



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development Division

Urbana Arts & Culture Program Monthly Progress Report

2nd Tuesday of the Month– April 14th, 2020

Prepared by Rachel Lauren Storm, M.Ed., Arts and Culture Coordinator

Introduction

The following Urbana Arts & Culture Program Monthly Progress Report describes activities of the Arts & Culture Program for the Urbana Arts & Culture Commission. The report includes information regarding projects that are in progress, recent requests and recommendations from the public, staff activities, and upcoming events.

COVID-19 Crisis Impact

- **Suspension of Programs/Events:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program suspended all in-person events and programs in response to the COVID-19 crisis through May. Staff are closely monitoring the situation and consulting public health guidance. Some events are being held virtually and Urbana Arts and Culture staff are working to share relief program information, resources for local artists, and continue various initiatives.
- **Staffing Changes & Accommodations:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program staff (Arts & Culture Coordinator, Rachel Storm, and Program Specialist, HeatherAnn Layman) are both working from home. On March 20th, City of Urbana offices were closed to the public. Essential services are still in operation and City staff who are able to are working from home during this stay-at-home order. Our Executive Internship student from Urbana High School, Emily Crane, ended her internship early due to the COVID-19 crisis and her internship evaluation was completed for Urbana School District #116.

Updates on Current Projects

- **Urbana Arts Grants:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program completed its jury process Saturday, February 8th for Tier I, II, and Arts in the Schools grants. A total of \$88,000 has been awarded to artists, arts organizations, and festival presenters for 38 creative projects that enrich the lives of Urbana residents and visitors in the 2020 cycle. Grantees attended orientations and nearly all have completed their contracts.
- **SNEAK PEEK Celebration:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program held its annual grant awardee celebration at Riggs Taproom on March 11th, 2020 from 5:30pm-7:30pm featuring a recognition of the 2020 Urbana Arts Grantees. Over 60 people attended the event and the musical performance from The Data Waves was a wonderful addition.

- **Boneyard Arts Festival:** Due to COVID-19, Boneyard Arts Festival has been postponed. The planning committee launched a #VirtualBoneyard campaign on social media inviting support for local artists who had planned to participate. Artist features, a #boneyardbuys campaign of past purchases, and virtual performances are being made possible. The planning committee intends to set a new date for the festival as more information becomes available.
- **Culture Fest!:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program canceled *Culture Fest!*, our event in conjunction with Boneyard Arts Festival. We hope to reschedule this event at a later date, perhaps still in conjunction with the rescheduled festival.
- **Artist of the Corridor:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program and Urbana Free Library are proud to present *WOMEN WHO PAINTED* by Paula McCarty, features digital and oil portraits of famous women painters and is displayed in honor of Women's History Month. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the exhibit remains on display. A digital showcase is being shared online in conjunction with Virtual Boneyard efforts.

The *ART OF JAZZ* exhibit, in collaboration with CU Jazz Festival, is postponed. No further exhibits will be planned until COVID-19 no longer poses significant risk.

- **Virtual Events:** In collaboration with Chambanamoms, KOOP Adventure Play, and Museum of the Grand Prairie, Urbana Arts and Culture Program has helped spearhead virtual events designed to keep the community feeling together during times of separation. These include:
 - #ChalkYourWalk, *weekly on Fridays*
 - Hearts for Healthcare on National Doctor Day, *March 30th*
 - Haiku from Home, *April 2020 in honor of National Poetry Month*
- **Urbana's Inaugural Poet Laureate, Will Reger:** The City of Urbana's inaugural Poet Laureate, Will Reger, had to cancel a number of in-person events, appearances, and initiatives due to the COVID-19 crisis. The following new and reoccurring initiatives are able to continue virtually:
 - Poets on a Park Bench (potentially converting to a video interview)
 - Postcard Poetry Project (becoming a digital archive rather than exhibition)
 - Poems on Glass (continuing normally without unveiling events)
 - Haiku from Home (virtual National Poetry Month initiative)

- **Art IN the Square:** Urbana Business Association was forced to cancel the remaining indoor farmer's markets in Lincoln Square Mall. All Art at the Market Concerts are canceled for the foreseeable future. Notice has gone out to all who had booked with our program.
- **The Young Artist's Studio:** The Young Artist's Studio series is postponed until further notice. Staff are exploring the possibility of virtual events in the form of art lessons from local artists.
- **Murals on Glass/Urbana Utility Wrap Program:** Murals on Glass selection *In the Sunshine* by BLACKMAU (Kamau Grantham and Stacey Robinson) will be installed on Cunningham Township's front windows now that spring is here.

Additionally, the jury selected 8 approved artworks for utility boxes. Installation of both Murals on Glass and the Utility Box Murals will take place come spring. In the meantime, Urbana Arts and Culture Program continues to seek sponsors for utility box murals.

- **COVID-19 Relief for Individual Artists & Arts and Cultural Organizations:** The City of Urbana Arts & Culture Coordinator has been in close communication with the local arts and culture community to promote various relief programs and upcoming grant deadlines, including: 3Arts Illinois Individual Artist Relief, Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grants COVID-19 Fund, Illinois Humanities COVID-19 Emergency Relief Grants, 3Arts Application for Arts & Cultural Organizations, and additional resource listings such as the Creative Capital COVID-19 Resource Listing for Artists. Reminders have also been sent out to arts nonprofits about the Illinois Arts Council Program Grants.

The Illinois Arts Council recently announced that a coalition of national grantmakers, consisting of Academy of American Poets, Artadia, Creative Capital, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, MAP Fund, National YoungArts Foundation, and United States Artists, launches Artist Relief, a fund for artists facing dire financial circumstances due to COVID-19. Artist Relief will provide individual artists with rapid, unrestricted \$5,000 grants and other immediate resources. The organizations are also co-launching the COVID-19 Impact Survey for Artists and Creative Workers as an informational resource to the field. (www.artistrelief.org)

The City of Urbana has assembled a listing of COVID-19 crisis relief resources for local businesses that includes resources specific to the creative sector and for individual artists. (<https://www.urbanaininois.us/COVID-19/business-resources>)