



Roanoke Arts Commission
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**THIRD ROUND OF *ART MATTERS* STIPENDS AWARDED
IN ROANOKE'S *YEAR OF THE ARTIST***

Local artists funded to advance wellness, justice and inclusion

Roanoke, Va. — (October 28, 2022) — The third round of *Art Matters* awards have been announced in Roanoke's [Year of the Artist](#) strategy to advance wellness, justice, and inclusion in the community.

To date, 34 Roanoke area artists have been funded to undertake community based art projects. The awards are a component of the Roanoke Arts Commission's *Year of the Artist* initiative exploring the role of artists and individual change makers in key aspects of community development.

"We are extremely pleased with the diversity and breadth of our 30 *Art Matters* projects" says Roanoke Arts Commission Chair Meighan Sharp. "Using the performing, visual, and literary arts, our community is addressing challenges and celebrating our people and our place. Just a few of the important issues addressed include housing instability, local food access, and gun violence; and we're approaching the work through photography, song, hip hop, ballet, film, poetry and more. There are many ways to get involved in projects and events of the YEAR OF THE ARTIST, and we welcome our entire community in taking part."

The \$3,000 grants, funded by National Endowment for the Arts through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the City of Roanoke, are awarded to individual artists as a stipend. All stipends must result in a public presentation, performance, or workshop.

More than 350 artists have registered for the Year of the Artist program. Interested artists can prepare for future grants by watching past trainings at <https://roanokearts.org/meetings>.

ART MATTERS ROUND THREE ANNOUNCED IN OCTOBER 2022

Artist	Art Matters Project	Description	If interested in the project, contact:
Rachel Austin	Topical Online Art Gallery	The artist will pilot, manage, and market an online gallery and engagement space featuring the work of local artists on environmental and humanitarian topics.	hello.rachelaustin@gmail.com
Richie Cannaday	Untitled Mill Mountain Star Play	The artist will explore untold stories in the development of Roanoke's iconic star, culminating in the staged reading of a new short play that celebrates the community with a sense of possibility and belonging.	richard.cannaday@gmail.com
Amanda J. McGee	Marquee in Verse	The artist will work with the Grandin Theatre to post short poetic verses during National Poetry Month and to host a screening on the theme of poetry and place.	amcgee139@live.com
Victoria Von Tassel McGrath	Exploring Housing Insecurity	An exhibit of work developed during the project will include artistic and journalistic practices in the exploration of housing insecurity in Roanoke.	smileyvvtm5@yahoo.com
Casey Murano	Roanoke Interfaith Pilgrimage Project	Working with religious communities in the area, the artist will create collaborative works of art reflecting on pilgrimage, interfaith community, and a resilient Roanoke Valley.	casey.murano@gmail.com
Bipin Pokharel	Faces of the Roanoke Foodshed	A collaborative storytelling and photography project that will showcase the faces, places, and stories of community food leaders in the Roanoke region.	pokharelbip@gmail.com

Susanna Young	Roanoke Harvest Dance Theatre Project	The artist will work with Star City Ballet students in a field study of urban agricultural practices that includes dance, poetry, and farm work, culminating in a dance theatre piece performed in outdoor spaces around Roanoke.	susannayoung09@gmail.com
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ART MATTERS ROUND 2 - ANNOUNCED IN SEPTEMBER 2022

Artist	Art Matters Project	Description	If interested in the project, contact:
Olivier Bisanga	Year of the Artist Visual Storytelling Project	The artist will create drawings that illustrate the power of community art projects in advancing the community. The works will capture the work of the Year of the Artist and be incorporated in a variety of communications.	bisanzinoli@gmail.com
Bryce Cobbs	Visual art projects that engage, welcome, remember, and celebrate.	Through two separate visual art projects, the artist will engage, portray, and welcome the community at Berglund Center through the <i>Gainsboro Heart and Art</i> project and the Child Health Investment Partnership (CHIP) of the Roanoke Valley's library renovation.	bcobbs97@gmail.com
Marlee Coles	Hairfirmations Event	The artist will create an interactive space that brings together photographers, designers, and artists in a celebration of hair art and education toward ending discrimination based on hair styles.	loveablebuttons@gmail.com

Artist	<i>Art Matters</i> Project	Description	If interested in the project, contact:
Taye the Truth (Dionte Hall)	Project "Don't Blink"	The artist will produce a video for his song, "Don't Blink," exploring gun violence through the song, video and related youth and community engagements.	tayethetruthmusic@gmail.com
Kinnfolk (Julie and Josh Kinn)	Roanoke Traditional Music Song Cycle	The artists will compose and perform a song cycle of traditional music that embraces the Celtic-music theme of place exploring, using Roanoke as its subject.	kinnfolk.music@gmail.com
Otu Kojo	Drum Circles and Recital	The artist will conduct 10 free drum circles for a variety of ages, culminating in a recital showcase.	otusc479@yahoo.com
Kayla Saunders	"Like Moonlight on Water" film	The artist will produce and premier a short film exploring a hopeful dancer who loses her hearing yet remains determined to pursue her passions. https://www.kaylabproductions.com/general-8	kbproductions97@gmail.com
William Smith	"The Lark Ascending," ballet for the deaf community	The artist will lead the development of a ballet for the deaf community through a collaborative community process. around the George Meredith poem, "The Lark Ascending."	wsmith@roanokeballet.org
Aaron Spicer	Culinary Arts Portrait Project	The artist will create a series of portraits that highlight underrepresented culinary artists in the Roanoke Valley.	aaronspicer@gmail.com
Joy Truskowski	Song Circles for English Language Learners	The artist will conduct singing classes with Roanoke English language learners through Roanoke Valley Alleghany Adult Education Region 5 English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.	joytruskowskimusic@gmail.com

Art Matters Grants ROUND ONE announced in June 2022

Artist	<i>Art Matters Project</i>	Description	If interested in the project, contact:
Charlie Brouwer	The Benediction Project	The Benediction Project is designed to connect places of worship to each other and their surrounding communities through a public-facing, rotating temporary artwork.	cbrouwer@swva.net
Brian Counihan	Daisy Chain World Art Parade	The Daisy Chain World Art Parade (April 15, 2023) will celebrate and support art makers of all skill levels in a collaborative celebration of a diverse and spirited arts community.	brian@communityhigh.net
Bryan Hancock	National Youth Poet Laureate Program	The Roanoke Youth Poet Laureate Program will engage young people in the National Youth Poet Laureate Program, exploring community, place, and identity through spoken and written word, encouraging young voices in the city. https://roanokearts.org/2022/05/30/national-youth-poet-laureate-program-launching-in-roanoke/	harvestblaque@gmail.com
Toya Jones	Back to Black Art Show	The Back to Black Art Show (June 25, 2022 in Downtown Roanoke) celebrated diversity and Black culture through all forms of art -- ensuring that the art and stories of Black people are presented and valued.	versesroanoke@gmail.com
Heather Marshall	Youth Art Workshops / Mural project Oliver Hill Justice Center Waiting Room Art	The artist will install a mural and a collection of artworks generated by Roanoke youth that will create a calming, supportive environment for community members in the Juvenile and Domestic Court waiting area of the Oliver Hill Justice Center. The project involves to grants: One to Archived information at: https://roanokearts.org/2022/05/30/free-youth-artists-workshops-for-roanoke-city-youth/	marshall.hm@gmail.com

Artist	Art Matters Project	Description	If interested in the project, contact:
Jane Gabrielle McCadden	The Singing Tree Project	The Singing Tree Project will involve city youth in a peace building based in art and nature.	jgabriellered@gmail.com
Kathryn Schnabel	Artist Workshops for Sustained Engagement	The project will help artists develop best practices for sustaining an inclusive and engaging community arts practice that fosters artistic, personal, and community growth.	katschnabelstudio@gmail.com
Katie Trozzo & Joy Truskowski	Singing Circles	The project will result in collaborative community singing circles around diversity, unity, and healing as well as a video and culminating 'big event.' https://m.facebook.com/StarCityCirclesinging/ https://www.meetup.com/Star-City-Circlesinging/	katie.trozzo@gmail.com
John Woodrum	I Heart Southeast Sculpture Project	The artist will develop and install a three-dimensional artwork fostering community pride in a neighborhood of Southeast Roanoke.	johnwdrm@gmail.com
Lynsey Wyatt	Queer Your Aerial Arts and Activism Project	Queer Youth Aerial Arts & Activism project will provide LGBTQ+ youth from Roanoke and the surrounding areas the opportunity to learn fundamental acrobatic and aerial skills and plan and execute a youth-led public event that addresses a social issue of their choice.	lynsey@cirqlation.com

About the Roanoke Arts Commission

The Roanoke Arts Commission (RAC) was established in 1983 to “advise and assist City Council on matters relating to the advancement of the arts and humanities within the city.” Fifteen volunteers appointed by council work to increase the collective impact of arts and culture in the community by

- Guiding City investments in arts and culture.
- Advancing the City’s Arts and Cultural Plan.
- Developing and Implementing the City’s Public Art Plan.
- Advocating for arts and cultural initiatives and investment.

About The Year of the Artist

The Roanoke Arts Commission invites artists who live, work, or are civically involved in the Roanoke community to participate in the Roanoke's [Year of the Artist](#) (YOTA) activities. During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the City of Roanoke will invest more than \$300,000 in community-driven and artist-led projects advancing the community in a variety of key areas.

The YOTA network will offer **free artist trainings** in a variety of professional development topics, including business practices, community development and facilitation, self-care, and specific engagement strategies. Sessions will occur every Tuesday this fall. The next virtual beginning on Tuesday, September at 7 PM and focusing on resources and coaching available to artists undertaking community projects. Those interested in participating can learn more and register to receive login information at www.roanokearts.org/YOTA.

The Year of the Artist is funded by National Endowment for the Arts through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the City of Roanoke.

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