

Site See: New Views in Old Town Artist Residency

The Office of the Arts is seeking individual artists or artist groups/organizations for up to two residencies to develop and perform new, site-specific work in response to the new temporary public artwork *Groundswell*, by commissioned artist Mark Reigelman, installed at Waterfront Park in historic Old Town Alexandria, Virginia. The stipend for each residency will range from \$6,000 up to \$16,000, and applications from artists of all mediums will be considered.

The selected artists or artist groups/organizations will create new site-specific work beginning with a period of site research and exploration, followed by proposing a direction for the work, developing and rehearsing the performance, and culminating in presenting the work for a duration of time agreed upon with the selected artist(s) and the Office of the Arts. The selected artist(s) or artist group(s)/organization(s) should be able to adapt their concept and work to meet public health guidelines as they evolve due to the pandemic.

Groundswell is the third artwork commissioned in the *Site See: New Views in Old Town* public art series, an annual exhibition of temporary installations with the goal to attract visitors, foster interaction, provide a visual anchor and enrich the experience of Alexandria's waterfront.

Background and Context

About Alexandria's Public Art Program

Alexandria's Public Art Program is managed by the Office of the Arts and is building a reputation for working with artists in innovative ways to realize new projects. The Program's vision is for public art to enrich the experience of Alexandria's past, celebrate the spirit of Alexandria's present, and shape the identity of Alexandria's future.

Site See: New Views in Old Town is an annual series of temporary public art installations that showcase Alexandria's Public Art Program through new, exciting, high-quality contemporary artwork at a key riverfront location. The series fosters engagement and interaction with contemporary works of art on Alexandria's historic waterfront. It amplifies Alexandria's reputation as an arts destination with new work that captures the public's imagination and is unlike anything that can be experienced in the region.

About *Groundswell*

Groundswell is the third work in the *Site See: New Views in Old Town* public art series. It will be installed in March 2021 and will remain on view until November 2021. Commissioned to create a public-art installation for Waterfront Park, Reigelman focused on Alexandria's working waterfront as the shoreline crept further into the Potomac River. In his research, he learned that drastic measures manipulated the city's riverbank. Thousands of timber pilings sprawled further into the Potomac River each decade, outlining the city's shifting foundation. Alexandria grew from a town on a lofty riverbank to one with a sprawling dock that stretched deep into the river.

Groundswell pays homage to this rich, but forgotten, history and brings an element of play to the shoreline's material topography. The installation features a ground mural depicting the floor of the Potomac River and over 100 wood pilings throughout the site. These quintessential maritime objects will range in heights from 9 to 39 inches, in accordance with the river floor topography, or bathymetry. Each 14-inch-diameter piling will be topped with a cobalt blue mirrored surface

etched with growth rings that suggest the passing of time. These mirrored surfaces will shimmer in the light like the nearby water, reflecting the sky, as well as the faces of passersby. Reigelman hopes visitors will be immersed in this shimmering landscape as they navigate through the pilings, considering their place in the city's history at this moment in time.

The *Site See* temporary public art series highlights Waterfront Park as a civic space and is informed by the historic waterfront and neighboring community. Waterfront Park is a key location for original commissioned art in Alexandria. Reigelman was selected to create this site-specific artwork by a community task force with the Alexandria Commission for the Arts' approval. The City of Alexandria will also commission regional artists to create site-specific performances or activations in response to *Groundswell* later this year. A full description of the artwork and its interactive capabilities, including images and an animation are available at <https://www.alexandriava.gov/PublicArt>

About Waterfront Park

Waterfront Park was expanded at the foot of King Street, historic Old Town's main commercial street, in 2019. The new space serves as the keystone to the revitalization of the Potomac Riverfront in Alexandria. It features an open plaza, a waterside promenade, shade structures and modular space that can adapt to different uses throughout the year.

Goals and Process

The Office of the Arts intends for the residency/residencies to accompany *Groundswell* in activating Waterfront Park and support the *Site See* exhibition series. The resulting work will further activate Waterfront Park, foster community engagement and interaction with the park, attract visitors, and encourage repeat visits to the park.

Goals of the Performing Arts Residency/Residencies

Work created through the Performing Arts Residency/Residencies should:

- Feature or explore themes, topics, materials, and/or concepts related to *Groundswell*
- Make use of and engage with the interactive qualities of *Groundswell*
- Capture the public's imagination
- Highlight and activate the park as a civic space
- Attract new and repeat visitors to the park

Process

The process for executing the two Performing Arts Residencies is:

- Sunday, February 28, 2021: Deadline for applications to be received
- Wednesday, March 17, 2021: Notification of award
- Wednesday, March 24, 2021: Deadline to return signed contract and complete necessary administrative processes if awarded
- Thursday, March 25 – Friday, April 9, 2021: Research and initial development of work phase, including meeting with Office of the Arts staff, consultants, and artist
- Friday, April 23, 2021: Deadline for proposals of concepts to be received
- Week of April 26, 2021: Meeting with Office of the Arts staff to discuss proposed concepts.

- Monday, May 3, 2021: Confirm with Office of the Arts staff dates work will be presented. Work may be presented until October 31, 2021.

Residency applications are reviewed through a competitive process by a panel of arts and culture professionals. The panel or staff may choose to interview candidates before making a final selection. Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria: 1) Equitable employment of artists, including women, and BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities; 2) Artistic excellence and ability to create original work as demonstrated by work samples; 3) A body of work that demonstrates the ability to meet the goals of the project, and execute projects of similar scale; 4) An understanding of how to design the work to reflect the site and the City of Alexandria demonstrated in the letter of interest.

Once the selected artists or artist groups/organizations are under contract they will begin a period of site research and exploration, which will include access to Office of the Arts staff and consultants, Mark Reigelman, and other City staff or partners for conversations. The artist or artist group/organization will then propose to Office of the Arts staff a direction/concept for the original site-specific piece they will create. Once this direction is approved by staff, the artist or artist group/organization will develop the piece. If performing artist(s)/artist group(s) or organization(s) are selected, rehearsals may be on site in Waterfront Park in public view, keeping in mind the park cannot be closed to the general public during on-site rehearsals. Each artist in residence will work with Office of the Arts staff to schedule **presentation of the work through October 2021**.

Artist or Artist Group/Organization Responsibilities

The artist(s) or artist group(s)/organization(s) selected for the Residency will:

- Collaborate with the Office of the Arts to create an original, site-specific work that is in response to or in conversation with Reigelman's temporary public artwork *Groundswell*.
- If the commissioned piece is performance based, it should be no less than 15 minutes and a maximum of 30 minutes in length. All work must include the commissioned site-specific piece.
- Provide a brief written narrative description of the commissioned performance.
- Work with the Office of the Arts to schedule presentation of the work at Waterfront Park through the end of October 2021.
- Work with the Office of the Arts to document and archive the work and the artistic process.
- Provide any additional equipment needed.

Office of the Arts Responsibilities

The Office of the Arts and its City partners will provide access to the site, a green room/staging area for performers, parking, permits, marketing, and project management support.

The Office of the Arts will also:

- Approve the direction for the original site-specific work before the artists or artist groups/organizations embarks on further development of the idea.
- Facilitate conversations between Reigelman and the selected artists or groups/organizations.

- Work with the selected artists or groups/organizations to develop and schedule presentation of the work, [including approving any additional content selected for performance].
- Provide professional photography of the performances for documentation and media purposes.
- Provide one sound system with an eight-channel mixer and two speakers.

Budget

The artist or group/organization selected for each residency will receive an all-inclusive fee between \$6,000 and \$16,000 to develop the original, site-specific work and provide presentation of the work on site at Waterfront Park through the end of October 2021.

Eligibility

This residency is open to all contemporary artists and artist groups/organizations, age 18 and older, based in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, and the District of Columbia, including but not limited to directors, choreographers, designers, individual artists, arts organizations/groups, professors, and students of all artistic mediums.

To Submit

Please email the following **in a single PDF file** to Anne O'Dell at anne.odell@alexandriava.gov by 5:00 p.m., Sunday, February 28, 2021:

- 1) Cover Sheet with name, address, phone number, website and e-mail address of the artist or artist group/organization applying. If a group/organization, designate and name a lead artist who will be the main point of contact.
- 2) Letter of Interest of no more than two pages indicating your experience developing original work and your preliminary approach to the residency. If a group/organization, also briefly describe your history of working together.
- 3) Proposed budget
- 4) Resume/CV of no more than three pages. If a group/organization, include the resume/CV for the designated lead artist and up to three additional resumes of no more than three pages each.
- 5) Web links for up to five videos of performances by the artist or group/organization if the proposal is for a performance-based residency or up to five web links for online portfolios. Videos must be online and cannot be files that must be downloaded to access. For each link provide a one to two sentence description, including the name of the performers and/or creators.
- 6) Names and contact information for three professional references.

Questions

Please submit your questions about this opportunity via email to Anne O'Dell at anne.odell@alexandriava.gov.