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**Roanoke Arts Commission**

117 Church Ave. SW

Roanoke, VA 24011

540-853-5652

[Douglas.jackson@roanokeva.gov](mailto:Douglas.jackson@roanokeva.gov)

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CONTACT:

Douglas Jackson

Arts & Culture Coordinator

540-853-5652

[Douglas.Jackson@roanokeva.gov](mailto:Douglas.Jackson@roanokeva.gov)

**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](https://roanokearts.org/yota/) 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**

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| **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:amcgee139@live.com) |
| **Victoria Van 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:susannayoung09@gmail.com) |

ART MATTERS ROUND 2 - ANNOUNCED IN SEPTEMBER 2022

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| **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](mailto: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 *Gainsboro Heart and Art* project and the Child Health Investment Partnership (CHIP) of the Roanoke Valley’s library renovation. | [bcobbs97@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:loveablebuttons@gmail.com) |
| **Artist** | *Art Matters* 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:joytruskowskimusic@gmail.com) |

**Art Matters Grants ROUND ONE announced in June 2022**

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| **Artist** | ***Art Matters* Project** | **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:johnwdrm@gmail.com) |
| **Lynsey Wyatt** | Queer Youth 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@cirqulation.com](mailto:lynsey@cirqulation.com) |

**About the** [Roanoke Arts Commission](https://www.roanokeva.gov/769/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](https://roanokearts.org/yota/)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](https://roanokearts.org/yota/) (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](http://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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