a living piece: I’m personally guaranteeing it for 10 years, and I am a Park City resident who uses the MARC quite often.

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PCMC: What's next for each of you?

Sky: I'll be attending the University of Colorado, Boulder in the fall, where I'll major in aerospace engineering and studio art. Aerospace engineering has a lot of similarities to ship design (especially the aerodynamic requirements), which I think is why I'm drawn to it. I may go on to pursue bionautics, which is the study of how space affects the human body and how to survive in a spacecraft.

Mike: I want to take my company, IKOS, in new directions—scaling the basic toy up for new applications. Spheres have so much potential for innovative design because they provide more

volume with the same amount of material. I want to design humanitarian shelters, water tanks, and other equipment for developing countries and emergency situations that will be more resilient, cheaper, and easier to transport.

Josh Lansky will be attending Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Interested in learning more? Contact Jenny Diersen, the Staff Liaison to the Public Art Advisory Board, at jenny.diersen@parkcity.org.

