

ROANOKE ARTS

AUGUST 2024

IT'S HERE

THE ARTS,
ENTREPRENEURSHIP +
PLACEMAKING IN
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

40 YEARS

CELEBRATING FOUR DECADES
OF PROGRESS, ART & FUN

ARTS CONNECT

FALL IN LOVE THROUGH THE ARTS

LEVERAGING CREATIVITY

WITH STRATEGIC PUBLIC INVESTMENT

CHAIN OF DAISIES

A COMMUNITY ARTS STRATEGY EVOLVES

2023-24

ANNUAL REPORT + A LOOK AHEAD

RA
ROANOKE ARTS



ROANOKE ARTS

2023-2024

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Arts & Culture Coordinator **Douglas Jackson**



A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

It's an odd business, public service. You sign up for a committee or a commission—nothing earth shattering—just a sense that you have some time and there's good work that can be done.

But before you know it, those meetings fill with laughter over some silliness. They echo with cheers because of a successful community engagement. And you realize that you have a strong set of colleagues, partners in far-fetched schemes who come from every quadrant of Roanoke. Working together toward common goals, you find friendship and community, and with that comes the potential for loss and the challenges life brings to us all. We felt that this year with the loss of commissioner and arts advocate Helen Dean.



But Helen Dean modeled for us that we can make a difference by showing up for our city. Through art, we open ourselves up to each other. We connect with neighbors. We create each day the community in which we want to live. We do it together, and we do it with joy.

We thank you for your support as we grow the arts in Roanoke, and we invite you to join us.

Sincerely,

Meighan Sharp
Chair (2022-2024)

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We're midway through the first year of an important neighborhood strategy. Let's see how we're doing!

ON THE COVER

VERA DICKERSON

Walter Williams, 2023
Acrylic on Canvas
18" x 24"

from *It's Here: The arts, entrepreneurship + placemaking in Roanoke Virginia*. The subject is Walter Williams, the owner of the Boxy Swedish Car Center.



ART AT THE INTERSECTIONS

Roanoke's resident artists are working across disciplines, demonstrating the relevance of arts and creativity in all aspects of our lives in the Star City.



HISTORY RECORDED

The work of David A. Ramey, Sr. received well-deserved attention in 2023-24 with a collaborative show across two museums and a new mural project.

“IN MY MIND, ART CAN MAKE US FEEL WHAT WE DON’T NECESSARILY UNDERSTAND.”
ANGELA DAVIS



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More than two dozen arts and cultural organizations applied for city funding to support the development of robust programs to enrich the lives of Roanoke residents.



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The arts are coming to your neighborhood. With 50 catalog offerings, there’s sure to be an activity that will put a smile on the face of neighbors. Latin dance party? Nature poetry workshop? Group photography walk?

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We’re just getting started in supporting neighbors as they improve their piece of the city.

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We’re gearing up for the next Roanoke Arts and Cultural Plan by building a learning community.



Photo: Ashley Wilson-Fellers, The Roanoker Magazine

HELEN BARBARA DEAN

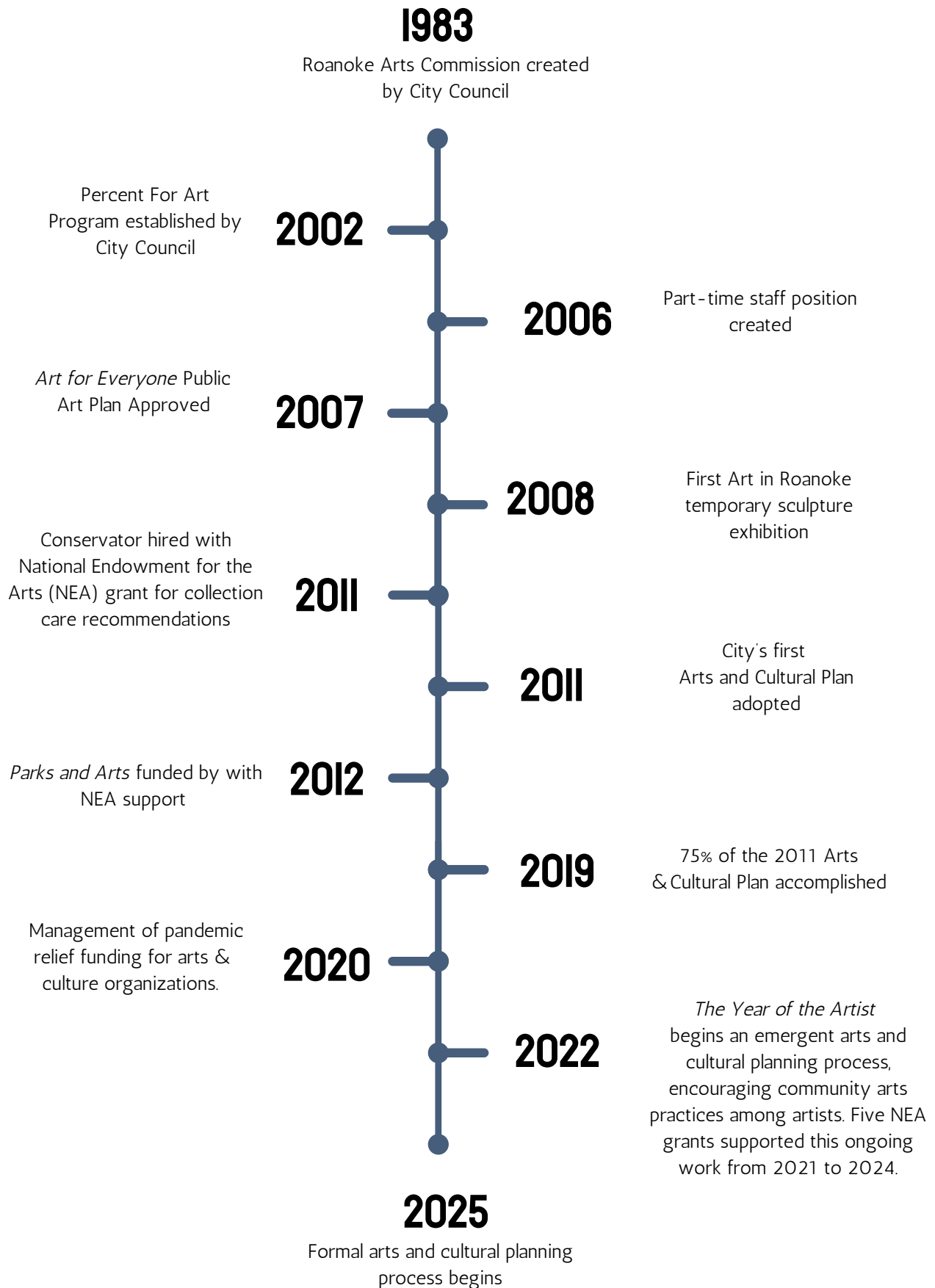
APRIL 10, 1945 - MAY 12, 2024

Helen Barbara Dean brought heart to everything she did. On the Roanoke Arts Commission, she served on the Funding and Collections committees. She met with grantees and advocated for youth across the community. She helped shape our strategies. As a board leader of the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, the Harrison Museum of African American Culture, and a surprising number of state and local committees and organizations, Helen brought to all of her efforts a seemingly endless well of talent, spirit, care, hard work, and love.

Often online with her home-office backdrop that included a still life she had painted, Helen attended nearly all of the Tuesday night artists' conversations. "I'm so proud of them," she said. "They are *doing it!*"

Helen Dean knew that with a little focused effort, our commission—our community—is leveraging much more than we put in, that a small investment and a bit of encouragement can go a long way in activating a community of change makers. We already miss her greatly. We will work to make her proud.

RAC AT A GLANCE



OUR COMMITTEES

advance core components of the *City's Arts and Cultural Plan*. Participation in these hard-working teams is open to city residents without appointment to the Arts Commission, with the exception of the funding committee, which requires City appointment or approval.

The Collections Committee advises the Commission on temporary exhibitions and the permanent work in the public art collection. It emphasizes the work of regional artists and oversees all aspects of acquisition and maintenance.

2025 Chair: Lauren Woodson.

The Funding Committee reviews funding applications from nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and individual artists for City grant opportunities. They participate in grantee monitoring and program development.

2025 Chair: Catherine Koebel Stromberg.



The Placemaking Committee advances our community and its places through—community—driven and artist-led projects that amplify the voices and creative energy of Roanoke residents, neighborhoods, and partners.

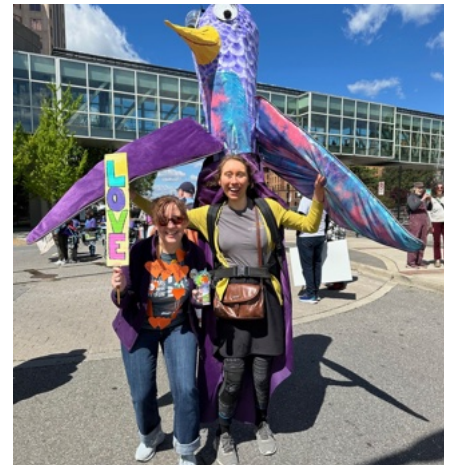
2025 Chair: Ben Bazak.

The Planning Committee will oversee the development and monitoring of the next *City of Roanoke Arts and Cultural Plan*. Forming this fall, and pulling together key stakeholder representation, it will plan the overall process to develop a plan for the coming 5-10 years.

2025 Chair: John Cornthwait

CREATING OUR COMMUNITY CULTURE

We're busy, creating every day the place we want to be, and our community team reaches far beyond the 15 members of our Council-appointed commission, four committees and selection panels. Our **ambassadors for building a welcoming, just and inclusive community** through the arts include artists and organizational partners, neighborhood leaders and residents, volunteers and professionals, and a whole lot of paper-mâché critters.



ROANOKEARTS II





ART AT THE INTERSECTIONS

In the second year of the City of Roanoke's resident artist program, we continued to explore how the arts can help the city engage residents in welcoming and ongoing ways. This year we had 15 resident artists advancing projects alongside partners in transportation, parking, health, neighborhood, economic development, tourism, community revitalization, gun violence prevention and more.



Depending on their roles, artists were paid stipends through a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) project grant, the NEA Our Town 23 grant, the City of Roanoke matching fund, and the Percent for Art Fund.



Artists have been instrumental in advancing existing projects as well as shaping new initiatives that you see outlined here. In the third year of the program, resident artists will advance community goals in three areas:



- The *Daisy Art Parade* and neighborhood activations,
- *Arts Connect Neighbors*, and
- Public art development.

OUR 2023-24 RESIDENT ARTISTS

Polly Branch - Neighborhood Centers
Brian Counihan - Southeast Roanoke
Katherine Devine - Community Connector
Jane Gabrielle - Northwest Roanoke
Cory Greer - Chief Communicator
Molly Kernan - Southeast Roanoke
Brett Lague - Artist Directory
Katrina Legans - Muralist in Residence

Robyn Mitchell - Eureka Park Center
Jon Murrill - Muralist in Residence
Simone Paterson - Dreamin Big Art Project
Jahni Quen - Artspace Roanoke
Antonio Stovall - Arts Connect Facilitator
Katie Trozzo - Arts Connect Facilitator
Joy Truskowski - Arts Connect Facilitator
Susie Young - Dramatist in Residence

Can We Connect?

Roanoke's arts catalog might have just what you need to connect across your neighborhood.



Building and maintaining neighborhood connections requires intention. We're distracted, over-worked, still reeling from COVID, and trying to fit it all in. But what if we could hit the pause button and use the arts to bring us together? Could we get something started again? What would happen next? Could we envision an even stronger neighborhood through stronger relationships with those in the closest proximity to us?

These were the questions behind *Arts Connect Neighbors*, a program of the Roanoke Arts Commission, the Roanoke Cultural Endowment, and Roanoke Neighborhood Advocates.

ARTS CONNECT ROANOKE

This effort, like everything the Roanoke Arts Commission has undertaken in the last few years, has been in the spirit of investigation. What can the arts do for us? What if we take a different approach? Who else can we involve to get new perspectives? Arts Connect Neighbors is no exception.

With an informed sense that the arts can help us engage in different and meaningful ways (and that's backed by research), we're asking neighbors to join in this exploration. We don't have to know how to best bring people together, we just have to be willing to try. Reach out. We'll help you think through options, partners, and possibilities. What do we have to lose?



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

There's nothing the Arts Commission does alone. For *Arts Connect Neighbors*, two lead partner organizations stepped up to help lead the way in this important neighborhood building strategy because they saw it as a path to a stronger community and a stronger arts sector.



ROANOKE CULTURAL ENDOWMENT

As part of the 2011 *Arts and Cultural Plan*, the community identified the need to provide ongoing, sustainable support for Roanoke's arts and culture organizations as a critical element of our community's prosperity and quality of life. They are well on their way toward building a \$20 million endowment to support our arts and cultural community.



ROANOKE NEIGHBORHOOD ADVOCATES

With support of the City of Roanoke's Office of Neighborhood Services, Roanoke Neighborhood Advocates (RNA) supports neighborhood-based organizations in establishing, developing, and expanding their capacities in the promotion of Roanoke neighborhoods.

**ARTS CONNECT NEIGHBORS
MID-YEAR SHOUT OUT!**
A SIX-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT ON OUR BIG EXPERIMENT CONNECTING NEIGHBORS

ROANOKE ARTS COMMISSION | 40 YEARS PROGRESS ART FUN | NATIONAL ENDOWMENT OF ARTS | ROANOKE CULTURAL ENDOWMENT | RNA

WE'VE PROVIDED **40** FREE NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES
IN **19** NEIGHBORHOODS across **4** quadrants

50% OF THE **50** CATALOG OFFERINGS HAVE BEEN SELECTED

WE'VE ONLY USED **60%** OF OUR CURRENT RESOURCES WITH PLENTY MORE AVAILABLE!
AND WE'VE LEVERAGED **100,000** MORE DOLLARS TO CONTINUE THE PROGRAM IN 2025

SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?!
Connect your neighbors by hosting a **FREE** art workshop or performance in your City of Roanoke neighborhood.
roanokearts.org/neighbors

**ARTS CONNECT
ROANOKE**

Neighborhoods and partners helping to set up events to date

- Apple Ridge Farm
- Bethlehem Bible College
- Chainges, Inc.
- Community Arts Reach
- Fairington Apartments
- Gainsboro Southwest Neighborhood
- Gainsboro Branch Library
- Grandin Court Neighborhood Association
- The Hope Center
- Humble Hustle
- Indian Rock Village
- Latinas Network
- Lick Run Community Farm
- Local Colors
- Main Branch Library
- Melrose Branch Library
- Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood
- Melrose Towers
- Noble Neighborhood Watch
- Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority
- Old Lick Cemetery
- Old Southwest, Inc.
- Old Mountain Road Neighborhood Watch
- Price Memorial AME Zion Church
- Raleigh Court Branch Library
- Screaming Vegan
- Second Helpings - Roanoke Rescue Mission
- Shenandoah West Neighborhood
- Summit Hills Neighborhood Group
- Wasena Neighborhood Forum



ARTS & CULTURE FUNDING

LIVELY PROGRAMMING FOR ROANOKE RESIDENTS

\$336,500
GRANTED TO LOCAL
ARTS & CULTURAL NONPROFITS

Roanoke residents—volunteers appointed by City Council to the Roanoke Arts Commission—oversee annual funding for programs by local arts and cultural organizations. Every year, members closely review the plans and operations of applicant organizations for programs worthy of public investment.

The funded projects provide our community with opportunities for education, enlightenment, world class exhibitions, festivals, and performances that they don't have to leave town for.

Throughout the year, each organization submits quarterly reports and has a monitoring visit from staff and members of the funding committee.

Pictured above (left to right)

Local Colors offers multi-cultural offerings such as the Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration in addition to their signature festival. A \$20,000 grant supported Local Colors festivals.

With a \$6,000 grant, *Blue Ridge Literacy* created a curriculum to engage English language learners in cultural experiences around the community. They are pictured here at the *SWOON* exhibit at the **Taubman Museum of Art**, which was supported with a \$25,000 grant.

Alma Ensemble provided *Alma Del Core*, a free chamber music concert series featuring a wide variety of local musical talent with a \$4,500 grant.

The 2023-24 Funding Committee

- William Penn, Chair
- Becky Carr
- Jim Davis
- Helen Dean
- Catherine Koebel Stromberg



Pictured above (left to right)

Roanoke Ballet Theatre put a stage full of dancers to work down the rabbit hole with their spring performance of *Alice in Wonderland*, supported with a \$14,000 grant.

With an \$18,000 grant, **The Grandin Theatre** coached a cadre of young filmmakers in creating quality short film while working in teams and learning core aspects of film production.

Southwest Virginia Ballet provided a host of collaborative performances, highlighting young talent and partner organizations with a \$14,000 grant.

PROGRAMMING FUNDED IN 2023-24

- Alma Ensemble** Alma del Core
- Artemis Journal** 2024 Journal
- Blue Ridge Literacy** Arts & Culture Curriculum
- The Spot On Kirk** Local Talent Spotlight
- Eleanor D. Wilson Museum** 2024 Exhibitions
- Grandin Theatre:** Grandin Theatre Film Lab
- Harrison Museum Of African American Culture**
Henry Street Heritage Festival Performances
- Historical Society Of Western Virginia** Local Saturdays
- Jefferson Center** Performing Arts And Education
- Local Colors** Festivals And Cultural Events
- Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP)**
Arts & Culture-Based Community Building
- Mill Mountain Theatre** Young Audiences Reading Series
- Mill Mountain Zoo** Art To Rescue The River
- Mish Moves Dance Company** 2024 Showcase
- Opera Roanoke** *The Marriage of Figaro*
- Roanoke Ballet Theatre** *Alice In Wonderland*
- Roanoke Festival In The Park**
- Roanoke Symphony Orchestra**
Symphony Under the Stars
- Roanoke Valley Children's Choir** Tuition Scholarship
- Science Museum Of Western VA** STEAM Program
- Southwest Virginia Ballet** Collaborative Performances
- Taubman Museum Of Art** Swoon Exhibition
- Virginia Children's Theatre** In-School Residencies
- Virginia Museum Of Transportation** Education Programs
- Winds Of The Blue Ridge** 2024 Series



Through Art to Rescue the River, **Mill Mountain Zoo** used an \$8,500 grant to partner with **Clean Valley Council** in an awareness campaign that culminated in large mosaic works made by local artists with bottle caps, keeping plastics out of waterways and landfills.



Photo: RVTV

PUBLIC INVESTMENT HELPS FUEL ROANOKE'S MURAL MOVEMENT

Neighborhood leaders and artists are identifying long-overlooked canvases in their backyard. Stewards of public infrastructure see value in using art to get out of the tag-and-cover up cycle. Revitalization specialists understand the value in murals as part of visible signs of community care worthy of attracting additional investment. No wonder murals are so hot right now!

Roanoke is right there with this national trend, and the Roanoke Arts Commission (RAC) has used small public investments to strategically invest in neighborhoods, leverage private dollars, and highlight key community assets.

In 2022, the RAC's Placemaking Committee developed Art in Place, a flexible and responsive tool to invest in murals and other public facing art on both public infrastructure and private property. After piloting the program to better understand potential and best practices, the Commission used the Resident Artist program to hire muralists-in-residence Jon Murrill and Katrina Legans to help speed up the process. And it's worked: watch for six new murals coming this summer and fall!

ART IN PLACE FUNDING SUPPORT

COMPLETED MURALS

- Barrows on Roanoke River Greenway
- City Market Building neon signs
- Campbell Ave & 4th Street, SW
- The Collective, 11th & Moorman Ave., NW
- River's Edge Park and South Jefferson Street. Wall
- SE LOVE Sign, 13th St., SE
- 9th Street Bridge & Roanoke River Greenway, SE
- 13th Street Bridge & Roanoke River Greenway, SE
- Arches, Memorial Bridge & Roanoke River Greenway
- Dorothy Gillespie Mural Rehabilitation, 2nd St., SW

UPCOMING & IN PROGRESS MURALS

- Gainsboro YMCA, Orange Ave., NW
- Lab Sports on 9th St., SE
- Hunton Lifesaving Crew, Moorman Ave., NW
- Walnut Bridge & Roanoke River Greenway, SE
- 10th Street NW & Lick Run Greenway, NW
- West End Center, Patterson Ave., SW
- 220 Bridge & Roanoke River Greenway, SW
- Alcova Building at Church and Market streets, SE
- Franklin Road Bridge & Roanoke River Greenway, SW

Projects completed this year include the River's Edge North mural (1) by Jon Murrill and a mural by Tandem on the back of the Collective at 11th St., NW and Moorman (2).

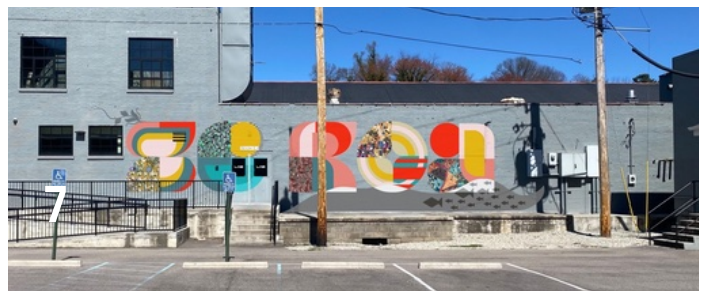
Each mural supported has its own goals ranging from artist development to celebration of youth and community serving organizations. Similarly, each has its own funding structure ranging from a three-way partnership between property owner, business district and the city, to leveraged private fundraising as in the case of the newly regional greenway art and amenities fund, or public invest with the requirement of the property owner preparing the property for the art.

- ### The 2023-24 Placemaking Committee
- John Cornthwait, Jr., Chair
 - Ben Bazak
 - Becky Carr
 - Michael Clark
 - Donna Davis
 - Charlene Graves
 - Molly Hunter
 - Shaleen Powell



SUMMER AND FALL 2024 MURALS

- 10th St., NW on the Lick Run Greenway (3) by Katrina Legans.
- The Gainsboro YMCA on Orange Ave. NW (4) by Bryce Cobbs and JC Stallings.
- Moorman Ave. at 8th Street (5) - a former site of the Hunton Life Saving Crew - by James Divers.
- Walnut St. Bridge, SE (6) by Jon Murrill
- Lab Sports (7) on 9th St., SE at Riverdale by Nicole Gray and Steven Paul.
- West End Center (8) on Patterson Ave., SW by Rachel Anne Morris



roanokearts.org/ramey



PARK ROANOKE HONORS GAINSBORO'S ARTIST OF RECORD

MURALS AND LOT DEDICATED ON DAVID RAMEY DAY

Guests enjoyed hand pies in honor of the storied 'Pie Man' as about 100 people gathered for the dedication of a dozen images on the newly named Ramey Lot in late April. The Park Roanoke project was conceived by Executive Enterprise Administrator Brian Mann, who partnered with City of Roanoke Artist-in-Residence Polly Branch to engage the neighborhood in selecting murals and honoring the late artist, David A. Ramey, Sr.

Mr. Ramey documented from memory what was lost in urban renewal through detailed colored pencil illustrations and hand written text. Many of the works—200 images and 150 pages of text—were exhibited this year at the Harrison Museum of African American Culture and the Taubman Museum of Art. The Ramey Lot murals include eight applied murals and four cutout figures. *Pictured, bottom right: Untitled (Henry Street), 1994*





LOCAL

artists helped share the love for Southeast Roanoke this year, building on the momentum of the active, social, community-minded neighbors of I HEART SE. Led by Sunni Purviance, the neighborhood continued plawking (picking up litter while walking), creating art for the Daisy Art Parade, and connecting at Morningside Urban Farm events. They dedicated two new works this year.

John Woodrum's I HEART SE sculpture, funded under a 2022 Art Matters grant was installed in time for a Valentine's Day dedication, complete with a plawking session and doughnuts. The sculpture sits in front of the Belmont branch of Roanoke Public Libraries.

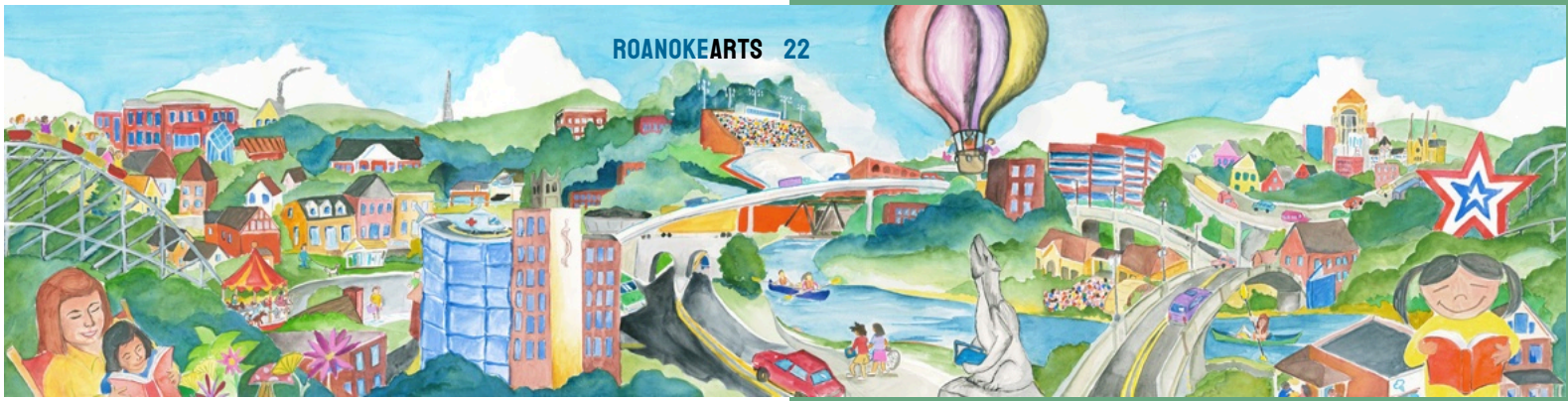
Next, the SE LOVE sign got a makeover courtesy of the Art in Place program of the Percent for Art Fund and a LOVE Works grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation. This work continues the theme of mosaics in Southeast and was completed by Steven Paul and Gretchen Coleman of Metaverse Mosaics.

I HEART SE!

SE
LOVE

SHINES THROUGH IN TWO
NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECTS





IT took a while. There was a pandemic after all. Years passed since the February 2020 meeting with Neighbors in South Roanoke when the community said that their desire for the Roanoke Public Library E-Branch in their neighborhood was to wrap it in imagery by the young artists of Crystal Spring Elementary.

"Mr. Jones can work with the students," a neighbor said. "He's terrific." And indeed that turned out to be the case.

Elementary art teacher Chris Jones said yes he had done a similar project before, incorporating ideas and designs from students into a composition they could work on together. Four years later, after a shutdown and challenging circumstances for schools everywhere, the art is in place, and it was worth the wait.

Mayor Lea, Superintendent White, Director of Libraries Sheila Umberger, and Crystal Spring Principal Jason Rooney were all on hand to applaud the young artists at a May 28 dedication.

That's a wrap!

SORO SCENES

BY CRYSTAL SPRING
ELEMENTARY STUDENTS NOW
ADORN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
LIBRARY E-BRANCH



GROW WITH Love



IF SOMETHING DOESN'T HAPPEN TO THE HEARTS OF MEN, THE SAME THINGS WILL HAPPEN AGAIN AND AGAIN.
- DR JEANNETTE MANNIS

PRIDE

is critical for a strong neighborhood, and visible neighborhood projects can be important building blocks for strengthening it and reaching more people with it. Community investments like the major development in Melrose Plaza and a potential infusion of resources through a potential federal EPA grant can make a difference. So can existing assets such as Northwest Roanoke's network of robust church congregations, civic groups, and community networks.

What if these resources could be aligned and celebrated with a sense of community pride? That's what a group of artists and changemakers from the neighborhood began exploring in 2024. What could happen if a few projects came together with an overarching theme? Resident Artist Robyn Mitchell has been convening the group to find out.

The first few projects have been approved by the Roanoke Arts Commission.

- A heritage wheat paste mural will be installed on a building on Moorman Avenue by James Divers (bottom right).
- Katrina Legans will paint a mural under the 10th St. Bridge on the Lick Run Greenway. (rendering above).
- The Salem Avenue Turnpike traffic calming mural will be followed by a fence weaving project in July and September, paving the way for ongoing efforts through 2024.
- Resident Artist Robyn Mitchell is working alongside Play Roanoke and a team of architects in engaging the community in plans for the new Eureka Park Community Center (top right).
- Jane Gabrielle is working with Gainsboro leaders to pop up sturdy theatre facades as a way to invite the community to envision a climate supportive of spaces for gathering and Black-owned businesses in the historic Black commercial district.
- Finally Lick Run Farm has served as the host site for a variety of well attended art activities, indicating the potential for the community development corporation.

ARTISTS CONVENE AROUND PROJECTS TO BUILD

NW STRONG





the scoop on SCULPTURE

Three dimensional public art continues a strong tradition with the continuance of the Art in Roanoke temporary call (we're about to launch our eighth temporary exhibition, with pieces largely being placed on pads on the Elmwood Art Walk. The current exhibit, *Artist at Work* has been well-received and continues to add to the Elmwood experience. Work includes *Self-Portrait* by Matt Babcock (4) and *The Butterfly Enchanter* by Aldo Muzzarelli (5).

The theme for the next call, opening in late summer is *Larger than Life*, for over-scaled works inspired by *Trojan Dog* (6), which will be celebrating 15 years since he first appeared in temporary form in Grandin Village.

Short term leases have gotten more "Art in Place" this year, with Dan Kuehl's *Leaf* (9) returning to the community, and 16 works by sculptor Charlie Brouwer now populating the grounds of Berglund Center in the *Considerations* exhibition (8) on view through June 2025.



The 2023-24 Collections Committee

- Lauren Woodson, Chair
- John Hitchins, Past Chair
- Laura Carden
- Demetrius Johnson
- William Penn
- Meighan Sharp
- Karl Willers

SCULPTURE



The biggest news in sculpture this year came via the volunteer Roanoke Hidden Histories committee in partnership with the Harrison Museum of African American Culture. After independently raising funds for a gift to the City for Henrietta Lacks Plaza, the committee dedicated a bronze sculpture of the late Roanoke native by Larry Bechtel with assistance by Bryce Cobbs (1) on October 4, Henrietta Lacks Day in Virginia.

Another pending gift is a bronze sculpture of Mr. James Tarpley, *The Angel of Grandin Village* (2) by Betty Branch with support from Polly Branch. The sculpture appeared one day on a Grandin Village bench, and is widely reported to be a project of developer and creative spirit Ed Walker.

Occasionally we have to make repairs to work, including a new concrete job at the base of *Global Harmony* (7), which had to undergo arm surgery under the capable hands of Jim Hudson of Hudson Studios.

Since a good deal of our sculpture is in parks, we have to give a shout out to the parks crews, who are always professional, capable, and fun to work with. The team shown here is with a representative of *Hill Climb's* creator, Jim Collins Studio in Chatanooga (3).

Finally, our volunteers put their whole being into the work. Past Collections Committee Chair John Hitchins (10) demonstrates the dimensions of the Elmwood Art Walk pads.





ARTSPACE ROA EXPLORES AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR CREATIVES

In September 2023, **Artspace**—the nation’s leading developer and manager of affordable housing for the creative sector—came to Roanoke to conduct a preliminary feasibility visit. This was the first step on the path to a potential Artspace project, and the Roanoke Arts Commission played a supportive staffing role, participating in the core team alongside Artist-in-Residence Jahni Quen and representatives of Riverdale Southeast and the arts community.

During the course of that visit, Artspace determined that Riverdale—the Southeast Roanoke site of the former viscose plant and what will become Roanoke’s newest neighborhood—was their primary site of interest. They recommended moving to the second step, an Arts Market Study.

The market study concluded in March of 2024, and the Artspace team presented a Report of Findings at a public gathering in April. Roanoke’s robust participation in the market study survey impressed the Artspace team, and with the data showing demand for a mixed-use, affordable, arts-centric concept at the Riverdale site, recommended moving to the next step on the path to an Artspace project, the predevelopment phase.

The busy year of exploration included gatherings, an art exhibit, networking events, and in-person reports from the Artspace team at the Riverdale site. The effort complements the existing work of the Arts Commission in building our network of artists, including those sharing an interest and energy in community challenges such as the provision of affordable housing in a tight housing market.

www.roanokearts.org/artspace



ARTS CONNECT TUESDAYS

Now with

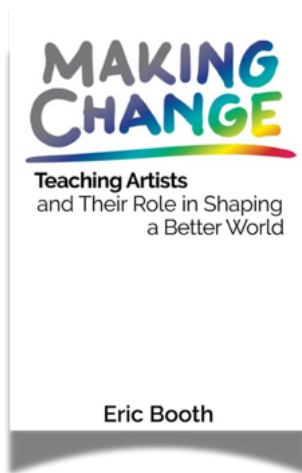


WEEKLY ARTIST CONVERSATIONS OFFER A Y'ALL COME APPROACH TO BUILDING A LEARNING COMMUNITY

Every Tuesday evening, artists, special guests, and anyone interested in shaping stronger neighborhoods and our community through the arts, hop on or drop by for an hour-long conversation on a focused topic.

Each session includes some kind of check in and celebration, and sessions are recorded and posted online at roanokearts.org/tuesdays.

In 2023-24 artists held 48 weekly sessions including attendance at related community events.



Key topics this year:

- the path of the individual artist in helping to shape community,
- organizing as a community to support neighborhood leaders through the arts,
- advancing key community strategies such as the Daisy Art Parade and Arts Connect Neighbors,
- building an artist network, and
- community and network support for teaching.

ARTS CONNECT TUESDAYS Now with **Neighbors**

Tuesdays at 7 PM. Check the schedule for details on where we'll be and how to join us.

Put the catalog to work in your neighborhood!
Artists are busy out performing, engaging, and enlightening things at neighborhood events.
What are you waiting for? Plan your event today!
www.roanokearts.org/neighbors

DOROTHY GILLESPIE SCREENING WITH FILMMAKER Q&A - MAY 22
Celebrate the activism, teaching, and work of one of the great abstract expressionists of the twentieth century - Roanoke native Dorothy Gillespie.
Tickets at www.grandintheatre.com.

MAY 28 - GRANDIN FILM LAB SHOWCASE
Cheer on student filmmakers at this red-carpet screening
www.grandintheatre.com

THE ROANOKE PORTRAIT PROJECT
Roanoke Municipal Building, 1st Floor Gallery
215 Church Ave. SW 24011
8 AM - 5 PM, M - F
GALLERY TALK: Monday, May 20, 6 PM

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

MAY 6, 6 PM - **Setting up Your Arts-Based Business**, Grandin Co-Lab, FREE

MAY 7, 7 PM - **Arts Connect Tuesday - Project Updated!** (hybrid--online & 117 Church Ave.) www.roanokearts.org/Tuesdays

MAY 11, 9 AM - 4 PM **Lansdowne Street Mural**
Volunteer here:

MAY 14, 7 PM - Arts Connect Tuesday around town: **Science Museum of Western VA**, 1 Market Square SE - 4th Floor of Center in the Square

MAY 20, 6 PM - **Municipal Building Gallery Talk**
Our monthly community building evening featuring artists & subjects from the Roanoke Portrait Project.

MAY 21, 7 PM - **Arts Connect Tuesday Teaching Artistry for Social Impact Conversation** - details at: www.roanokearts.org/Tuesdays

MAY 22, 7 PM - **Dorothy Gillespie Documentary**
Screening at the Grandin Theatre.
Tickets at grandintheatre.com

MAY 28, 7 PM - Arts Connect Tuesday around Town **Grandin Film Lab Showcase**.
Tickets at grandintheatre.com

LANSDOWNE STREET MURAL
Help create the Lansdowne Street Mural on Saturday, May 11th!
Volunteer at www.roanokearts.org/lansdowne-street-mural

What's Cooking at the Studio?

Chicken & Eggs

- Finishing up dozen egg heads to loan out
- 1 Giant chicken puppet body
- Finishing a dozen Hobby horse heads for ECPH no Bounds
- 4 life size horse puppets

Coming soon-

- Banner paintings--Carny Style
- Loads of Bamboo poles for banners, puppets etc.
- Backpack construction to carry puppets





DAISY ART PARADE

SECOND ANNUAL GATHERING CELEBRATES COMMUNITY CREATIVITY

More than 400 local art makers converged on Downtown Roanoke in honor of World Art Day on April 13, 2024. The parade is the culmination of months of preparation, and that community work in readying for the day is much of the point. “You have a different kind of conversation when you are making something. It opens you up,” says parade founder Brian Counihan. “It’s the opposite of an elevator pitch. You settle in and have natural conversations. We see the Daisy Art Parade as a community building strategy. And it’s a lot of fun.”

This second year saw parade participation nearly double with greater inclusion of neighborhood ‘krewes’ (collections of individuals who may not regularly work together on projects).



A BONUS LOOK AT WHAT'S AHEAD

Daisy Art Activations

With support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the City of Roanoke, we're using the Daisy Art Parade and our Arts Connect Neighborhoods strategy to help us reinvest in emerging neighborhood centers.

Through this upcoming effort, we will place a paid artist in residence in at least four neighborhood centers to explore how we can foster new businesses, gathering spaces, and community activity in these key areas.

Over the course of a year, each artist will work closely with a neighborhood leadership team in establishing neighborhood goals, advancing them through small art projects, and helping neighbors learn together.

We can reinvest in our neighborhoods to benefit those who live there. We can do it together by building relationships and celebrating each other. We see the arts as a big piece of this strategy, and the Daisy Art Parade is a celebration and culmination of this spirit.

Learn more about the emerging neighborhood centers strategy at RoanokeArts.org/NeighborhoodCenters.

DAISY ART NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVATIONS
 THE NEXT STEP IN NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY BUILDING STRATEGY BEGINS THIS FALL

Emerging Neighborhood Centers:

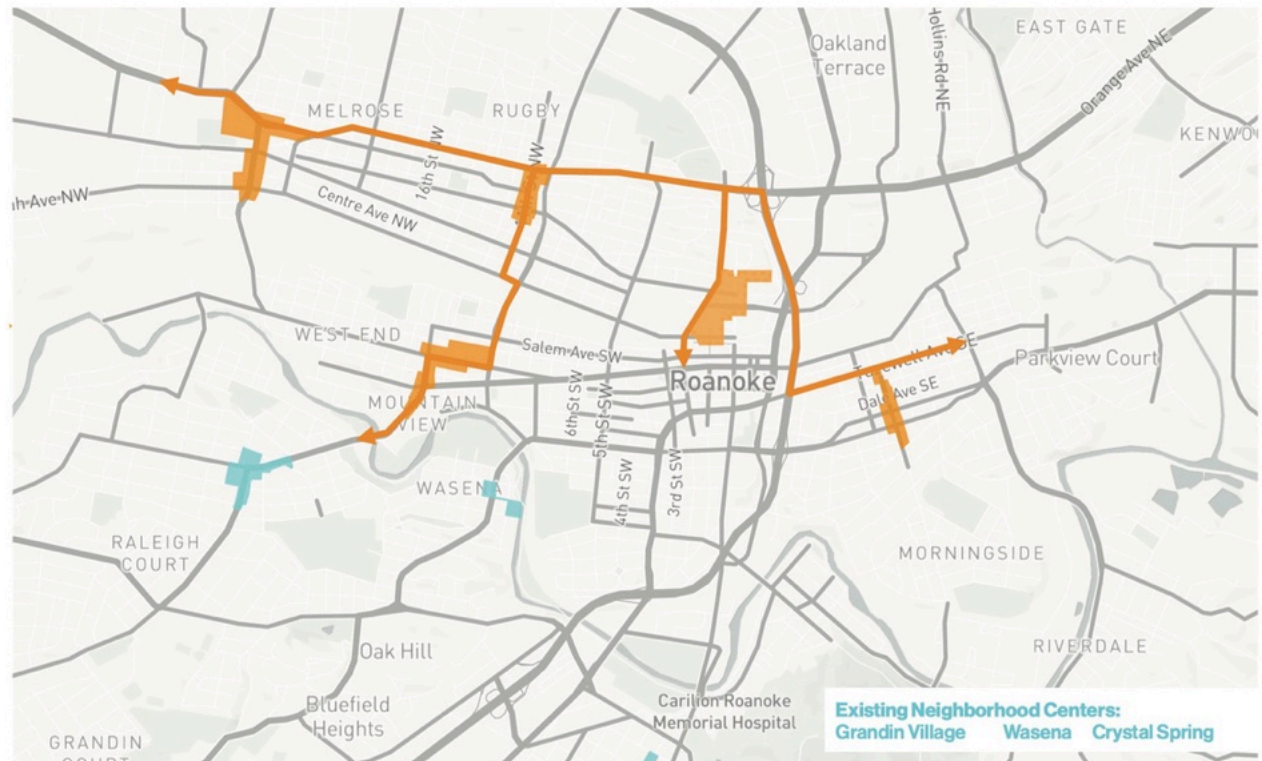
Melrose at 24th

11th Street NW

West End

Gainsboro

9th Street SE



Existing Neighborhood Centers:
 Grandin Village Wasena Crystal Spring

MEET ELANI SPENCER

ROANOKE'S FIRST YOUTH POET LAUREATE



Get to know Roanoke Youth Poet Laureate Elani Spencer in these excerpts from her online Q&A, available at roanokearts.org/ypl. Watch for the rising Hollins University second-year as she engages community youth in the fall of 2024.

What do you like about Roanoke?

I like that Roanoke has the best of both worlds. I can enjoy the city life, but also have access to trails and beautiful nature where I can unwind and ground myself. I've been able to conjure a lot of inspiration from the trees, mountains, and wildlife all around me. But I especially like Roanoke because of how incredibly welcoming and nice everyone is. Any of the residents I talk to here have been nothing but kind, and they're super proud of this city and its people.

What does poetry do for you personally?

Poetry is an outlet for my creativity. I always had an overactive imagination as a kid. You would always find me coming up with these elaborate worlds, turning my kitchen into a dense forest or a treacherous sea. Writing gave me a chance to bring these worlds alive on paper and share them with others. Also, writing became a coping mechanism for me in times of hardship. Any time my family faced tragedy, or my mental health took a turn, I turned to writing to work out my feelings or make sense of the situation. Somehow being able to put the issue into words made it less scary for me to deal with. And I knew if I could turn pain into art and make suffering into something beautiful, I could survive anything.





Perennials

Let us tend to this city like a garden.
 Listen to our roots and honor those who planted the seeds.
 Shield it from the harsh winds of divide.
 Plant the milkweed next to the bearded iris.
 Our differences will only make us stronger.

Let us pollinate our city with love.
 Cover it with grass clippings and leaves.
 Make it livable for the Eastern swallowtails and black bumblebees.
 This is all of our homes.

Let us drench our city with hope.
 So, when there are seasons of drought,
 our spirits will not sag,
 but stand tall with the promise of rain.

Let us fertilize our city with compassion,
 so the soil remains rich
 and budding with life.

Let us prune our beliefs so new ideas can grow,
 and watch as our future unfurls before us like flower petals.
 Our children will harvest the fruit we've grown,
 save the seeds,
 and build their own gardens,
 lush with possibilities.



2024 Roanoke Youth Poet Laureate
ELANI SPENCER

February 20, 2024

Inaugural Poem
roanokearts.org/ypl

CREATING EVERY DAY THE PLACE WE WANT TO BE

IT'S HERE

It's here in Roanoke, Virginia, that you can dig in, create your future and be part of our shared potential. We have a culture here of shaping opportunity. The community is large enough to have a variety of options, but small enough to have a personal impact. It's in the DNA of the "Magic City," and we can do this in a way that involves all of us.

This spirit comes through in a city anthem penned by Bryan "Harvest Blaque" Hancock and J. P. Powell as part of a Buzz television series led by the Roanoke Cultural Endowment and the City of Roanoke Department of Economic Development.

The *It's Here* exhibition took the next step, celebrating this quality of our community by featuring 40 portraits of local entrepreneurs, community connectors, and arts leaders making it happen right here, right now. We gathered monthly in gallery talks to get to know these artists and subjects better.

This summer, the overall Roanoke Economic Development strategy received an Innovative Promotion award from the Virginia Main Street program at the summer meeting of the Virginia Economic Developers Association. The exhibit comes down in September of 2024, but it will live on at roanokearts.org/here and bizroanoke.com



ARTIST ACTION GRANTS



Small grants inspire creativity, spark thought and engagement around social change and create works that foster inclusion and encourage wellbeing.

In 2022, the Roanoke Arts Commission (RAC) offered individual artists the opportunity to apply for Art Matters Grants. With a maximum of \$3,000, the projects had to be completed within the year and advance justice, wellness, and inclusion in the community.

Funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars from the National Endowment for the Arts, the program was a great chance to pilot a new way of engaging with the arts in our community, a tool to support individual artists, and a way to explore emergent strategy. Rather than having the City plan the projects, we asked artists to propose projects to show what the arts can do for our community.

The response was strong, and 33 successful projects were funded. Because of the strong response to the Art Matters grant opportunity, the Arts Commission budgeted \$15,000 in 2024 for the grants, renaming them for clarity to Artist Action Grants.

Artists have until December 2024 to complete the work. Fifty percent of the work has been completed to date.



OUR 2024 GRANTEES

Marlee Coles
Hairfirmations
convening and
Crown Act podcast

Victoria Ferguson
Fan Me with a Brick
staged reading
(with additional
support from
Resident Artist
Susie Young)

Lena Loshonkohl
Domestic Violence
Embroidery
Workshops and
Municipal Building
exhibition

William Smith
Calling the Powers
ballet commission
and performance

**Michelle Smith
Johnson & Kyle
Hutchins**
downcast eyes
musical
composition and
performance

**Victoria Van
Tassel-McGrath**
*Housing
Insecurities*
Explored exhibition
phase II: providers

Katie Trozzo
Grief ritual workshop



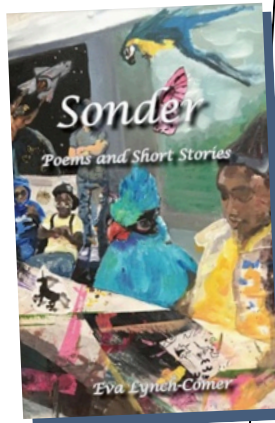
ART BY BUS

ANNUAL TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP PROMOTES RIDERSHIP

A partnership between Ride Solutions, Valley Metro, the Bus Riders of Roanoke Advocacy Group, and the Roanoke Arts Commission, *Art by Bus* celebrated its sixth chapbook and visual celebration of Roanoke’s public art program.

Poet Eva Lynch-Comer wrote *Sonder* during a two-month transit residency. The work weaves the everyday community of bus riders she experienced with a bit of meditation and magic.

From the City’s recent *We Are Art* self-portrait project, Lynch-Comer selected the work of JC Stallings as the chapbook cover. Stallings, a teacher at Lucy Addison Middle School engaged his students in the work, even including their efforts in his mixed media piece, *Let Your Mind Be Creative*. Students reported seeing themselves and their teacher around the city on the bus.



Sonder

We are rocked back and forth,
the cobbled road waves beneath a ship.

The weather forecast rolls across the screen.

The bus sighs weight of another passenger entering.

A woman with bright pink hair whispers into her phone,
Can you hear me?

The bus whirs along Colonial Ave
so quickly I can only catch the bones of trees.

The crisp air brushes my face, beads of sweat
turn into salt on my skin.

You will come see me today right?
the pink lady asks, cradling her phone against her ear.

I stare at words circling the screen, so I don’t miss my stop.

Branches scrape the bus windows, trying to sneak in.

Leaves sweep the glass, a tender afterthought.

A man with long dreadlocks bends over his phone.
I want to reach over pull the lint from his hair
but I do not know him, so I fold
my hands in my lap.

2



TALENTED INTERNS

ADVANCE COLLECTION INTERPRETATION



Miriam Yopp (Summer '23, top) is a rising third year at Virginia Commonwealth University studying graphic design and marketing. Miriam worked to get the foundation of the collection into a user-friendly online archive. Pictured: Dorothy Gillespie, *Accentuated Forms in Space*, 1979, 2023

The City of Roanoke's robust summer internship program and responsive spring program provides opportunities for local students to engage for credit or pay (summer only) to learn about opportunities in local government.

Zaria Studevart (January '24, middle) is a rising Hollins University third year student studying studio art and secondary education. Picking up where Miriam left off, Zaria worked to digitize many paper files of collection holdings and increased available content online.

The Arts Commission's Collection Committee has taken advantage of the program over the past year, working with three talented and engaged students.

"We've been really fortunate to engage with such talented young people," said Collections Committee Chair Lauren Woodson. "We want our public art to be engaging and accessible to Roanoke residents, and the work of these interns has really advanced us."

Seaira Siv (summer '24, bottom) is a 2024 graduate of Hollins University where she studied studio art. Seaira worked to create online galleries for the *It's Here* portrait project, Charlie Brouwer's *Considerations* sculpture exhibition at the Berglund Center, and the community's growing collection of outdoor murals. Pictured, Allen Carter, *Roanoke Valley Mural*, 1979.



MISSION



The mission of the Roanoke Arts Commission (RAC), as established by ordinance in 1983, is to advise and assist the city council on matters relating to the advancement of the arts and humanities within the city to establish Roanoke as a vibrant, prosperous community where arts and culture engage people in all aspects of life. The RAC increases the collective impact of the arts and cultural community by:

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



FY 2024 BUDGET REVIEW

FY 2024 Budget	Budget	Actual	Subtotal / Project Notes
Collections Committee			\$75,500
Municipal Art Shows	\$23,000	\$21,000	<i>It's Here: The Arts, Entrepreneurship + Placemaking in Roanoke Virginia:</i> Municipal Building exhibit.
2-D Acquisitions	\$2,500	\$500	April Yopp, <i>Newfound Element</i> purchase.
Maintenance	\$50,000	\$7,000	<i>Global Harmony</i> Repair + Framing
South Roanoke E-Branch	\$3,000	\$3,000	Crystal Spring Elementary School / South Roanoke Neighborhood Project development.
Placemaking Committee			\$83,000
Artist Residencies	\$31,000	\$15,000	Artists to engage residents in art projects alongside city staff and community partners.
Mural Program	\$20,000	\$20,000	Resources for emergent projects developed by artists in residence and Placemaking Committee.
Art in Place / Murals	\$32,000	\$22,000	Supports public/private partnerships and public facing art on city property.
Literary			\$9,000
Youth Poet Laureate	\$5,000	\$1,000	Supports Youth Poet Laureate stipend and participation in regional and national programming.
Art by Bus	\$4,000	\$3,000	Mini residency with Ride Solutions, Valley Metro, and Bus Riders of Roanoke Advocacy Group.
AFAC (Funding)			\$15,000
Artist Action Grants	\$15,000		Seven grants for individual artist projects advancing equity and community health strategies.
PERCENT FOR ART TOTAL	\$185,500		\$182,500
Daisy Art Activations Grant (NEA GAP 24)	\$160,000		\$10,000
2024 Daisy Art Parade production		\$10,000	
Arts Connect Neighbors (NEA Our Town 23)	\$150,000		\$89,000
Arts Engagement Development		\$15,500	
Arts Engagements		\$26,000	
Neighborhood Facilitators		\$9,500	
Artist Coaches		\$18,000	
Chief Communicator		\$6,000	
Training		\$1,000	
Catalog, marketing, & documentation		\$13,000	
Artists Residencies (NEA Grant 2022)	\$40,000		\$40,000
Payments to Artists		\$40,000	
GRANT + MATCH TOTAL			\$139,000
TOTAL FROM ALL SOURCES			\$321,500
Arts & Culture Grant Fund	\$336,500		City arts & culture grant awarded to nonprofit organizations through a competitive process
TOTAL			\$658,000

Budget note: All budgeted funds and projects, encumbered and non-encumbered, are carried forward into the FY 2025 budget and plan.

FY 2025 BUDGET

FY 2025 Budget	Cost	Subtotal / Project Notes
Collections Committee		\$132,000
Elmwood Art Walk	\$45,000	Includes funds for sculptures in three neighborhood parks.
Municipal Art Shows	\$25,000	Artist stipends for advancing community development culture and spirit through art.
2-D Acquisitions	\$12,000	Funds for collecting contemporary regional artists to add in public spaces in city buildings.
Maintenance	\$50,000	Reserving this level of funds is a best practice for collection care.
Placemaking Committee		\$163,000
Parks & Recreation Residencies	\$18,000	Artists to engage residents in public art projects alongside city staff, partners, and consultants.
Public Art Residencies	\$18,000	Artists to help advancing Art in Place Projects and the <i>Larger than Life</i> Sculpture Exhibition.
Placemaking Fund	\$10,000	Resources for emergent projects developed by artists in residence and the Placemaking Committee.
Eureka Park Center	\$25,000	Participatory development of interior mural and exterior panels at the neighborhood community center.
Art in Place / Murals	\$87,000	Supports public/private partnerships to develop public art on private and public property.
Downtown Performances Strategy	\$5,000	Development of downtown space activation through arts performances.
Literary		\$10,000
Youth Poet Laureate	\$5,000	Supports Youth Poet Laureate stipend and participation in regional and national programming.
Art by Bus	\$5,000	Short residency in partnership with Ride Solutions, Valley Metro, and Bus Riders of Roanoke Advocacy Group.
AFAC (Funding)		\$15,000
Artist Action Grants	\$15,000	5-10 grants for individual artist projects advancing equity and community health strategies. Cap = \$3,000.
PERCENT FOR ART TOTAL		\$320,000 Carries forward \$53,000 in unprogrammed funds in the Percent for Art Fund.
Daisy Art Activations Grant (NEA GAP 24)		\$147,000
2025 Daisy Art Parade production	\$10,000	
Lead artist	\$20,000	
5 Neighborhood based artists	\$50,000	
Lead communicator and documenter	\$12,000	
5 Facilitating artists	\$30,000	
Neighborhood projects	\$25,000	
Arts Connect Neighbors (NEA Our Town 23)		\$61,000
Arts Engagements	\$18,000	
Neighborhood Facilitators	\$13,000	
Chief Communicator	\$4,000	
Training	\$4,000	
Project Fund	\$20,000	
Catalog, marketing, & documentation	\$2,000	
Arts Connect Neighbors II (NEA Our Town 24)		\$47,000
Arts Engagements	\$10,000	
Neighborhood Facilitators	\$13,000	
Chief Communicator	\$4,000	
Training	\$5,000	
Catalog, marketing, & documentation	\$15,000	
GRANT + MATCH TOTAL		\$255,000
TOTAL FROM ALL SOURCES		\$575,000
Arts & Culture Grant Fund	\$336,500	City arts & culture grant awarded to nonprofit organizations through a competitive process.
TOTAL		\$830,000

Planning with PARTNERS

Roanoke readies for the next Arts & Cultural Plan

The Roanoke Arts Commission (RAC) does nothing alone. Internal City partners such as **Roanoke Public Libraries** and **Play Roanoke** are frequent collaborators. With the addition of our resident artist program, we've strengthened and grown these relationships. Additionally, policy change in 2022 allows the RAC to hire artists in planning relationships prior to identifying a project rather than putting a specific project out in a public call.

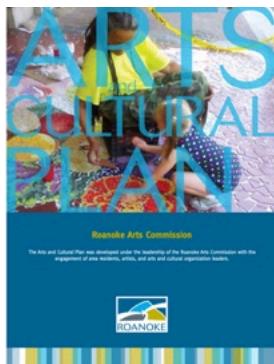
It's been 13 years since the approval of the City's first Arts and Cultural Plan, and it's time to build a new plan. Over the past few years, the RAC has worked from an **emergent strategy** model. Instead of getting people in a room to identify what the arts can do, we've been putting out public calls for mini grants and partners to show us what they can do. The results have been striking. (Check out the **Year of the Artist** final report for more at roanokearts.org/YOTA.)

External partnerships are strong. The **Roanoke Cultural Endowment** works with the Arts Commission to convene the executive directors of the arts and cultural sector on a bimonthly basis. In 2023, this group of more than two dozen organizations assigned a collective marketing task force to explore strategies for doing more together. Watch for an October rollout of that material and strategy.

With the results of Culture Check Roanoke and the outcomes from years of emergent strategy, we'll pull together the community in calendar year 2025 to create the next **Arts & Cultural Plan**. The City is the steward for this collective effort. The RAC will convene the planning team under Planning Committee Chair John Cornthwait, Jr. with membership from across the community.

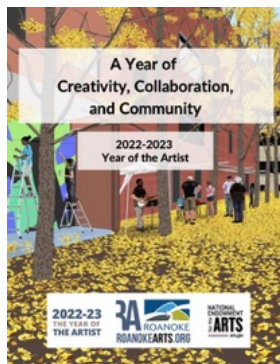
Additionally, this group will provide input in fall 2024 in **Culture Check Roanoke**, a study conducted by Professor Amanda Nelson's graduate marketing class in Virginia Tech's Arts Leadership program. Based on the work of Pennsylvania Humanities and the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, the effort will assess the post-COVID-19 shutdown health of our sector and explore active community connections of our dozens of cultural partners in the community.

With the Office of Arts and Culture now in the Planning, Building and Development Department, we anticipate the same close alignment and support during the process that we enjoyed in 2010-11. Track our progress at roanokearts.org/plan. While we're no longer in the Department of Economic Development, we still work next door and have a great relationship with that team as we continue exploring the impact of the arts on our economy and our lives.



2011 PLAN

The 2011 Arts & Cultural Plan is a great starting point. It captured every idea presented in all of the input sessions. What seeds might be ready to grow in the current soil?



YOTA OUTCOMES

Our 2022-23 *Year of the Artist* deployed artists with resources to explore what the arts can do for us as a community. Explore the ideas in the final report.



CULTURE CHECK

This model from Pennsylvania Humanities and the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance will guide Virginia Tech graduate Arts Leadership students in helping us assess the wellness of our system of arts and cultural organizations.

FY 2025 THE YEAR AHEAD

ARTS CONNECT NEIGHBORS ACTIVITIES

DAISY ART PARADE

DAISY ART NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVATIONS

THE ROANOKE COVER STORY EXHIBITION

LARGER THAN LIFE SCULPTURE EXHIBITION

CULTURE CHECK ROANOKE

IT'S HERE COLLECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGY

BUSK ROANOKE!

ARTS & CULTURAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

RESIDENT ARTIST PROGRAM

MURAL DAYS

ART BY BUS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EMBROIDERY EXHIBITION

HOUSING INSECURITY EXPLORED II EXHIBITION

ARTIST ACTION GRANTS

YOUTH POET LAUREATE

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE TRAINING

GREENWAYS AMENITIES STRATEGY

Pictured: Crystal Spring Elementary Art Club with Mr. Chris Jones, *Untitled* (Crystal Spring E-Branch Design), 2023

ROANOKEARTS.ORG

WHAT IS POSSIBLE IN ART
BECOMES THINKABLE IN LIFE.

BRIAN ENO

CELEBRATING
40 YEARS
OF **PROGRESS**
ART AND FUN

RA

ROANOKE
ARTS

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