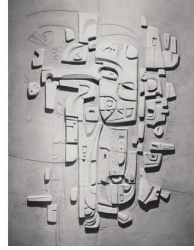


# CHARLES CLEMENT



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February 4, 2026

Yu Yu Shiratori, Public Art Collections Associate  
Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona  
525 N. Bonita Avenue  
Tucson, AZ 85745  
yuyu@artsfoundtucson.org

**Re: Turnkey Sculptures by Charles Clement – Request for Deaccession and Return Pursuant to City of Tucson Public Art Relocation and Deaccession Policy (AD 7.01-7)**

Dear Ms. Shiratori,

On behalf of the Charles Clement Estate, I submit the enclosed report, *The Turnkey Sculptures by Charles Alfred Clement: Condition, Administrative Failure, and Required Disposition*, for formal consideration under the City of Tucson's Public Art Program, including the **Public Art Relocation and Deaccession Policy (Administrative Directive 7.01-7)**. This report has been prepared with the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation to establish a clear factual and policy record in light of how the Public Art and Community Design Committee has thus far discussed, framed, and approached the condition, treatment, and proposed disposition of the work, and to ensure that any further action proceeds in alignment with the City's adopted public art policies and governing standards.

As the report documents in detail, the *Turnkey* sculptures are owned by the City of Tucson and are therefore part of the City's Public Art Collection, as defined by Administrative Directive 7.01-1. Under that directive, the City's public art policies are not aspirational; they are mandatory and apply to all artworks in the collection regardless of date of creation.

The same directive establishes that the City's public art collection "will be periodically inventoried and monitored," and that sufficient resources are to be set aside for maintenance, conservation, preservation, and, where appropriate, relocation or deaccession. The Directive further provides that matters of relocation and deaccession are governed by AD 7.01-7, which exists precisely to address circumstances in which an artwork can no longer be responsibly preserved or presented with integrity.

The enclosed report demonstrates that those circumstances are present here. Specifically, the record establishes that:

- The *Turnkey* sculptures were deinstalled and relocated c. 1995- 2006 without documented compliance with the City's relocation procedures.
- The unified work was fragmented into multiple groupings, with 4 original elements lost and unaccounted for.
- Remaining elements have suffered physical damage and prolonged neglect.
- The work has been irreversibly decontextualized and can no longer be interpreted or presented as the unified artwork conceived by Charles Clement.

As the report explains, these outcomes reflect a failure of mandatory stewardship obligations contemplated by the City's Public Art Program and trigger the very condition for which the Relocation and Deaccession Policy exists: an artwork that can no longer be preserved, maintained, or presented with integrity as part of the City's collection.

Charles Alfred Clement died on July 15, 1981. Because the artist is deceased, consultation with the artist regarding corrective measures is impossible. Continued City custody and display of fragmented elements therefore results in ongoing misrepresentation of the work and continued policy noncompliance. Process reform alone cannot cure this condition.

Accordingly, and consistent with the City's adopted public art policies, the Charles Clement Estate formally requests that the Arts Foundation deaccession the work pursuant to AD 7.01-7 and arrange for the return of all remaining *Turnkey* fragments to the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation a 510(c)3 non-profit organization.

This request is not made as a matter of preference. It is made because deaccession is the only outcome contemplated by City policy when an artwork has lost integrity and can no longer be responsibly preserved or interpreted. Return of the remaining fragments will halt further damage, end continued misrepresentation, and bring the City's handling of this work into alignment with its own governing directives.

Continued display and attribution of fragmented and damaged elements has consequences beyond the condition of the *Turnkey* sculptures themselves. Public presentation of these remnants as works by Charles Clement materially misrepresents his artistic practice and distorts the historical record of his work. That misrepresentation necessarily diminishes the perceived integrity of his broader body of work and adversely affects the treatment, interpretation, and valuation of other works by the artist held in private and institutional collections. Deaccession and return are therefore required not only to address stewardship failure, but to prevent ongoing harm to the artist's legacy.

We are available to discuss next steps, documentation, and logistics at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Christine Bondante  
Charles Clement Estate

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**The Turnkey Sculptures, 1969/70  
by Charles Alfred Clement  
Condition, Loss, Administrative Failure, and Required Disposition**

Prepared by:  
The Charles Clement Estate

Date: January 2026

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## I. Purpose of This Report

This report is prepared to document the history, condition, and treatment of the *Turnkey* sculptures by Charles Alfred Clement and to establish a clear record of the actions that have resulted in the work's irreversible damage. The report is prepared by the Charles Clement Estate in partnership with the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation.

The report does not seek to revisit artistic merit or to propose reinterpetive strategies. Its purpose is narrower and more precise. It documents that the *Turnkey* sculptures, owned by the City of Tucson and administered under the City's Public Art Program, have been materially altered, fragmented, and partially lost through actions taken without consultation with the artist, his Estate, or the copyright holder, and without compliance with the City's own mandatory policies governing preservation, relocation, and deaccession.

The report further establishes that the work can no longer be preserved, interpreted, or presented with integrity. As a result, continued City ownership and administration of the remaining fragments constitutes an ongoing misrepresentation of the work and a continuing breach of applicable policy. Deaccession is therefore required.



## II. The Artist and the Work

Charles Alfred Clement (August 15, 1921 – July 15, 1981) was an American artist whose career bridged fine art, design, architecture, and public sculpture. Born in New York City to French parents, Clement was educated in a rigorous modernist milieu and developed a multidisciplinary practice that consistently emphasized the integration of art with the built environment.

Clement's formal training included study at the Franklin School of Professional Arts, the Parsons School of Design, the New School for Social Research, and Brooklyn College, where he studied under György Kepes. Kepes, a key figure in twentieth-century modernism and a proponent of the integration of art, science, and architecture, exerted a lasting influence on Clement's approach to form, material, and spatial composition. Clement's education placed him squarely within the intellectual lineage of mid-century modernism that rejected autonomous ornament in favor of art conceived as an integral component of lived space .

In the 1940s and early 1950s, Clement worked professionally in New York as an illustrator, designer, and artist, producing commercial and fine art while continuing to explore sculptural form. In 1950, he relocated permanently to Tucson, Arizona, where his career entered its most significant and productive phase. In Tucson, Clement became deeply engaged with architects, planners, and civic institutions at a moment when the city was undergoing rapid postwar growth and experimentation in modern design.

Clement's work in Tucson encompassed sculpture, murals, architectural reliefs, furniture, and integrated environmental artworks. He frequently worked in durable materials such as cast concrete, ceramic, mosaic, stone, fiberglass and metal, selected for their suitability to permanent public and architectural contexts. His sculptural vocabulary favored abstraction, repetition, and modular form, but always in service of a larger spatial and social composition rather than isolated object-making.

A defining characteristic of Clement's practice was his commitment to site-specificity. His works were conceived in direct response to architectural settings and intended uses, with scale, orientation, and material chosen to complement surrounding structures and human activity. Clement did not treat public artworks as transportable or interchangeable objects. Instead, he designed them as integral components of cohesive environments, often collaborating closely with architects and planners to achieve unified results.

The *Turnkey* sculptures, created in 1969/70, are representative of this mature phase of Clement's work. Conceived as part of an affordable housing development, the sculptures were designed to function collectively as a unified sculptural installation embedded within the architectural and social framework of the site. Their purpose was not purely decorative, but civic and environmental: to shape shared space, provide visual coherence, and contribute to the identity of the development and its residents.



Clement's work occupies an important place within the history of postwar modernism in the American Southwest. At a time when many public artworks were conceived as stand-alone monuments, Clement pursued a more integrated and human-scaled approach aligned with international modernist principles. His work reflects broader mid-century efforts to democratize modern design by embedding art within everyday environments rather than confining it to galleries or elite institutional settings.

Charles Clement died on July 15, 1981. His death is a material fact in assessing the subsequent treatment of his work. All decisions affecting the *Turnkey* sculptures made after that date occurred without the possibility of consultation with the artist and without his participation or consent. As a result, the responsibility for safeguarding the integrity and accurate representation of his work necessarily shifted to those charged with stewardship and, ultimately, to his Estate and the copyright holder of his work, the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation.

The significance of Clement's work lies not only in its formal qualities, but in its conceptual foundation. His sculptures were not intended to survive as fragments or as decontextualized objects. Their meaning depended on completeness, placement, and relationship. Fragmentation, loss of elements, and removal from original context therefore do not merely diminish Clement's work. They alter it fundamentally.

This understanding is essential to evaluating the condition and disposition of the *Turnkey* sculptures. The damage documented in this report is not limited to material deterioration. It includes the loss of artistic intent, spatial coherence, and civic purpose that defined Charles Clement's contribution to Tucson's public art legacy.

The work was conceived as a single, unified sculptural composition, not as discrete or interchangeable objects.

The artistic integrity of *Turnkey* depended on:

1. the presence of all original elements,
2. their spatial relationships,
3. and their original architectural and social context.



### III. The Turnkey Project: Work, Site, and Historical Context (1969–1970)

The *Turnkey* sculptures by Charles Alfred Clement were created between 1969 and 1970 as part of the *Turnkey Housing Project*, an eighty-unit federally funded public housing development. The project was developed under the federal “turnkey” housing program, a delivery model in which private architects and contractors designed and constructed housing for public agencies under fixed-price agreements, with the objective of accelerating the production of affordable housing during a period of national demand.

The Tucson *Turnkey Housing Project* was designed by Mark Edson and William Goldblatt, AIA, and built by private contractors for the Tucson Housing Authority. Construction commenced on April 2, 1970. The project emerged during a period of heightened federal investment in housing and urban infrastructure, coinciding locally with increased civic attention to labor equity, civil rights compliance, and community representation in publicly funded development.

The *Turnkey* project became a focal point for these broader concerns. Community advocate Hubert Davis publicly pressed for equitable hiring practices, particularly increased Black employment, and for monitoring compliance with federal labor and civil rights requirements. As a result, the project carried social and civic significance beyond its architectural footprint, symbolizing the intersection of federal policy, local governance, and community advocacy.

Within this context, Charles Alfred Clement was commissioned to create a site-specific sculptural work for the development. The commission was integral to the project and consistent with mid-century modernist principles that emphasized the incorporation of art into everyday environments. Clement’s role was not to supply discrete decorative objects, but to contribute a sculptural program conceived as part of the architectural and social fabric of the housing complex.

Clement designed a unified ensemble of sixteen cast concrete sculptures, distributed throughout the development and conceived as a single, cohesive work. The sculptures were fabricated in durable materials appropriate for permanent outdoor installation and were scaled to the pedestrian experience of the housing site. Their placement, repetition, and relationship to the surrounding buildings were essential to their meaning. Individually, the elements were abstract. Collectively, they formed a spatial and visual system intended to shape shared space and reinforce identity..

The *Turnkey* sculptures were not conceived as transportable or modular works. They were site-specific by design, and their artistic integrity depended on three interrelated conditions: (1) the presence of all original elements, (2) their intended spatial relationships, and (3) their integration within the architectural environment of the housing project. Removal from that context fundamentally altered the nature of the work.



#### IV. Significance of the Turnkey Work

The Turnkey sculptures were significant not only as works by an important mid-century artist, but as physical records of a specific moment in Tucson's civic, architectural, and social history. The work represented a rare example of site-specific modernist public art integrated into federally funded housing, reflecting national policy priorities and local civic engagement at the turn of the 1970s.

The sculptures embodied Clement's mature artistic philosophy, in which sculpture functioned as a civic and environmental element rather than as an autonomous object. Their destruction through fragmentation and loss therefore represents more than material deterioration. It constitutes the loss of artistic intent, spatial coherence, and historical meaning.

This historical and contextual understanding is essential to evaluating the present condition and appropriate disposition of the *Turnkey* sculptures. The work cannot be responsibly preserved, interpreted, or represented in fragmentary form. Its significance lies in what it was designed to be: a unified, site-specific public artwork embedded in a particular architectural, social, and historical context that no longer exists.



## V. Removal, Dispersion, and Loss of Integrity

Sometime between 1995 - 2006, during redevelopment associated with the South Park public housing area, the *Turnkey* sculptures were removed from their original locations and setting. This removal occurred without consultation with the Clement Estate or Clement family, despite the artist's death in 1981 and the existence of identifiable successors in interest.

No documentation has been produced demonstrating that the City followed its required relocation procedures. There is no record of formal review, no documented evaluation of the work's integrity, and no evidence of a deaccession determination prior to fragmentation.

Following removal, the unified sculptural ensemble was fragmented and dispersed. The sculptures were separated into two known groupings and installed at unrelated locations, without interpretive context, without clear artistic attribution, and outside the architectural environment for which they were designed. The work's original coherence was destroyed.

Four (4) original elements of the *Turnkey* ensemble are now missing and unaccounted for. Their locations and condition remains unknown. The loss of these components constitutes partial destruction of the work and renders restoration of the original ensemble impossible.

As of February 2026 there are two known locations associated with the surviving known twelve (12) of the original sixteen (16) elements of the *Turnkey* sculpture.

The first location is a site at South Park Avenue and East 35th Street (949 and 951 East 35th Street, Tucson, Arizona), which housed a community arts organization in the mid-2000s. The origination was known as Hope IV Art and Culture Partnership (circa 2006–2007) and ArtCulture Partnership (circa 2007–2008). Available records indicate that the organization(s) discontinued operations by approximately 2008. While outside the primary scope of this report, it is important to note that, as reported in the Arizona Daily Star on July 4, 2006, the site included tile mosaic installations created in 1995 by Gonzalo Espinosa and Alex Garza. Despite the disposition of this site being part of the current discussion, there have been no formal evaluations or discussions of these additional artworks under applicable City policy, which constitutes a further governance and oversight failure.

Sometime between 1995 and 2006, the eight (8) elements of the *Turnkey* sculpture were relocated and reconfigured on this site. The elements were installed in a manner that reduced the height of the original work by partially burying the concrete components in the ground and were subsequently painted in various shades of gray. One of the rectangular elements has been struck by a vehicle; fragments of this damaged element were observed in pieces on the ground as of January 2026, approximately eight months after the Arts Foundation was first notified in July 2025 of damage to the sculptures.

The second location is Silverlake Park, (originally named Kino Parkway and 36th Street District Park) located at Kino Parkway and 36th Street (2420 South Kino Parkway, Tucson, Arizona

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85713). At this site, four (4) elements are present, consisting of two rectilinear concrete elements and two geometric bench forms. All four elements have been painted and three are in varying states of deterioration, including chipped edges and surface damage. The elements are isolated from one another and from their original spatial context, further diminishing the integrity of the work as a unified sculptural ensemble. In addition, plans prepared in 2003 for the Kino Parkway and 36th Street District Park identify the location of one of the painted *Turnkey* elements with the notation “Relocate Memorial as directed by City Project Manager,” indicating that the relocation of at least one component was anticipated or directed as part of the park planning process yet did not note it as the work of Clement.

**It is possible that the remaining four (4) missing elements are located on other City-owned property in or near the surrounding area; however, to date, no additional Turnkey elements have been identified or documented.**

**Any recommended action or disposition must therefore apply to all components of the work, including any elements that may be located or recovered at a later date.**

The work has suffered multiple forms of damage:

1. Loss. Original sculptural elements are missing and cannot be located within the City’s inventory.
2. Physical Damage. Remaining elements exhibit breakage, surface deterioration, and structural failure.
3. Decontextualization. The fragments are installed without reference to Clement’s original design intent, without interpretation, and without spatial coherence.

These conditions represent irreversible harm to the work as a unified artwork.



## VI. Loss, Damage, and Decontextualization

The *Turnkey* sculptures have suffered several distinct but interrelated forms of harm.

First, elements of the original work are missing. Four (4) known sculptural components that formed part of the unified installation cannot now be located within the City's inventory. Their whereabouts are unknown. This loss alone constitutes partial destruction of the work.

Second, the remaining elements exhibit physical damage. Breakage, surface deterioration, over paint and structural compromise have been documented. The works have been left unsecured and exposed, further increasing the risk of damage or loss.

Third, and most significantly, the work has been decontextualized. The remaining fragments are displayed without reference to the original design, without interpretive framework, and without spatial coherence. Presented as decorative and isolated objects, they no longer represent *Turnkey* as conceived by Clement.

Decontextualization is not a neutral act. For a site-specific, integrated work, it is a form of distortion.



## VII. Ownership and Governing Framework

The *Turnkey* sculptures are owned by the City of Tucson and form part of the City's Public Art Collection. As such, they are governed by the City of Tucson Public Art Program, adopted through Administrative Directive 7.01-1 and related directives.

Under this framework, ownership of a public artwork carries defined and mandatory obligations. These obligations include maintaining an inventory of artworks, conducting periodic condition assessments, allocating resources for maintenance and conservation, and following formal procedures for relocation or deaccession. The policies apply to all artworks owned by the City, regardless of date of creation or acquisition.

The City contracts with the Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona to administer the Public Art Program and to carry out these responsibilities on the City's behalf. This administrative structure does not dilute the City's obligations. It implements them.

The Public Art Program is not aspirational. It is the governing framework under which the City holds and manages public artworks. Failure to comply with its requirements constitutes administrative failure, not discretionary judgment.

Under this directive:

1. All artworks owned by the City must be inventoried, monitored, conserved, and preserved.
2. Relocation and deaccession must follow defined procedures.
3. The integrity of artworks must be respected.
4. The City contracts with the Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona (AFTSA) to administer these responsibilities.



## VIII. Administrative Failure

Under the City's Public Art Program, the *Turnkey* sculptures should have been inventoried, monitored, conserved, and protected. Any relocation should have followed a defined process. Any determination that the work could not be preserved should have triggered formal deaccession.

None of these processes occurred in a documented or compliant manner.

The absence of clear records, the loss of elements, the lack of condition assessments, and the prolonged neglect demonstrate systemic administrative failure. These are not isolated oversights. They reflect a sustained breakdown in stewardship responsibilities.

The City's policies were designed to prevent precisely this outcome. Their failure to do so in this instance is central to the conclusion of this report.

Under Administrative Directive 7.01-1, the City was required to:

1. maintain an inventory,
2. conduct periodic condition assessments,
3. fund maintenance and conservation,
4. and follow formal processes for relocation or deaccession 7-01-01.

The documented condition of *Turnkey* demonstrates that these obligations were not met. The failure is systemic rather than incidental.



## **IX. Significance of the Artist's Death**

Charles Clement's death in 1981 is legally and practically significant. Because the artist is deceased, it is impossible to consult him regarding alterations, reinterpretation, or corrective measures. Any posthumous modification of his work occurs without artistic authority.

This fact eliminates potential remedial paths that might otherwise exist for living artists. There can be no collaborative restoration or reinterpretation guided by the artist's intent. Continued handling of the fragments by third parties therefore risks compounding misrepresentation.

The only entity capable of responsibly stewarding what remains of the work is the artist's Estate, and the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation as copyright holder.

1. consultation with the artist is impossible,
2. corrective reinterpretation with the artist's involvement is impossible,
3. continued alteration or presentation of fragments cannot be cured through process reform.



## X. Required Disposition

The *Turnkey* sculptures cannot be restored as a unified public artwork. The loss of elements, destruction of context, and physical damage are irreversible.

**Continued City presentation of fragmented elements results in ongoing policy violations and continued misrepresentation of the work as a public artwork by Charles Clement. The City's Public Art Program expressly recognizes deaccession as an appropriate outcome when an artwork can no longer be preserved or interpreted with integrity.**

**In this case, deaccession is not discretionary. It is required.**

Return of all remaining fragments to the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation a 510(c)3 is consistent with city policy, and will halt further damage, end misrepresentation, and allow the fragments to be conserved, documented, and interpreted accurately within the context of Clement's broader body of work.

The *Turnkey* sculptures cannot be restored as a unified public artwork. Continued City custody results in:

1. ongoing misrepresentation of the work,
2. continued policy violations,
3. and continued risk of further loss or damage.

The City's Public Art Program expressly recognizes deaccession as an appropriate outcome when an artwork can no longer be preserved or interpreted with integrity 7-01-01

Accordingly, deaccession and return of all remaining *Turnkey* fragments to the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation is the only lawful and responsible remedy.



## **XI. Conclusion**

The *Turnkey* sculptures by Charles Alfred Clement have been irreversibly damaged through unauthorized relocation, fragmentation, loss, and neglect while under City ownership and administration. These outcomes resulted from failures to comply with mandatory public art policies and occurred without consultation with the artist, his Estate, or the copyright holder.

**Because the work can no longer function as a unified public artwork, continued City custody is untenable. Deaccession and return of all remaining fragments to the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation is the only lawful and responsible resolution.**

