

Main Street Mosaic:

**A Public Art Guide for Roanoke's
Emerging Neighborhoods**

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Introduction

In August of 2022, Downtown Economics LLC was commissioned to explore ideas for Neighborhood Centers along a variety of corridors across Roanoke that could enhance the physical environment, provide for and attract business and development opportunities to support area residents, and reinvigorate the neighborhood as well as the surrounding local economy. In this report, subject areas include:

- 11th Street
- West End
- Melrose
- 9th Street

In 2003, as part of the Roanoke Vision Plan 2001-2020, the Gainsboro Neighborhood plan was developed in conjunction with numerous neighborhood groups in several sessions. According to the report, “Their historical perspectives, thoughtful input, and direct comments were invaluable” to its development.

These two reports were the primary resources for this guide, and links to each can be found in the Appendix.

Purpose

Public art reflects the unique qualities of its community. It is intended to create a sense of pride and a sense of place. While it can take many forms, in some way it should involve the community, center itself in the environment it occupies, and nurture those that engage with it.

Currently, Roanoke has a robust arts public arts inventory that includes murals, sculptures, transit art, both in public and private locations. This guide is intended to complement the existing stock by providing a framework to begin to look at how art can be used to reinforce and promote a neighborhood’s identity through both permanent and temporary forms. The examples shown are intended to inspire, not dictate the content of the art. The hope is to stimulate and help organize the future of public art in these areas.





Types of Public Art

For the purposes of this guide, different types of art are categorized below. Some pieces could be in multiple categories, but it begins to create an organizing framework.

G Gateway

Art elements that are notable, identifiable, and prominent

Examples:

- Sculptures
- Archways
- Murals
- Mosaics

Possible Locations:

- Neighborhood Entrances
- Primary Arteries

C Traffic Calming

Art elements that slow traffic, make pedestrians safer, or separate pedestrians from automobiles

Examples:

- Murals
- Asphalt Art
- Episodic/Serial Art

Possible Locations:

- Intersections
- Bike Paths
- Medians
- Bollards
- Bus Stops
- Bike Racks

T Temporary

Art elements that could be installed until larger construction projects are developed, or something more ephemeral that changes regularly

Examples:

- Fence Panels
- Flags/Pendants
- Movable Seating/Canopies
- Episodic/Serial Art

Possible Locations:

- Vacant Lots
- Light Posts
- Security Fencing



T



P Placemaking

Art elements that help create gathering places, define a space, or enhance existing space. These pieces can often be a grouping of pieces, some that may be functional.

Examples:

- Sculptures
- Archways
- Murals
- Mosaics
- Furniture/Canopies
- Episodic/clustered Art

Possible Locations:

- Existing/New Parks
- Adjacent to Retail/Restaurants
- Courtyards
- Vacant Lots
- Neighborhood Landmarks



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WHERE





View down 11th Street from Orange Avenue.

WHERE:

11th Street

According to the Emerging Neighborhood Centers Vision Report, 11th Street has a future as a revitalized area with new infill construction. It currently has numerous auto shops and several vacant buildings along with some emerging businesses. Artistically, it has several murals with the potential for more. Additional public art could enliven the area with quick, temporary interventions in fencing and traffic calming while development continues. Using art to create some rhythm could begin to coalesce the main business district. Long term, developing a pocket park as a place for more permanent placemaking art, and continuing to work with the community to enliven the streets with asphalt art is a goal.

WHERE:



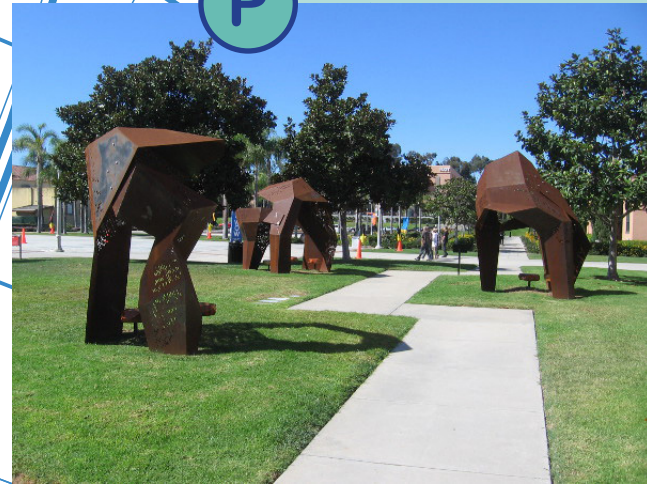
There are numerous opportunities for artistic fencing along 11th Street.



Asphalt art at the prominent intersections could be a great way to engage the neighborhood.



Using art to create a gathering place at Moorman Avenue and 11th Street could be a long-term goal.





View of intersection at Moorman Avenue and 11th Street.

WHERE:

11th Street

WHERE:



View of SE corner of Moorman Avenue and 11th Street.

11th Street



View looking up Patterson Avenue from 10th Street.

WHERE:

West End

West End has the beginning of a solid art infrastructure in its identity banners and murals. Both of these could be increased and enhanced while other elements are introduced to further develop the identity in the central commercial district. With several key community partners located in the neighborhood, the potential to create both temporary and permanent art installments could be pursued. One possibility is to introduce temporary, rhythmic pieces along 13th street at some of the vacant buildings while working on developing more permanent installations like a gateway at Patterson Avenue and 10th Street.



View looking south down 13th Street toward Chapman Street.

WHERE:

West End

WHERE:



View looking south down 13th Street at Patterson Avenue.

West End



View of shopping center parking lot on Melrose Avenue.

WHERE:

Melrose @ 24th

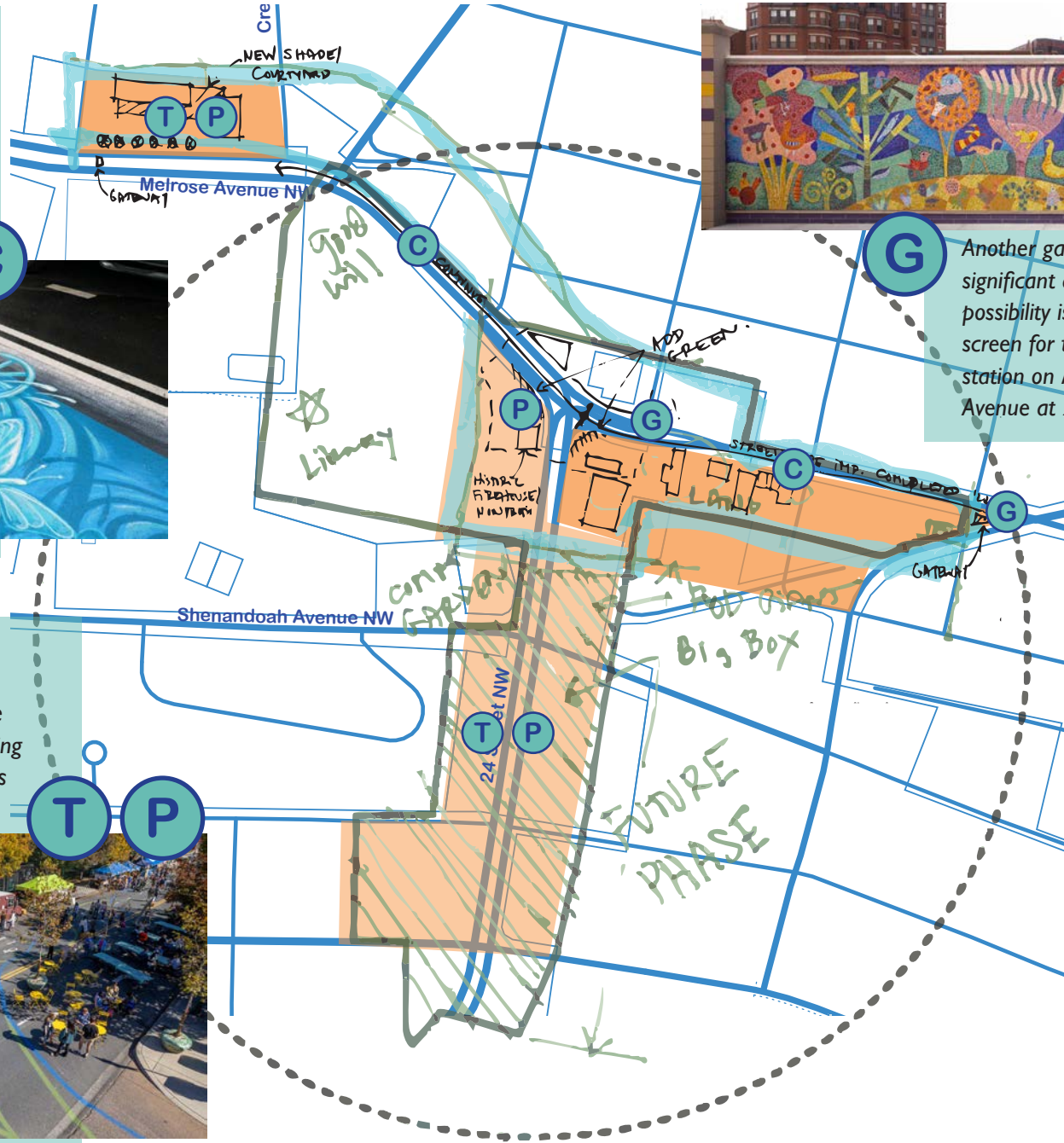
Of all of the districts in the Emerging Neighborhood Centers Vision Report, Melrose has the most infrastructure in terms of art, culture, and neighborhood services. The art at Melrose Plaza can serve as an anchor and an inspiration down the corridor to other areas. From the shopping center across the street introducing temporary seating and sculptural pieces to introducing a gateway at Melrose and Shenandoah Avenues, the pride and passion the community has already exhibited can be elaborated on with new art interventions.

WHERE:

Art in the bike lanes along Melrose Avenue could continue the vibrancy from Melrose Plaza while also providing a visual barrier to cars.



The numerous vacant or large parking lots along 24th Street could become vibrant temporary gathering spaces for art celebrations or neighborhood events.



Another gateway or significant art piece possibility is as a screen for the sub station on Melrose Avenue at 24th Street.



View up Melrose Avenue from Orange Avenue.

WHERE:

**Melrose @
24th**

WHERE:



View of substation at Melrose Avenue and 24th Street intersection.

Melrose @ 24th



View looking north on 9th Street at intersection with Highland Avenue.

WHERE:

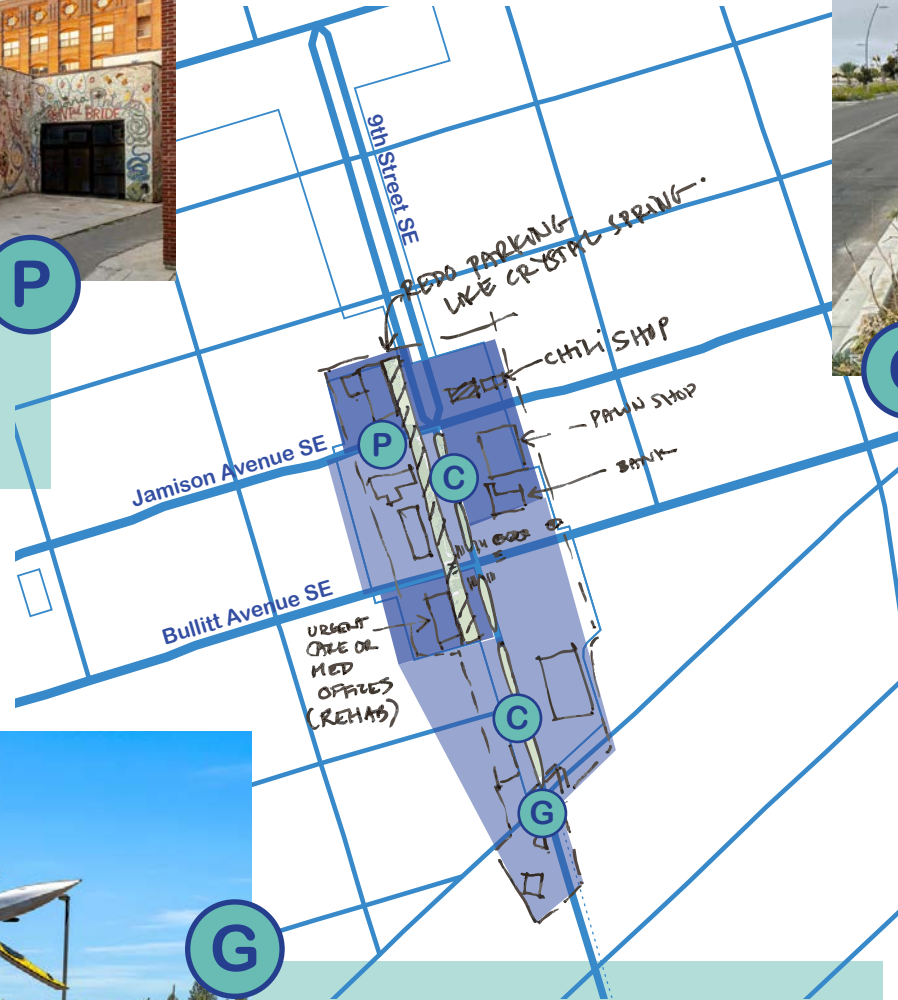
9th Street

In the 9th Street neighborhood there is a great opportunity to incorporate art into the infrastructure improvements that are currently in the works through their CDBG grant. The possible extension of the median as suggested in the Emerging Neighborhood Centers Report offers a great opportunity for permanent art that could culminate in a future round-about/gateway artwork. The potential of public/private partnerships are strong here as well, with several blank facades facing 9th Street that could incorporate new murals or mosaics. The inclusion of the community in the art initiatives here could integrate the existing historical residential area with the business corridor.

WHERE:



The potential for murals and mosaics in this corridor could transform even some of the more quotidian structures into vibrant artistic statements.



The opportunity to have art in both the existing and new medians on 9th Street can create a rhythm and a connecting element for the rest of the art in the corridor.



A vision for the future could include art in a roundabout at Highland Avenue and 9th Street that could be a connection between this historic area and the emerging neighborhood at the Viscose plant.



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View of intersection at 9th Street and Jamison Avenue.

WHERE:

9th Street

WHERE:



View of intersection at 9th Street and Bullitt Avenue.

9th Street



View from Orange Avenue Looking up Fifth Street.

WHERE:

Gainsboro

This district's rich history and proximity to downtown offers so much art potential. In the vision plan, the community had expressed a desire to redevelop Henry Street, introduce gateways to identify the neighborhood, and calm the traffic going through the two primary arteries. While there is some more formal types of public art here, there is a great opportunity to creates places and spaces that can directly involve the community and pay homage to the rich heritage here.

WHERE:

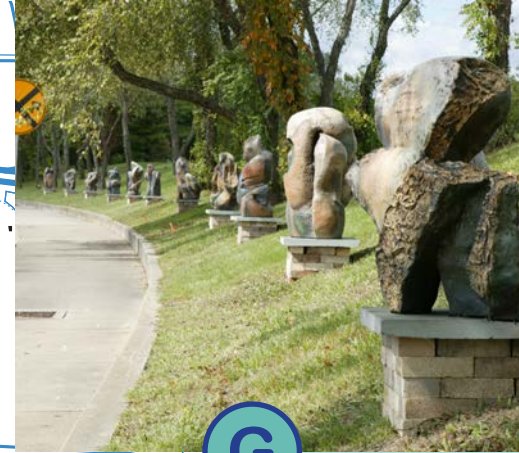


C

Since traffic-calming is important, there are several opportunities to introduce intersection asphalt art. The intersection at the library can also incorporate art into the staircase leading to the neighborhood, giving this node extra importance.

The redevelopment of the Henry Street area could include a pocket park that incorporates art inspired by its history.

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There are several gateway opportunities that could prominently identify the district.

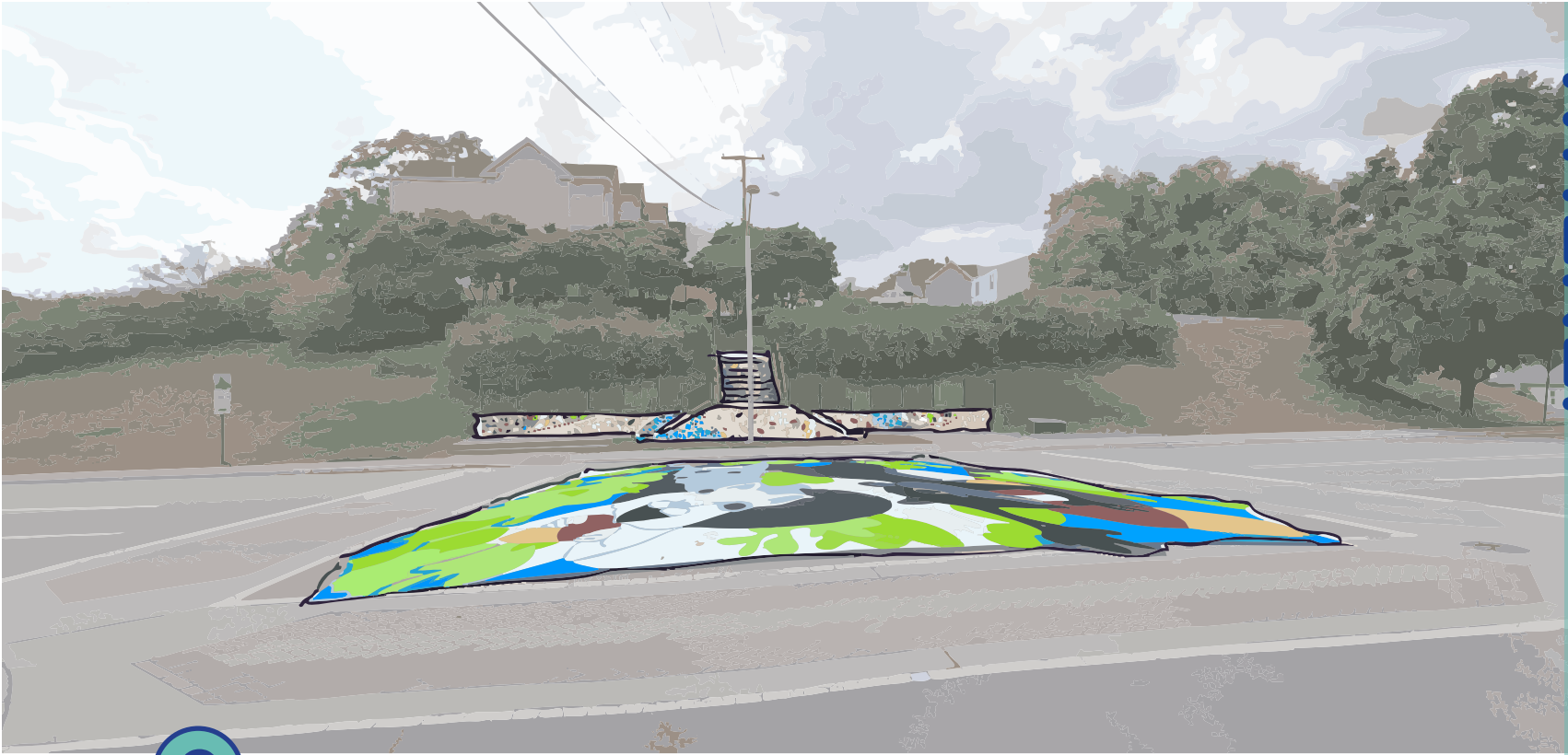


View from Wells Street Looking up Henry Street.

WHERE:

Gainsboro

WHERE!!



View from Library looking up Stairwell at Patton Avenue and Gainsboro Road.

Gainsboro

Art Example Credits

G Gateway



Aphidoidea
Point of Reference



Jack Morton
Pay It No Mind



Norman Moore
Gateway To California



Lisa Houck
A Friendly Flock Touches Down



Troy Pillow
Yakaya



Robert Pulley
Ancestral Way

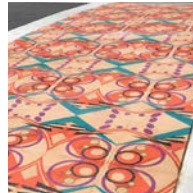
C Traffic Calming



Kait Culbertson
SuperBloom



Nate Walker
No. 2 Pencils



Scape Martinez
Sofa Streetprint



ChalkRiot
DC Bikelane



Rodrigo Nava
Alameda Afore



Aileen Barr/
Colette Crutcher
The 16th Avenue Steps

T Temporary



Christine Cholewa
Arty Fencing



Liz Glynn
Open House



House of Daskarone
Decorative Fence



Raw Design
Prismatica



Graham Projects
Damascus Placemaking Festival

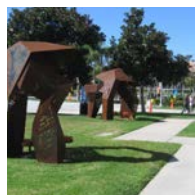
P Placemaking



Aphidoidea
Point of Reference



Design Within
Porch arcade



Mikilwasaki
Facetime



Valerie Theberge
*Gateway Arts District
Mosaic Bench*



Isaiah Zagar
Painted Bride



Leticia Huerta
Bloom

Additional Resources

Roanoke 2040: <https://planroanoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/City-Plan-2040-Adopted-12.21.20.pdf>

Roanoke: Emerging Neighborhood Centers Vision Report: https://roanokeartscommission.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/22-11-28_roanoke-emerging-neighborhood-centers-vision-report-with-appendix-a-pages-1.pdf

Gainsboro Neighborhood Vision Plan: <https://planroanoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Gainsboro-.pdf>

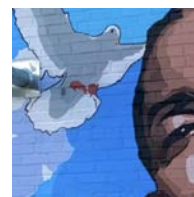
<https://www.madeyoulookbaltimore.org/#page-section-62a785522e5d5120d6418b23>

<https://www.pps.org/article/pubartdesign>

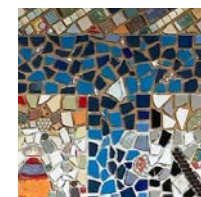
<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/public-art>

<https://www.durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/60860/Durham-Rail-Trail-Public-Art-Vision-Plan>

Local Art Credits



Bryce Hobbs
Nipsey Hussle



Gretchen Coleman
Steven Paul
ART?

This guidebook was prepared by Carrie Gault in conjunction with the Roanoke Resident Artist Program.