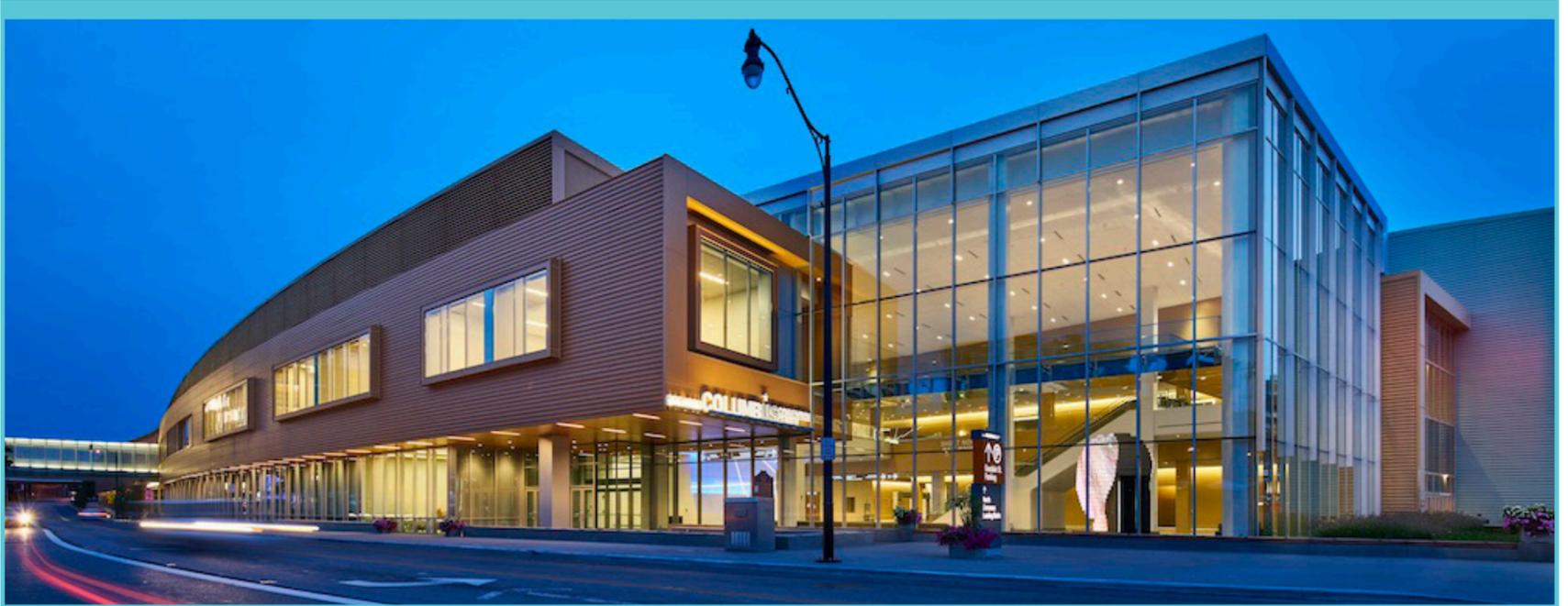




# 2017: A Look Back



2017 was a groundbreaking year for the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority. We completed a \$140 million expansion and renovation of the Greater Columbus Convention Center on time and on budget, celebrating with the community in late summer. We continued to build the largest collection of Franklin County art anywhere, unveiling both the innovative, interactive LED sculpture “As We Are” in the Convention Center’s new North Atrium and a one-of-a-kind ceramic sculpture by internationally renowned artist Jun Kaneko outside the center’s west entrance. Meanwhile, the Authority’s Hilton Columbus Downtown continued to win awards and accolades from peers and industry influencers, and we continued to book new events and conventions based on the strength of our growing capabilities.

We’ve put some of those highlights together for you in this recap of our 2017 progress. We hope you enjoy looking back on the year as much as we are looking forward to another groundbreaking year in 2018.

January 24, 2017

## OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ARTS

The Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority is where people meet Columbus. And with the largest contemporary collection of local art, our convention facilities are where visitors often meet Columbus’ artists for the first time.

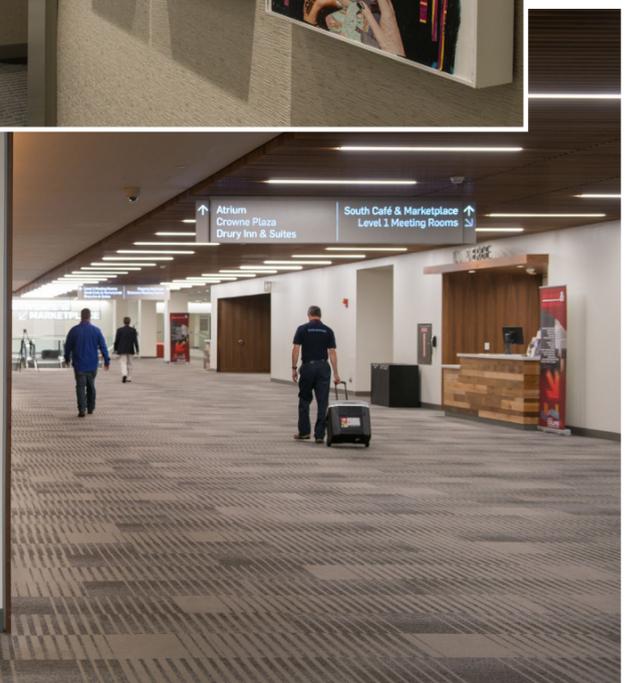
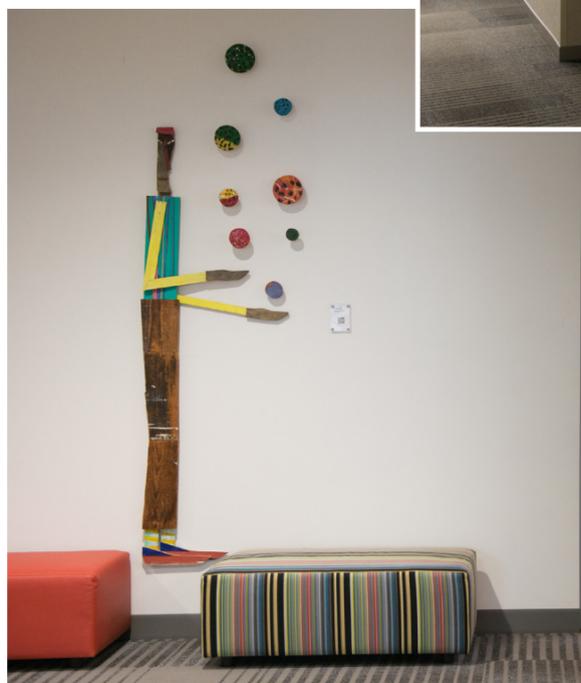
Our city’s rich arts culture explains our life and our people more than mere words ever could. In that way, our public art is an entryway to understanding what makes Columbus a great place to visit, work and live.

If you haven’t yet seen our public art collection, we invite you to view it for the first time in our newly launched virtual gallery.

This artwork represents the diversity of our community, cutting across age, gender and race. Explore that diversity on our website’s art section and allow yourself to connect with the artwork and stories that are Columbus.

Our commitment to bringing local artwork to the forefront of Columbus isn’t over. Major additions in the form of interactive art installations and exterior sculptures are expected to complement the Convention Center expansion and renovation yet this summer.

Come July, we wouldn’t be surprised if you begin your monthly Gallery Hop at Goodale and High!



April 7, 2017

## Discover the Discovery Café



The Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority celebrated the newest addition to the downtown culinary scene, **The Discovery Café**.

Operated within the Greater Columbus Convention Center by our food and beverage partner, Levy Restaurants, The Discovery Café features four distinct concepts, all made with fresh and local ingredients: the Columbus Grille, Crimson Cup, Homegrown Market and CBUS Tap Room.

In April, Levy installed a “smart farm” along the south wall of The Discovery Café to grow fresh vegetables and herbs for its kitchen just 75 feet away. The smart farm produces two and a half tons of produce each year for culinary use. Clients of the Greater Columbus Convention Center can make special advance arrangements with Levy’s catering team for specific items to be grown for use during their events, such as mint for mint juleps.

It doesn’t get more local than that!

April 25, 2017

## Hilton Columbus Downtown Scores Connie Award Three-Peat

The Hilton Columbus Downtown Hotel has won the Hilton brand’s coveted Connie Award for the third consecutive year.

The Connie, named for the company’s founder Conrad Hilton, is the Hilton brand’s highest honor given to one out of 248 hotels within the Americas Region, which compiles the highest overall combined rankings for loyalty, service, condition and cleanliness. As only one hotel is recognized annually, the award is highly coveted as the most prestigious within the brand, and the fact that Columbus has won it three times in a row is extraordinary.

**“Since opening, the team has been focused on only one goal: simply being the best hotel and employer we can be. All the credit for this focus, dedication and perseverance belongs to the team, including the FCCFA, Regional Team, and City and County representatives and partners, for being part of this amazing journey,” said Christian Coffin, general manager.**

Meanwhile, Coffin was named Leader of the Year for the second year in a row, while Director of Sales and Marketing Julia Hansen was named best sales director. Both awards were for Hiltons with more than 500 rooms.

The Hilton Columbus Downtown also received Hilton’s Service Award and its Genius of the “AND” Award – an honor that is given for a perfect score in each key performance area including financial, market, service, quality and team member engagement.

Earlier this year, Hilton also received the American Automobile Association’s Four-Diamond rating for the fifth year in a row.

The Four-Diamond designation is the second highest rating on a scale of one to five diamonds. The ratings are based on comprehensive, on-site evaluations on a combination of overall quality, range of facilities and level of services offered.



According to AAA, a Four-Diamond hotel must be “refined, stylish with upscale physical attributes, extensive amenities and a high degree of hospitality, service and attention to detail.”

Four-Diamond hotels account for fewer than 6 percent of almost 28,000 hotels that have been designated AAA Approved and Diamond Rated by AAA or the Canadian Automobile Association.

April 25, 2017

## Let the Countdown Begin



The Convention Authority is on schedule and on budget as it nears the July completion of the Greater Columbus Convention Center’s renovation and expansion. And it’s already winning accolades from community partners who see the project as a boon for the community.

Only three major tasks remain to complete the 22-month, \$140 million project, says Don Brown, the Convention Authority’s executive director.

First, construction crews are working to complete the fourth and largest node wall directly across from the newly opened Discovery Café. The node walls contain LED panels whose patterns provide bright backdrops throughout the Convention Center and a place for visitors to sit down and plug in.

A second major task will be the completion of the stunning renovations to the South Atrium. Workers will be busy during the next 60 to 90 days replacing a towering glass curtain wall, Brown says.

The third major area still underway is the outside connector area, which allows for visitor pickups and drop-offs at the central entrance of the Convention Center. The Convention Center’s driveway entrance

will be completely transformed with new streetscapes, hardscapes, lighting and a large outdoor sculpture by Jun Kaneko.

In the meantime, visitors will notice a dramatic improvement in finishes and spaces, with numerous project areas complete or nearing completion.

On April 23, the Short North Arts District will present the Convention Authority with its Architectural Star Award. The honor notes the impact the Convention Center will have on the gateway into the Short North, citing “impressive architectural additions, streetscape improvements, loads of new parking and a significant investment in over 200 public artworks.”

**Brown says the Convention Authority is honored to receive the award and “excited to be nearing the completion of this transformative project. We’re delighted to finish these major improvements on time and on budget, and proud that this major project has progressed while we also hosted over 660 separate client events and meetings.”**

April 25, 2017

## Convention Center Renovations Benefit Arnold Sports Festival

An estimated 200,000 people attended the Arnold Sports Festival in early March, with the new Greater Columbus Convention Center renovations playing a major role in its success.

Jim Lorimer, Arnold Sports Festival founder and co-producer, says improvements that included removable wall partitions allowed the event to run four competition stages in an “open-air” format without barriers blocking spectator views.

The Scottish Highland Games, previously staged outdoors, were moved inside during a time of year when the weather can be tricky. Additional events staged within the Convention Center included other strength, fitness and bodybuilding competitions.

Lorimer himself had a bird’s-eye view of the proceedings from the new, second-floor Lorimer Show Manager’s Office, which was announced last October as part of Jim’s 90th birthday celebration.

The Convention Center renovations “gave us the ability to position things a little more effectively in an open air arrangement,” Lorimer says. “And the open area permitted us to make things very more accessible to more people. We typically use every square foot of available space at the Convention Center, and this year we were able to secure some additional space, which will be advantageous as we are continually in a growth mode.”



He added that “additional side rooms and meeting rooms in 2018 will allow us to focus a little more on some of the fitness educational aspects of the festival weekend, which we think are going to be very important to the ongoing growth we’re anticipating.”

The Convention Center’s \$140 million expansion and renovation will be completed by July.

The Arnold is the Convention Center’s largest annual event. It has grown every year since 1989, when it began as a bodybuilding competition (which then actor and future California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger won). It now includes more than 70 sports and events and 20,000 athletes from 80 nations. The festival extends to venues around the city and, according to the city’s marketing organization Experience Columbus, contributes more than \$51 million annually to central Ohio’s economy.

## Convention Authority and GCAC to Honor Student Contributors to Largest Collection of Local Art

More than 250 Franklin County students from elementary school through high school will descend on the Greater Columbus Convention Center May 3 to see for the first time their artwork displayed as a permanent part of the Convention Center's \$140 million expansion and renovation.

The event will honor the students and teachers who have contributed to Columbus' growing public art scene. Guests will be guided from the new Union Station Ballroom in the Convention Center to the Vine Street Garage and Goodale Street Garage where student creations have been installed as murals around elevators on each floor.

Representing a number of local schools and community programs, students include those who responded to the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority's communitywide call for art in 2015. The effort, in collaboration with the Greater Columbus Arts Council, resulted in a local art collection larger than any other single recent inventory. Both student and adult art is now displayed in most of Convention Authority-owned facilities, including the Convention Center, the Hilton Columbus Downtown and three adjacent garages.

While touring the Vine and Goodale garages, students will carry an "art passport" to be stamped at each installation, and will participate in an art-focused scavenger hunt. Students also will hear from Nancy Smeltzer, an artist living in Columbus whose art is part of the Convention Authority's collection.

An evening reception is also scheduled May 3 to honor adult artists whose works grace Convention Authority facilities.

Poised at the gateway to the Short North Arts District, convention facilities are a logical venue for local public art, the Convention Authority says. Today, its local collection includes 230 original pieces by 130 central Ohio artists at the Hilton, works representing 100 artists at the Convention Center and 34 art installations in the garages.

The student event begins at noon; the adult reception begins at 5 p.m.



## NEWLY RENOVATED CONVENTION CENTER TO MAKE GALLERY HOP DEBUT



Poised at the gateway to the Short North Arts District, the Greater Columbus Convention Center will show off more than 130 stunning works of local art on Saturday, September 2, from 4 - 6 p.m. when it makes its debut as part of the district's Gallery Hop circuit.

Not to be missed is an iconic, one-of-a-kind interactive sculpture that will be unveiled at the Grand Opening just days prior. The sculpture that will be the centerpiece of the North Atrium will greet guests as they travel through the Arena District to the Short North, inviting guests inside to engage.

The Convention Authority, which owns and operates the Greater Columbus Convention Center, the Hilton Columbus Downtown, Nationwide Arena, and downtown parking facilities, welcomes the Columbus community to see the Convention Center's \$140 million expansion and renovation, and to enjoy tours of the largest contemporary collection of local art on display there.

Entry to the Convention Center is always free, and guides will be available Saturday for tours of the building and the art collection. The sculpture artist, Matthew Mohr, will be there to greet guests and answer questions.

The Gallery Hop, held on the first Saturday of every month, brings thousands of visitors to High Street in the Short North. Throughout the evening, visitors can enjoy new gallery exhibitions, street performers, special events, food and nightlife.

# Interactive Sculpture “As We Are” Unveiled as the Face of Human Diversity

Convention centers don't typically double as art galleries. The Greater Columbus Convention Center is an exception. As part of the Convention Center's recent \$140 million expansion and renovation, the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority unveiled an exceptional interactive sculpture unlike any other in the world at last night's Grand Opening, which marked the completion of the project.

Poised at the gateway to the Short North Arts District, the Convention Center will show off more than 200 stunning works of local art when it makes its debut Saturday as part of the district's Gallery Hop circuit.

Not to be missed is “As We Are,” a dramatic 14-foot, 3-D universal human head made from ribbons of ultrabright LED screens. Unveiled Aug. 31 as the Convention Center's newest art installation, the sculpture contains a photo booth capable of taking 3-D pictures. After visitors have their pictures taken, they will step out of the booth to see their portraits depicted as the face of “As We Are.”

“Each portrait is roughly 17 times the size of the person represented,” said Matthew Mohr, the conceptual artist for the work and a professor at the Columbus College of Art and Design. “Eyes will be as big as dinner plates. Through magnification, the sculpture recontextualizes each participant and ask all who see their portrait to consider who that person is and the life they lead, no matter their age, gender or culture.”

“The sculpture, fabricated by Design Communications Ltd., of Boston, is unique in the world,” said Sally Bloomfield, chair of the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority board, which commissioned “As We Are” as part of the largest contemporary collection of Franklin County art anywhere.

The Columbus Foundation has provided a yearly grant of \$75,000 for 2018. This support will help to maintain the visitor experience of “As We Are” for the coming year.

The Convention Authority, which owns the Convention Center, the Hilton Columbus Downtown, Nationwide Arena and four parking facilities, has invested \$3.5 million in local art as part of the Convention Center's recent \$140 million expansion and renovation.

**“Columbus has a great story to tell, and part of that story is a rich arts culture that adds to the experience of visitors and residents alike,” Bloomfield said. “The Convention Authority believes this is something to celebrate, and we hope people will visit Saturday and other times to see the exceptional improvements that have been made to the Convention Center and to enjoy our art collection.”**

Entry to the Convention Center is always free, and guides will be available Saturday for tours of the building and the art collection. Mohr will be there to present “As We Are” to guests and answer questions at 4 p.m.

Gallery Hop, held on the first Saturday of every month, brings thousands of visitors to High Street in the Short North. Throughout the evening, visitors can experience new gallery exhibitions, street performers, special events, food and nightlife.

To learn more about “As We Are,” please click here. Join the conversation on social media #AsWeAre and follow @FCCFA\_Art.



# 60-FOOT DIGITAL DISPLAY LIGHTS UP CONNECTOR WITH POSSIBILITIES



A unique digital display 60 feet long and 7 feet high is the final answer to the question “What's the best use for the 100-foot-long wall between the Greater Columbus Convention Center's south and north buildings?”

The display, which currently introduces itself to passersby with the statement “I am a 4 mm LED video art wall with a 9:1 aspect ratio viewing screen and a NVIDIA GeForce 1060 graphics card,” actually wastes little time on introductions before bursting into historic video snippets, dazzling color patterns and Columbus branding.

“We didn't want a static display for that large space,” says Jim Reese, whose Reese Brothers Productions curates the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority's extensive art collection in the Convention Center, Hilton Columbus Downtown and the Convention Authority's parking facilities. “It was a two-and-a-half year journey to figure out what was best suited for a 100-foot wall. The Authority's board members wanted it to stand out and be dynamic.”

The opportunity came as part of the Convention Center's \$140 million expansion and renovation, completed in July. Since its installation, the display has been incrementally loaded with historic references to Union Station – the former rail terminal upon which the Connector sits – as well as some of the art collection. It also reminds passersby about the

city's accepting and inclusive nature and upcoming events such as the Arnold Sports Festival in March.

The display itself was fabricated by Coffman Media Design Signage Solutions, and Reese has worked with motion graphics innovator Leftchannel and creative agency Heart + Soul, both from Columbus, on initial content. Columbus State Community College's Graphic and Motion Design Department is already working on some additional video assets, and one student is working on an animated version of the State of Ohio Seal.

The potential for content is almost unlimited, Reese says. The display operates 24 hours a day 365 days a year, and segments will never be more than 30 seconds or so, he explains, “so there really are no barriers to how much content we can provide.”

Eventually, it will function as a community showcase, advertising space, digital art gallery and entertainment point all in one.

**“No other convention centers are doing this,” Reese says. “Lots of them have signage and video walls. But they are not looking at it as a creative space or venue.”**

# Gallerie Bar & Bistro Named One of Columbus Monthly's Top 10

The award-winning Hilton Columbus Downtown recently picked up several more accolades when its Gallerie Bar & Bistro was named one of Columbus' 10 best restaurants and its hotel staff was recognized as among the best in Ohio.

Columbus Monthly for the second year in a row included Gallerie Bar & Bistro as one of the top 10 restaurants in central Ohio.

The publication praised the restaurant for “offering an imaginative, Ohio-inspired motif from the minds of Executive Chef Bill Glover and Chef de Cuisine Josh Kayser,” noting that “rather than playing it safe, Gallerie takes risks and honors quality ingredients. The local dining scene is better for it.”

Columbus Monthly also called attention to the restaurant's dessert prowess, saying “Gallerie's creative streak is never more obvious than on the restaurant's dessert menu, where the work of Pastry Chef Aaron Clouse made an impression this year.”

Meanwhile, Hilton employees were honored at the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association's Stars of the Industry Awards on Nov. 21. Ryne Sanford

was named OHLA's Housekeeper of the Year, while Ty Sindledecker was named Manager of the Year and the entire Hilton staff was named Team of the Year.

The Hilton Columbus Downtown is no stranger to recognition and awards. It has won the Hilton organization's highest award for service and quality – the Connie Award – three years in a row, as well as individual awards such as Leader of the Year for General Manager Christian Coffin for the last two years.

**“We are humbled by this recognition from both Columbus Monthly and the OHLA,” says Coffin. “It is truly an honor to work with such a team of dedicated service-oriented professionals every day.”**



# Kaneko's "Untitled, Dango" is First for Columbus

In November, the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority unveiled its newest major art piece, "Untitled, Dango," a large ceramic piece by internationally renowned sculptor Jun Kaneko.

The dango, which means "dumpling" in Japanese, is among a number of such works crafted at the artist's Omaha studio, but is his first piece of public art in Columbus, says Jim Reese of Reese Brothers Productions, the Convention Authority's art curator.

The rounded, wedge-shaped sculpture, with wide horizontal bands of black and gray and multicolor strips hanging vertically across the crown that end in a bulls-eye of colors at one corner, greets visitors at the west entrance to the Greater Columbus Convention Center, directly across High Street from the Hilton Columbus Downtown.

**"The artist is represented in Columbus by Sherrie Hawk of Sherrie Gallerie and has wanted to do a public art piece here forever," Reese said. "Michael (Jim's brother and company co-leader) worked with Sherrie to see what could be done."**

That conversation led to a trip by Hawk, Michael Reese, Convention Authority Board Member Barbara Nicholson and the Authority's Senior Project Manager Scott Reed to hand select a piece.

They fell in love with this design because it emulates the architecture of the building from above in a way that reminds someone of trains pulling in, Jim Reese says.

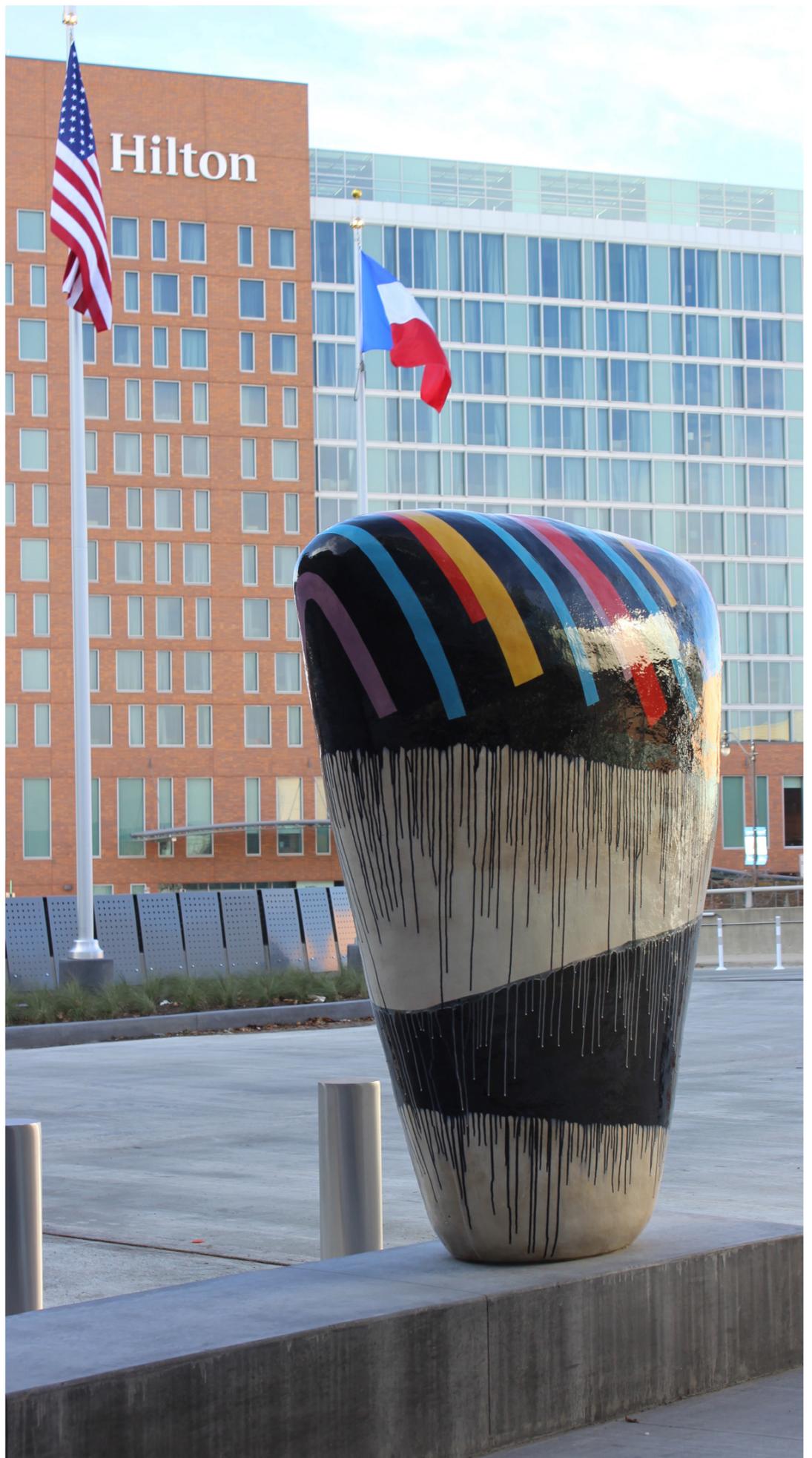
That is, in fact, a throwback to the sculpture's site, previously Union Station, the passenger rail terminal that reached its peak before World War II and was finally demolished in the 1970s.

Reese notes that Kaneko specially designed the bench upon which the dango sits specifically for the site and the piece.

More art?

Meanwhile, the Convention Authority continues to augment its collection of local public art, including a repurposing of the collection on Convention Center food carts, the "Art Makes Columbus, Columbus Makes Art" mural in the South Atrium and an upcoming application of the collection to bus shelter windows on High Street.

Additionally, there are plans to install a mural in the currently bare stairwell that connects the two levels of the South Parking Garage.



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