



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development Division

### Urbana Arts & Culture Program Monthly Progress Report

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the Month– November 17th, 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 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. Arts & Culture. One college student, Isabel Gleason, is completing a James Scholar Project with the Urbana Arts and Culture Program focusing on building programs for artists and audiences with disabilities and/or neurodivergence. Two CLL students, Hannah Darcy and Natalie Weiss, are completing a marketing internship focused on The Great ARTdoors. The office will receive two additional high school student interns through the USD #116 Executive Internship this spring and a small group of University of Illinois student interns.

#### 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. Grantees continue to work with the Urbana Arts and Culture Coordinator to address planning issues arising from COVID-19. The 2021 Urbana Arts Grant cycle is now accepting applications and up to \$90,000 is available in grant funding to artists and art organizations.
- **Deadlines:**
  - Applications for Tier III Grants were due Friday, November 6th, 2020 @ 5pm CST
  - Applications for Tier I, II, and Arts in the Schools Grants are due Wednesday, January 13th, 2021 @ 5pm CST

- City staff of the Urbana Arts and Culture Program continue to offer an informational workshop and drop-in grant support to those interested in learning about this funding opportunity. The grant workshop is designed to give applicants opportunities to explore the grant application, best practices for grant writing, and an overview of the application process. Staff also share information about other opportunities within the City of Urbana's Arts and Culture Program. The Arts and Culture Coordinator recently gave and recorded the 2021 Grant Workshop.

A video of the Arts Grants Workshop, hosted by the Arts and Culture Coordinator, is available for viewing on Urbana Public Television and social media.

In addition, staff will be offering "Drop-in Grant Hours" where applicants are invited to ask individual questions and get feedback on their grant applications.

### **Drop-in Grant Hours**

Dec. 10th and 11th via ZOOM, 10am - 12pm and 1pm - 3pm\*

Jan. 7th and 9th via ZOOM, 10am - 12pm and 1pm - 3pm\*

\*Grant applicants can sign up for a 15 minute time-slot to clarify individual grant questions.

- **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, awarded 10 selected local artists stipends to create outdoor art installations in several Champaign and Urbana parks and community gardens. The full list of selected artists and installed works are as follows:  
 Barry Abrams | *Tensegrity* | MLK Trail | Champaign  
 EKAH | *Points of View* | Lierman Neighborhood Community Garden | Urbana  
 Greg Stallmeyer | *Rainbow Connection* | Kaufman Lake | Champaign  
 Ja Nelle Pleasure | *Seeds of Injustice* | Randolph Street Community Gardens | Champaign  
 Keenan Dailey | *Unchained* | Douglass Park | Champaign  
 Kinsey Fitzgerald | *Mother & Child* | Chief Shemauger Park | Urbana  
 Lisa Kelser | *Prairie Dance* | Sunset Ridge Park | Champaign  
 Michael Darin | *Catapult Earth* | Anita Purves Nature Center | Urbana  
 Nathan Westerman | *Transfiguration* | Victory Park | Urbana  
 Sierra Murphy | *Bread and Roses* | South Ridge Park | Urbana

The organizing committee of The Great ARTDoors is currently working to locate indoor spaces for select sculptural pieces and organize an adjacent Artist's Panel. Interns working with Urbana Arts and Culture Program are promoting the #CUartdoors engagement throughout the community to youth programs, campus organizations, student groups, and local organizations.

Urbana Middle School teachers are encouraging students to participate through curriculum and engagement opportunities. Information about The Great ArtDoors has gone out in the district newsletter.

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. This outdoor gallery inspires neighbors to further explore their neighborhoods while maintaining social distancing guidelines. Share images 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 Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Laureate Programs:** The City of Urbana's inaugural Poet Laureate, Will Reger, completed his tenure as Poet Laureate at the end of October. The search for the next Urbana Poet Laureate is currently underway.

In April of 2019, the City of Urbana's Mayor's Office and the Urbana Arts & Culture Program were proud to announce the inaugural Poet Laureate Program for the City of Urbana. Now in its second cycle, the City's Poet Laureate Program celebrates poetry by recognizing a resident poet who honors and serves our diverse community and elevates the importance of the creative writing art form through sharing their work with Urbana residents. "The Poet Laureate acts as an advocate for poetry, language, and the arts," said Rachel Lauren Storm, Arts & Culture Coordinator, "The selected poet creates a unique artistic legacy by conducting outreach activities, special programs, and presentations of individual works with support from our arts program." (See what inaugural Poet Laureate Will Reger achieved during his tenure here.) This cycle, Urbana Arts and Culture Program welcomes nominations and applications. Submitted nominations initiate an invitation to submit a full application for nominees. Applications for Poet Laureate closed on Sunday, October 25th at 5pm. The jury will meet in the coming weeks to select the City's next Poet Laureate.

The inaugural Youth Poet Laureate Program celebrates Urbana's youth by sponsoring an Urbana teen poet (ages 13 - 18) who serves as a youth ambassador for poetry and utilizes poetry as a means for civic leadership, artistic excellence, and social engagement. Urbana's Youth Poet Laureate Program joins the National Youth Poet Laureate Program (YPL) network through Urban Word with programs in more than 50 cities, states and counties across the United States, collaborating with leading national literary organizations including the Library of Congress, the Academy of American Poets, Poetry Foundation, Cave Canem, and the National Endowment for the Arts. "The Youth Poet Laureate Program is one of the nation's most important civic movements of this generation. The YPLs are a collective of not only brilliant young writers but also deeply committed, young civic leaders working to improve their communities," said Dr. Camea Davis, National Youth Poet Laureate Director. Urbana's Youth Poet Laureate will be eligible to apply for the 2022 National Youth Poet Laureate Competition. **The deadline has been extended and the Urbana Arts and Culture Program continues to seek applications.**

- **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. Our most recent workshop, on Sunday November 15th, featured *Character Design Discovery*, a workshop for young illustrators led by artists of Cow House Press in conjunction with Urbana's Small Press Fest, an Urbana Arts Grant-funded festival. All upcoming Young Artist's Studio workshops will take place virtually until further notice.
- **Virtual Sensory-Sensitive Community Concert:** On November 7th, Urbana Arts and Culture Program presented a virtual 'Sensory-Sensitive Community Concert' on social media and UPTV channel 6 featuring five jazz and classical performers from the University of Illinois. The concert, still viewable online, is aimed at those who identify as having a disability and/or neurodivergent. The 'Sensory-Sensitive Community Concert' is the start of an effort of the City of Urbana Arts and Culture to be more inclusive in disability programming. Connected to this effort, the Urbana Arts and Culture Program is gathering input through listening sessions and a community survey. Data gathered through these efforts will be shared at the next commission meeting.
- **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 unveiled their Class of 2020 Sculptures approved by the jury for placement and Urbana Arts and Culture Commissioners voted for their favorites. Urbana Arts and Culture Commissioners selected their favorites and staff are currently working with Public Art League to confirm sponsorship and placement. *Peek Between the Trees*, *Races*, and *Ice Pops* are soon due for removal.
- **Art for Nourishment Program:** Urbana Arts and Culture Program is partnering with local food distribution programs to present Art for Nourishment, a program to share the creative work of local artists in the spirit of cultivating community and connection. The artworks of 10 selected local artists will be featured on a 5x7 prints distributed in meal kits for 30 local families each served by volunteer food distribution programs in Urbana. A total of 300 local families will receive an art print. Art for Nourishment is organized by the Urbana Arts and Culture Program in collaboration with the following local mutual aid food distribution efforts: Bucket Brigade, Silver Hearts, and The Tiger Market of Urbana School District #116.
- **Artist of the Corridor Exhibitions:** Featured artist, Paula McCarty, recently de-installed her exhibit, *Women Who Painted*, a collection of digital and oil portraits of notable woman painters. Staff are currently working with The C-U Fab Lab and The Urbana Free Library Teen Open Lab staff to organize a library-only display of the first Teen Arts Council Exhibition of collected works by local teens. This effort is sponsored by a 2020 Urbana Arts Grant.
- **Imagine Urbana Comprehensive Plan:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program will be supporting the City of Urbana's comprehensive planning efforts by offering some coordinated programming that invites the community to share their visions for Urbana through arts practices, as well as specifically envision Urbana's local arts and cultural landscape 20 years from now. Potential engagement opportunities include arts-specific listening sessions and sponsored programs this upcoming spring.
- **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. 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)."