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## Restoration begins on Yakima Valley SunDome's *Circle of Light*

*Dick Elliott's colorful vision to be brought back to life this summer*

OLYMPIA, WA – This summer, all eyes will be on the Yakima Valley SunDome as restoration begins *Circle of Light*. Created by the late Richard C. "Dick" Elliott (1945-2008), a Central Washington artist known for his large-scale installations, *Circle of Light* has been a trademark feature of the SunDome for nearly 30 years. However, the piece has fallen into disrepair in the decades since installation. At least half of the artwork's colorful reflectors – which number near 50,000 – have fallen off. Thanks to funding from the Washington State legislature, long-awaited repairs will now begin.

"The restoration of the *Circle of Light* fills me with pride and pleasure. It's a tribute to Richard Elliott's creative vision," said Jane Orleman, wife of Elliott. "He combined light, color and pattern into an iconic symbol for Yakima. Dick would be absolutely delighted to know his art is so valued and meaningful after 30 years. "

Comprised of nearly 50,000 industrial highway reflectors, *Circle of Light* forms a dramatic halo of vibrant, colorful patterns around the Yakima Valley SunDome. It is the largest piece in the State Art Collection, a trove of nearly 5,000 artworks managed by the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA). When the legislature approved the funding in 2021, the team at ArtsWA immediately set to work to preserve *Circle of Light*. No detail was too small: the new reflectors come from the same manufacturer that Elliott used in 1992.

"Our goal is to ensure that *Circle of Light* is restored in a way that is true to Dick Elliott's vision," said Janae Huber, the Collections Manager for ArtsWA's Art in Public Places program. "Getting the specific reflectors correct is key to the illumination that the artist's work achieved."

Kathy Kramer, President & CEO of the Yakima's State Fair Park & Event Center, looks forward to seeing the SunDome restored to its original brilliance.

"We are excited to have this beautiful piece of public art displayed around the perimeter of the Yakima Valley SunDome to greet and delight our guests as they visit State Fair Park," said Kramer.

The new reflectors are now in Yakima and restoration will soon get underway. Burton Construction, Inc will manage the removal of the old, decaying reflectors and the installation of their replacements. Their work will be undertaken with preservation guidance from Architectural Resources Group (ARG). Yakima residents and visitors can look forward to a fully restored *Circle of Light* in late summer or early fall. In celebration, Yakima's Larson Gallery will host an exhibition on Elliott's work from July 9 through August 27, 2022. The Yakima Valley Museum plans to put Elliott's original drawings on display from June through September.



“It’s simply an extraordinary story of art and community,” said Karen Hanan, ArtsWA’s Executive Director. “Washington’s State Art Collection is one of the most diverse and exciting collections in the country – and *Circle of Light* is one its crown jewels. This restoration is a testament not only to Elliott’s vision, but also to the spirit of Yakima. We are thrilled to help re-introduce this magnificent work to the world.”

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## About ArtsWA

ArtsWA is the Washington State Arts Commission, a state government agency established in 1961. ArtsWA works to be a catalyst for the arts, advancing the role of the arts in the lives of individuals and communities throughout the state. Programs include Art in Public Places, Arts in Education, Grants to Organizations, and other special projects. For more information visit [arts.wa.gov](https://arts.wa.gov).