



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development Division

### Urbana Arts & Culture Program Monthly Progress Report

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the Month– July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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#### 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 is continuing to suspend the majority of in-person events and programs in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Staff are following guidelines set forth in the Illinois Five-Phase Reopening Plan 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 continue to work from home with minor visits to the office as needed. City of Urbana offices remain closed to the public. Essential services are still in operation. One high school student was hired through the CARE4U Program grant and three high school students have been hired through the Illinois Arts Council's Summer Youth Employment Grant received by the Urbana Arts and Culture Program. Additionally, we have sixteen new University of Illinois student interns through the new We CU program. Interns will work virtually until further notice.

#### Updates on Current Projects

- **Urbana Arts Grants:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program awarded \$88,000 to artists, arts organizations, and festival presenters for 38 creative projects that enrich the lives of Urbana residents and visitors in the 2020 cycle. All grantees have completed contracts and nearly all have received initial grant payments. Grantees attended a virtual grants update and received the approved COVID-19 Guidance for Urbana Arts Grantees.
- **Artists Reimagine the World Youth Exhibition:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program collaborated with Chamanamoms, Krannert Art Museum, KOOP Adventure Play, and Museum of the Grand Prairie who launched *Art in a Time of Quarantine* earlier this summer, are joining together with community groups and youth organizations to organize another youth exhibition, inviting teen artists to lend their creative work towards visualizing a world without systemic racism and other 'isms that centers peace, justice, and unity. While this initiative is still in development, exhibition opportunities will include digital display, public access TV, and in-person gallery/museum exhibitions.

- **The Great ARTdoors:** The Great ARTdoors, a new collaboration between the Spurlock Museum, the Urbana Park District, the Champaign Park District, the Urbana Arts and Culture Program, and 40 North, is awarding selected local artists stipends to create outdoor art installations in several Champaign and Urbana parks and community gardens. This program is guided by the belief that public art has the ability to visually and intellectually activate spaces by connecting people and sparking dialogue. This is a meaningful opportunity to create something experimental, interactive, and engaging. This project is also committed to supporting local artists, prioritizing underserved communities, and ensuring accessibility for all. The 10 selected artists will receive a \$1,000 stipend and the artwork will be featured in 1 of 10 designated locations. Artists from Champaign County are asked to submit a proposal of artwork by midnight on July 15th. Selected artists will be notified via email by July 20th and artwork will need to be ready to install by August 24th, 2020. The selected artworks will remain installed through November 20th. Designated Urbana locations include: Chief Shemauger Park (1001 E Kerr Ave, Victory Park (1000 E Green St), Weaver Park (2205 E Main St), South Ridge Park (3008 S Myra Ridge Dr.), and Lierman Neighborhood Community Garden (Washington & Lierman).

Another element of the Great ARTdoors is the outdoor community gallery. Community members are encouraged to be creative by transforming their windows, balconies, porches, yards, and neighborhoods into art that expresses their thoughts and feelings. This outdoor gallery inspires neighbors to further explore their neighborhoods while maintaining social distancing guidelines. Please share images of your creations on all social media platforms using hashtag #cuARTdoors

- **Art Inspired in Urbana Highlights:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program and The Urbana Free Library are collaborating to produce weekly highlights of local artists on social media. Each post includes a digital image of their artwork, a portrait, a comment from the artist, and weblinks to purchasing the artist's work. Posts appear Mondays on social media.
- **Urbana's Inaugural Poet Laureate, Will Reger:** The City of Urbana's inaugural Poet Laureate, Will Reger, has had his tenure officially extended until the end of October due to COVID-19 disruptions.
  - Poets in a Pandemic (*formerly Poets on a Park Bench; converted to virtual format*)
  - Postcard Poetry Project (*becoming a digital archive rather than exhibition*)
  - Poems on Glass (*first unveiling concurrent with Murals on Glass*)
  - Request-A-Poem from Poet Laureate, Will Reger (*request via email*)
  - Young Artist's Studio Poetry Workshop for Kids! (*Sunday, July 19th, 2020*)
  - Urbana Poetry Pros(e) Summer Initiative (*Collaboration with Urbana Park District, The Urbana Free Library, and Urbana Arts and Culture*)
- **Young Artist's Studio:** In collaboration with The Urbana Free Library, the Urbana Arts and Culture Program will now be offering Young Artist's Studio workshops virtually using Zoom. Participants are asked to register on The Urbana Free Library's website to obtain the link and password. The next workshop features Urbana Poet Laureate Will Reger with a *Poetry Writing for Kids!* Workshop on Sunday, July 19th, 2020 (*rescheduled from June 21st*). All upcoming Young Artist's Studio workshops will take place virtually until further notice.

- **Murals on Glass/Urbana Utility Wrap Program:** Murals on Glass selection *In the Sunshine* by BLACKMAU (Kamau Grantham and Stacey Robinson) was installed on the Cunningham Township Supervisor's Office front windows at 205 W. Green St. in Urbana and unveiled during the Urbana Amble Garden and Art Tour. *In the Sunshine* is a mixed media piece that, in the artist's words, "invites you to imagine Black kids swimming in the golden infinity of uninterrupted time." Murals on Glass, organized and funded by the City of Urbana's Arts and Culture Program, is an initiative to feature local artworks on Downtown Urbana windows. Digital images of original artwork from local artists are printed on adhesive vinyl for public display. The mural will be displayed for a guaranteed period of two years.
- **Utility Box Murals Program:** Additionally, the jury selected 8 approved artworks for utility boxes and will be installed in the next few weeks. Urbana Arts and Culture Program continues to seek sponsors for utility box murals.
- **Urbana Sculpture Project:** The City of Urbana Arts & Culture Program collaborates with Public Art League to select sculptures for placement in the City of Urbana. Public Art League has recently unveiled their Class of 2020 Sculptures approved by the jury for placement.
- **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. We CU interns are assisting in cold calling local arts agencies, businesses and individual artists to ensure access to artist relief information and accessing needs.

There is a comprehensive listing of individual artist grants nationwide on the Americans for the Arts website here. <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/disaster-preparedness/coronavirus-covid-19-resource-and-response-center>

**The Americans for the Arts Relief Guide** is an excellent resource detailing COVID-19 resources here: [shorturl.at/iwCDP](http://shorturl.at/iwCDP).