

IN

THE COMMONS



**USING ART TO RE-PRESENT
CAMDEN, NJ
IN PUBLIC SPACES**



**CAMDEN
FIREWORKS**







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FORECAST

[Forecast Public Art](#) is a nonprofit organization based in Saint Paul, Forecast partners with artists and communities throughout the country to activate, inspire, and advocate for public art that advances justice, health, and human dignity. Forecast consults with decision-makers on public art and cultural planning efforts, helps find, select, curate and commission public artists and artwork, and supports public artists with funding, training, and opportunities to advance their public art careers. The nonprofit places particular emphasis on access for BIPOC artists and groups that are traditionally excluded. On the ground, Forecast's work results in policies and initiatives aimed toward addressing inequity and serving the community through public art. As a national organization, Forecast's team aims to set standards for ethical policies, processes, and outcomes in the field.

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We would like to especially thank Jane and Dave Hummel for their generous sponsorship of this plan.

FORWARD



Almost four years ago, I was wrapping up my second term as a Councilmember in Haddon Heights, New Jersey and considering joining Camden FireWorks as Executive Director. It was still early in the pandemic: people were stressed, politics were immensely divisive, and arts organizations were shuttering their operations at an alarming frequency.

Before accepting the Director position, I drove around Camden's historic Waterfront South neighborhood (where FireWorks is located) to conduct a windshield survey whereupon I noted the neighborhood vibrancy with its intermingled residential and commercial units. The main thoroughfare, Broadway Avenue, is an area of high freight and pedestrian traffic so the neighborhood was bustling with all sorts of activities.

I decided to park on the street to walk the two blocks and assess the organization's building. Immediately upon exiting my car, I had to side-step several hypodermic needles that had been left on the sidewalk near the crosswalk to Sacred Heart School. The nearer I approached the building, the more I appreciated how prolific the litter was—it covered every inch of the gutter and was strewn about the sidewalks and in alleys. The nearby buildings, probably glorious in their prime, were now a hodge-podge of old and new materials leaving the impression that resources are constrained in this neighborhood.

But what I also noticed was the colorful murals throughout the community. I saw a collection of garden statuettes in one resident's side yard. I witnessed school children from Sacred Heart holding hands as they crossed the street to walk to the Michael Doyle Fieldhouse. I saw holiday decorations displayed on neatly kept rowhouses and people enjoying each

other's company in a place that we all inhabit: the commons.

Thanks to Dave and Jane Hummel, Camden FireWorks received funding to support this strategic art plan for a program that we have named Art in the Commons (AITC). Our vision with AITC is that it will be the catalyst for making Camden a national example of how to create an equitable, sustainable, and eco-friendly public art program in an environmentally overburdened city. What follows is a Camden-led and Camden-centered plan that upholds the creatives who live and work in the city.

I'd like to express my sincerest appreciation to all of the artists, residents, and community stakeholders who helped provide form and substance to this endeavor.

As an applied anthropologist, I am trained to document cultural assets that can be identified, nurtured, and sustained. While it is true that Waterfront South and Camden City have some structural needs – as do many urban centers - it is also true that the best testament to a city's vibrancy is its cultural amenities.

According to Noonan and Breznitz¹, “creative places are innovative places” and what I see in Camden, a city that has no grocery store or art supply house for almost 72,000 people, is an innovative spirit that spurs creativity in the most unlikely of places: Camden - The Invincible City.

Asiyah Kurtz
Executive Director
Camden FireWorks

1. <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/Noonan-PPaT.pdf>

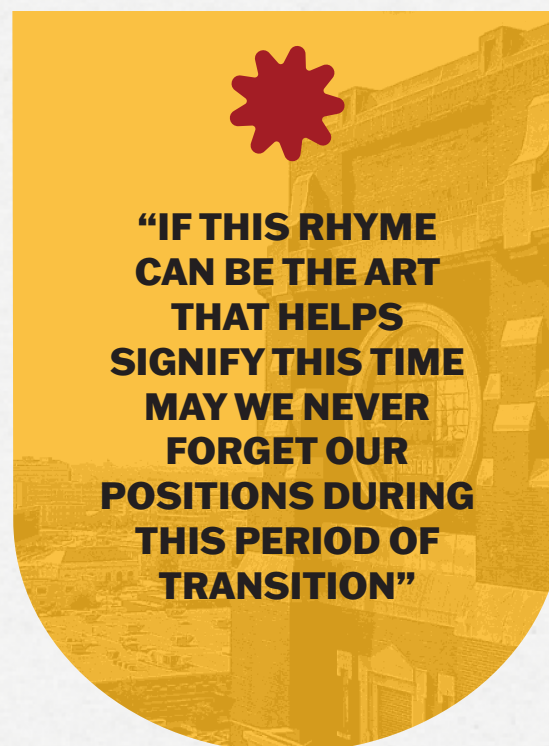
Public art is important because it places art in spaces where marginalized people don't often see it in their communities... most folks may not go to the Barnes or PMA but they will see it on their way to the bodega. Public art creates a sense of value and importance in the community, gives a sense of hope, pride, and makes people feel that they are worthy – and Camden is worthy!

Camden is special to me because of the sense of pride that permeates everywhere. Our pride in being an Invincible City fuels our desire to see Camden moving beyond survival and being an example of a place where people can thrive. Camden artists are better positioned than artists outside of the city to capture/represent us accurately. As artists we are charged with getting the story right. Even for artists like myself who grew up outside of Camden, we have a stake in this city. We CHOSE Camden, or perhaps maybe this Invincible City chose us.

Camden is in the middle of a renaissance, led by artists, promoting a new version of Camden. The more we promote the arts in the city, the more effectively we can rewrite Camden's narrative. While it takes time and investment to steward a more accurate story, the arts are a catalyst for this work. The arts allow us to highlight the good that is here in Camden and uphold a more conscious wave of intentional art and practices happening in the city now. The arts also enable us, through intergenerational artist support and connections, to dream what is possible.

Erik James Montgomery

Artist, Founder & CEO
EJM Foundation, Inc.



INTRODUCTION



Art in the Commons will be a catalyst for collective action making Camden a national example of how to create an equitable, sustainable, and eco-friendly public art program in an environmentally over-burdened city. Camden, New Jersey, home to around 71,000 residents, is exploring the creation of a transformative public art program amid its industrial legacy, environmental challenges, and diverse community along the Delaware River.

The primary goals of Art in the Commons are to:

- Establish an inspired and engaging program that reflects Camden’s unique history, people, cultural identity, and future aspirations
- Expand the community’s spatial imaginary and understanding of public art in the city
- Create a sustainable ecosystem of learning for emerging public artists, prioritizing Camden residents
- Collaborate with premier regional art institutions and established artists to implement the program
- Build sufficient staff support to manage a program of Art in the Commons’ scale and ambition
- RE-present Camden, New Jersey as an arts destination

Public art funding in Camden to date has been sourced from various channels, including contributions from Bloomberg Philanthropies, Camden FireWorks, private entities, and public funds allocated for murals and programming by organizations like Subaru of America Foundation, Inc.. Despite the diversity in funding sources, there is not consistent funding for public art and a lack of leadership dedicated to furthering this work within the City of Camden or the nonprofit community.

The Art in the Commons initiative recognizes the crucial need to maintain and enhance this funding ecosystem and collaborative cross-sector partnerships for the successful execution of the plan.

● EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

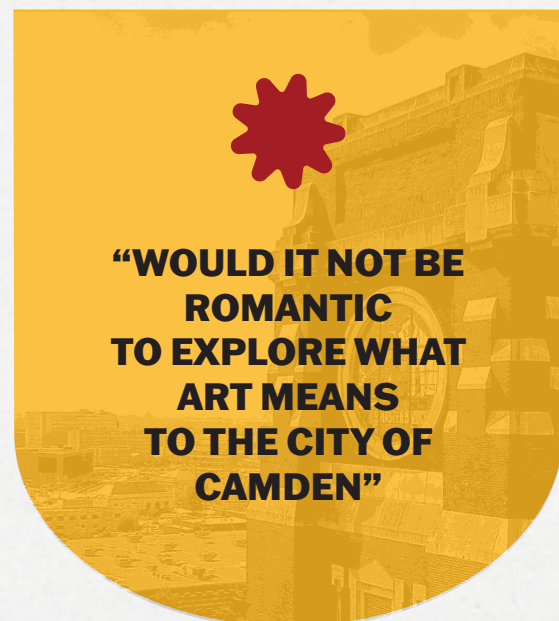
The driving focus of this new public art initiative is to celebrate what is good in Camden by uplifting Camden stories, history, public spaces, and artists. Dedicated efforts were made to engage Camden residents, artists and partners to shape the possibilities and goals of public art by and for Camden. Throughout the planning process, there was collective enthusiasm for a grassroots and inclusive public art program, and a shared sentiment that this work is long overdue in Camden. A deep love for and pride in Camden was another throughline in this process that speaks to a resilience and shared commitment to the city and the possibilities ahead. Camden is invincible.

The primary recommendation for Art in the Commons is the creation of a new nonprofit focused on developing public art opportunities. In partnership with the City of Camden, this organization will lead the charge to develop a robust and equitable public art program centering Camden and work towards establishing sustainable funding and partnerships with local municipalities, businesses and other partners. Key takeaways from the planning process include:

- Lead with a grassroots approach, distinct from nearby, established programs like Mural Arts Philadelphia
- Use an expansive and inclusive definition of and approach to art in public spaces to support diverse

artistic practices including visual arts, performance, literary arts, and graffiti/street art

- Directly engage the community, involving Camden residents and artists in the creation and appreciation of public art
- Identify challenges for Camden artists and develop resources and accessible opportunities to support scaling up their work and expanding their practices in public spaces
- Honor the history and diversity of Camden with an eye towards the future and engaging younger generations
- Support public art projects that add vibrancy, color, and multigenerational appeal, augmenting the built and natural environment



ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES & SUMMARY

Eban: Sense of Place
Watu Moja X Camden FireWorks



To build this plan, engaging Camden residents, artists, and business leaders was crucial to ensure that Art in the Commons reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities. Engagement included individual interviews with community leaders, partners, and artists, a public survey of artists and residents in Camden, and a focus group with the Waterfront South business community. A key question was held at the center of all of these conversations:

What is the story of Camden, NJ and how do we use art to tell it in a meaningful and intentional way?

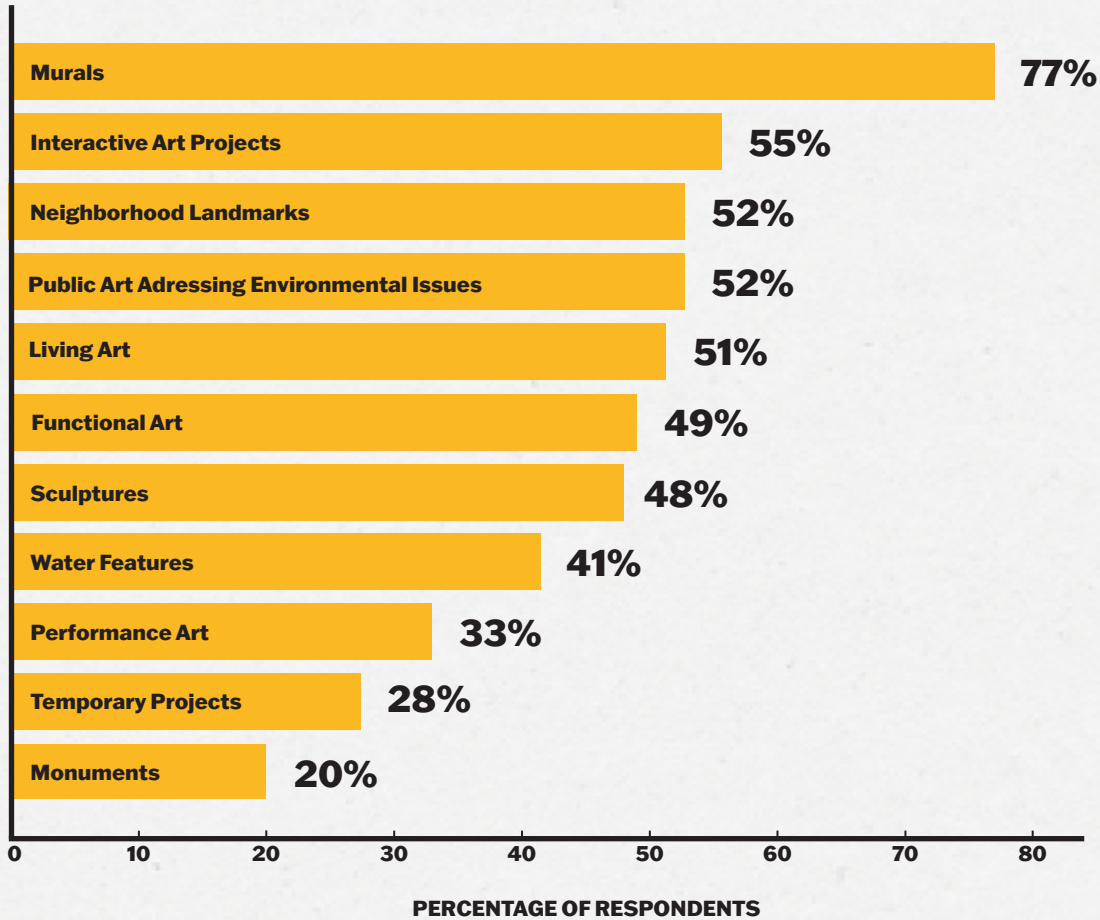
- 100 Camden residents and artists were engaged throughout the planning process
- 11 individual interviews with Camden residents, partners and artists
- 16 members of the Waterfront South business community attended a focus group
- 6 engagement events in partnership with Connect the Lots and other Camden partners
- 69 responses to public survey of Camden artists and residents (39 artists, and 30 residents)

Survey respondents were asked:

Do you have a favorite public art project either in Camden or in another city? What is it about that project that you most enjoy?

- Collaborative nature of public art
- Historical context and recognition
- Surprise factor
- Colorful/vibrancy
- Interactivity
- Multi-generational appeal
- Addressing issues important to the community
- Accessibility
- Functional art like bike racks

What do you most want to see in public art for Camden? What types of public art?

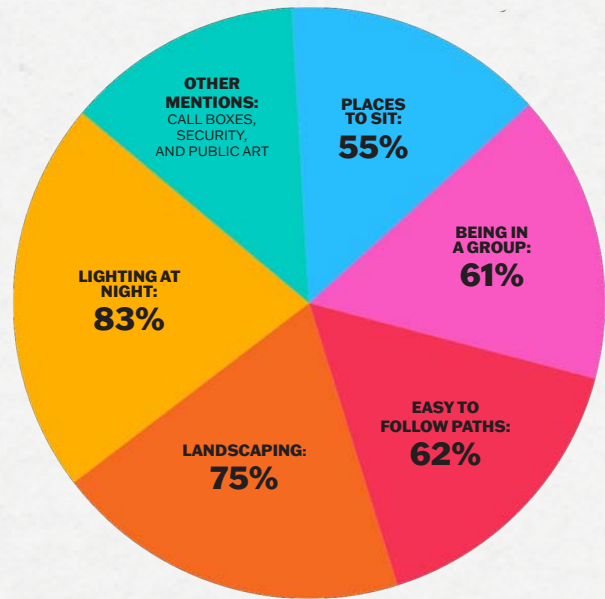


Are there specific people, landmarks, or histories that you feel deserve to be honored through public art? What do you want to see artists respond to/highlight/celebrate about Camden?

- 80% of respondents said yes
- History of Camden/"our roots"
- History of indigenous peoples
- Notable figures in Camden history, including arts and culture leaders, innovators, BIPOC freedom fighters and activists
- Industrial history, major businesses like Campbell Soup, RCA Victor, New York Shipyard
- Represent Camden residents, especially women of color and the broad diversity of the city

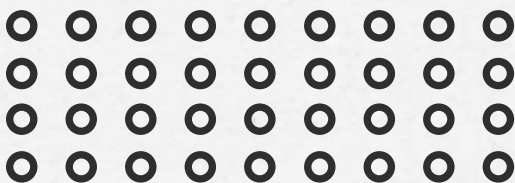
- Uplifts Camden
- Educational opportunities, particularly for youth in Camden
- Camden is invincible, strength, resilience that deserves to be celebrated and uplifted, inspiring younger generations to understand the city's history and feel hopeful about the future
- Neighborhood landmarks throughout the city, designed to feel cohesive and be seen in multiple locations
- Peace garden/memorial space that honors community members lost to violence, and provides a healing and celebratory space
- Graffiti permission spaces
- Include the literary arts
- Public art that addresses the lack of trees and green in Camden either by bringing green into the city or providing shade

What makes you feel safe in public spaces?



In your culture, what words or objects make you feel welcome where you've never been before?

- Public art, vibrant/bright colors, landscaping, seating
- Positive messaging: welcome, you belong, we're so happy you're here
- Images and words that feel inclusive of different cultures, backgrounds, and communities
- Historical markers and signage that invite engagement
- Indications of maintenance and care, clean spaces



Are you interested in participating in future artist selection processes?

- 78% of respondents said yes

Art in the Commons aims to be more than a strategic plan; it aspires to be a catalyst for collective action. It strives to reshape narratives by fostering collaboration between businesses, government officials, and the community, and to recognize the mix of informal expressions and grassroots initiatives that have historically adorned Camden's streets.

Residents, with their creative endeavors and "guerilla" expressions inspired by street art, have long been the architects of the city's visual narrative. Throughout the planning process, a deep love for Camden and a spirit of resilience and hope rang true.

There was consistent enthusiasm expressed for a public art initiative by and for Camden, with many folks saying such an effort is "long overdue". Overall, the need for a grassroots initiative that involves meaningful community engagement and resident participation was a dominant theme.

Reflecting the rich history of and diversity of the city is also a significant interest, with an eye towards the future by educating and inspiring younger generations with Camden's history and possibilities.

This plan seeks to address the intricacies of long-standing local

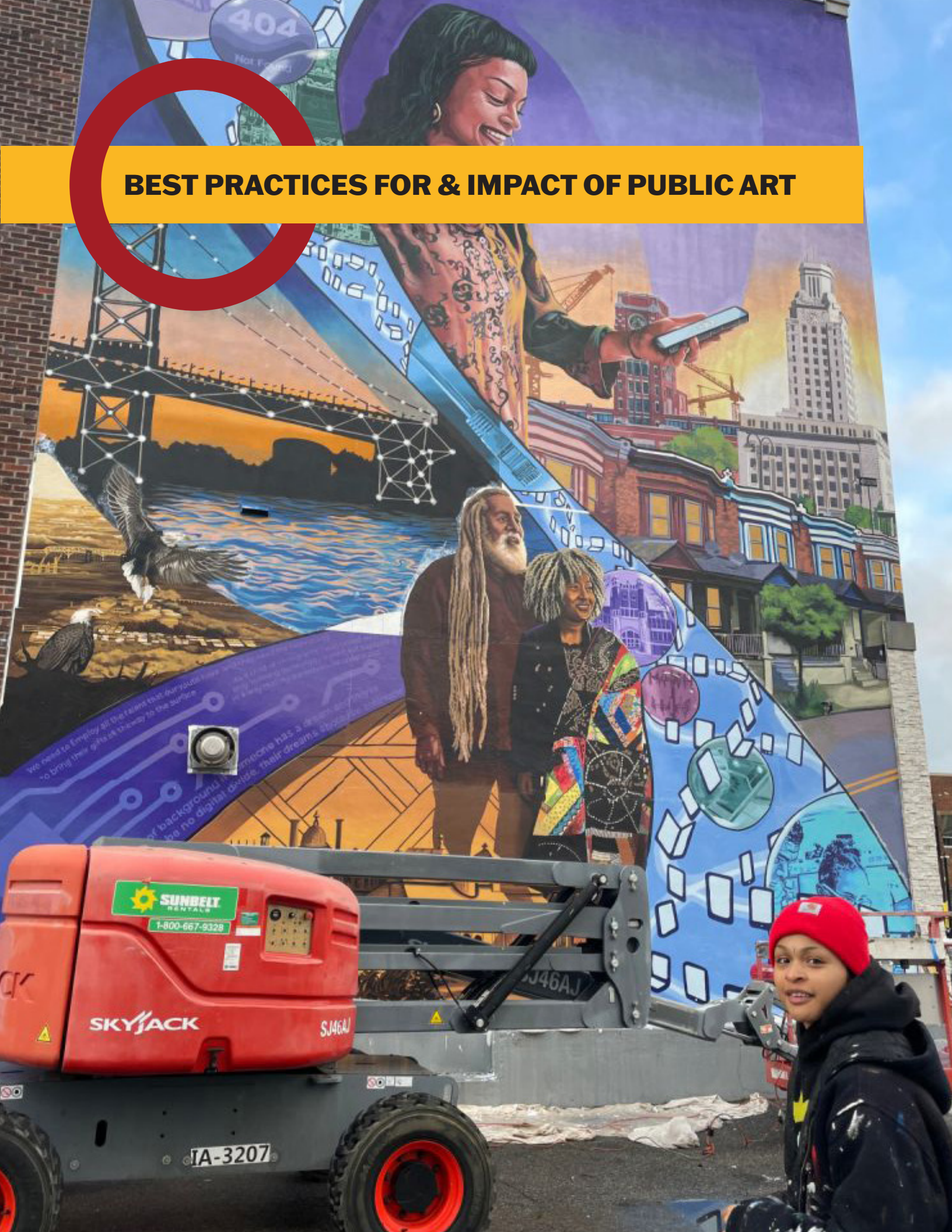
issues related to illegal dumping, environmental racism, and structural bureaucracy, emphasizing the need for a united front to propel Camden towards a cleaner and more vibrant future.

In particular, the Camden artists and residents engaged in this plan want to see public art that includes the following components:

- Interactive public art
- Mural
- Temporary projects
- Functional art in parks
- Public art that is engaging for families in Camden to enjoy and supports youth involvement
- Address public safety and create welcoming spaces
- Colorful and vibrant
- Celebrate and improve the natural environment



BEST PRACTICES FOR & IMPACT OF PUBLIC ART



Successful public art is responsive to the site, communities, and key stakeholders for which it is created. In order to be truly responsive, open and accessible processes and a willingness to adapt to unique situations for each project are critical. In addition to the resources provided in the appendices to this plan, here are some important components to support a robust and engaging public art program:

- Clear and accessible communication for community stakeholders and artists around project goals, decision-making, selection and design review criteria, timelines, and opportunities to participate
- Include diverse voices and perspectives in the artist selection process through project selection, selection committees, and design reviews
- A dedicated team and group of partners committed to being in conversation with and working alongside artists and communities

A vibrant arts and culture scene is a boon to the local economy on several fronts in augmenting local tourism and talent retention, supporting a strong community of local artists, and supporting overlapping industries. The Arts and Economic Prosperity 5 study from Americans for the Arts reported that arts and culture activities in the state of New Jersey generated over \$380 million by arts and culture organizations in FY2015 and supported over 14,000 jobs across the state.

Audience spending across the state (excluding ticket sales) totaled over \$220 million. These numbers indicate that revenue between arts and culture organizations, audience members and the cultural industry, is a significant player in the local New Jersey economy.

Public art specifically is a meaningful investment in shared spaces that contributes to the greater impact of a strong arts and culture community, both economically and anecdotally. Below are some key data points from an Americans for the Arts report from 2018, [Why Public Art Matters](#):

- 70% of Americans believe that “the arts improve the image and identity” of their communities
- 70% of Americans say that they experience the arts in nontraditional arts venues such as parks, hospitals, malls and airports
- 49% of people with college degrees (and 52% of millennials and 54% of Generation Xs) expressed that a community rich in the arts impacts where they would relocate for a job
- Public art can contribute significantly to cultural tourism
- A case study in Nashville indicated that for projects over \$150,000, $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the project budgets went back into the local economy via fabricators, installers, electricians and other subcontractors

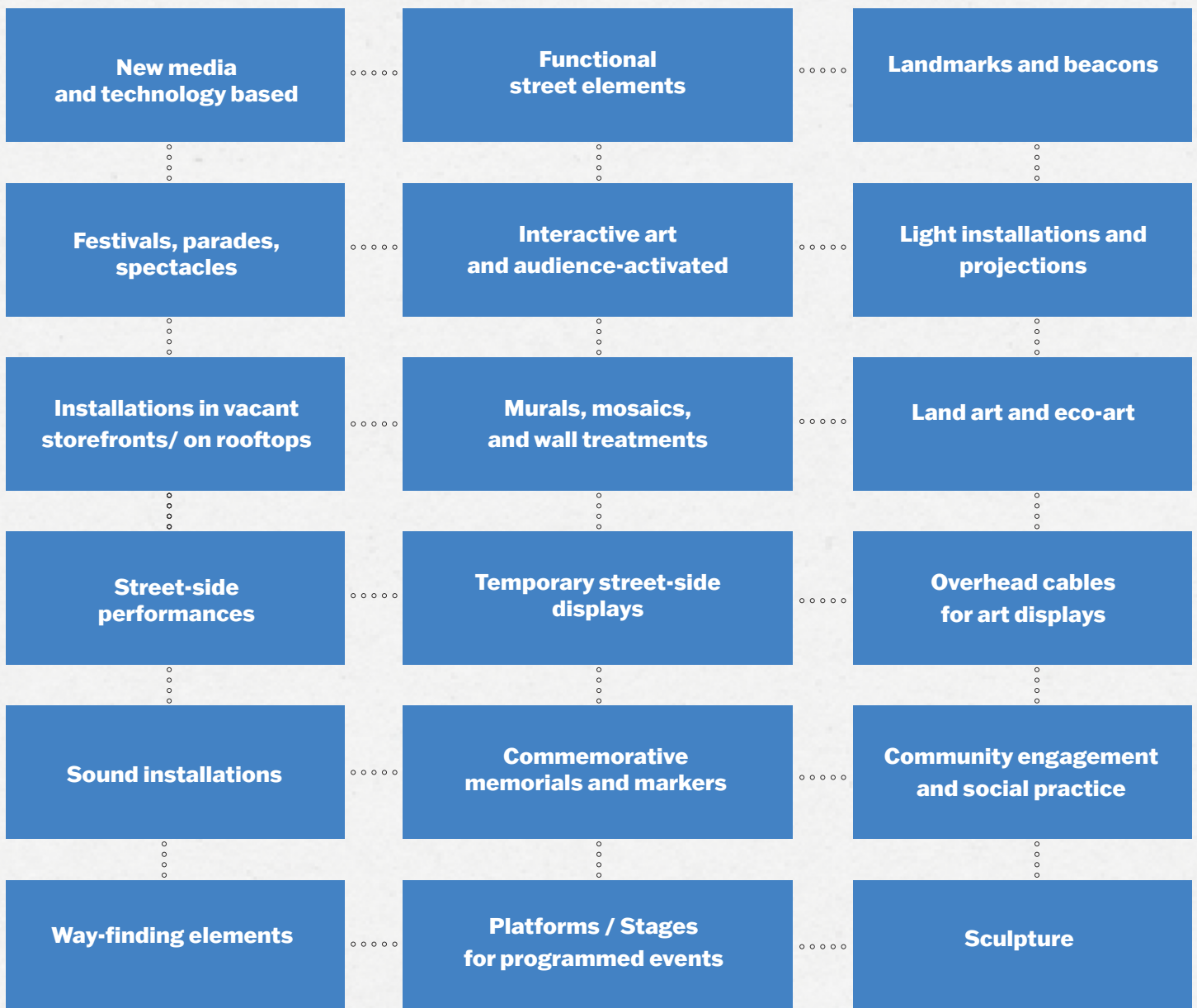
- Public art can improve feelings of public safety, pedestrian safety, neighborhood morale and social cohesion



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START IN CAMDEN”**

● **EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC ART**

Public art takes many different forms, and an express desire for public art in Camden is to create projects beyond traditional media such as murals and sculptures. The information and examples presented here are to support a broad understanding of the opportunities for public art.





Stand Up For Our Streets, Jamond Bullock, Memphis, TN



Be the Y, [Parc Sans Souci](#), Lafayette, LA

PUBLIC ART PROGRAM STRUCTURES



Public art programs across the country vary in their structures and funding mechanisms. The most common versions include:

1. **Embedded within the city:** this is an option that is internal to the City and has dedicated staff to administer the program and oversee the public art collection. It also typically includes a public art commission [or something similar] that recommends projects to the City Council.

2. **City/Partners:** in this option, the City leads the public art program, working closely with a nonprofit organization that facilitates community engagement and partnerships with the private sector.

3. **City/Nonprofit:** here, the nonprofit is contracted by the City to manage and administer the program. The nonprofit works strategically with other entities to manage, support, and fund public art across the city.

4. **Regional approach:** this model is led by a nonprofit that partners with multiple government agencies, such as City and County.



MUNICIPAL ARTS AND CULTURE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

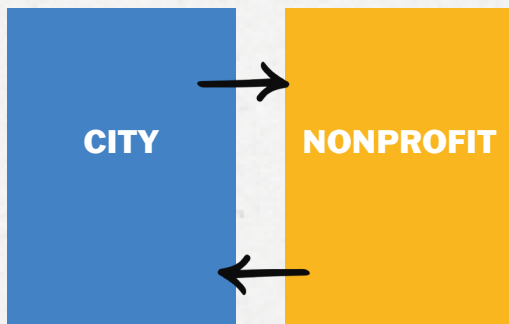
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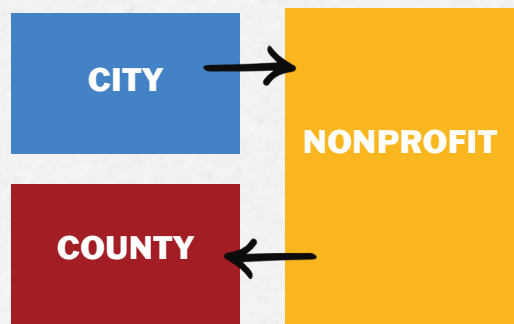
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3.



4.



Similarly, these programs are funded by a variety of different means including through an annual allocation from municipal capital budgets (percent-for-art), hotel/motel tax, license plate fees, percentage of private development fees, corporate sponsorships, private gifts and loans, microgrants and crowdfunding, and other grants and sponsorships.

RECOMMENDATIONS



A public private partnership, or City/nonprofit, model is recommended to establish a public art program in Camden, with a new nonprofit created to become the primary driver of curating art for public spaces working in tandem with a local municipality. Public private partnerships can be a meaningful way to launch a new initiative by leveraging funding and support across different organizations and spaces. Recognizing that this is a new initiative, a fiscal sponsorship from an existing nonprofit such as Camden FireWorks could support early projects and fundraising efforts before a new nonprofit is established.

GOALS:

Build a grassroots public art organization that advocates for the inclusion of art in public spaces, develops opportunities and resources for local artists, and is actively involved in conversations and initiatives that address the needs of Camden residents.

SHORT TERM

- Hire two person team including a director and project manager
- Develop a public art advisory board including board representatives from new nonprofit, City arts commission, Mayor's office, Camden Community Partnership, and arts professionals in Camden
- Adopt best practices for project development and execution including transparency in decision making, artist selection processes, accessibility to artwork and process, and goals for equitable public art (artists commissioned, processes, and places)
- Identify opportunities for temporary, rotating and event-based public art projects to demonstrate the possibilities of public art and encourage more conversation about public art for Camden in partnership with local businesses
- Identify an opportunity for a large-scale permanent public art project as a case study for further investment
- Explore opportunities to use recycled and living materials through in-kind contributions to help offset project costs and address public interest in the natural environment and environmental issues in the city
- Incorporate feedback from Art in the Commons plan engagement
- Establish inventory system to catalog existing and future public art projects, and support ongoing data collection (artists commissioned, source of funding, budget, materials, maintenance recommendations)
- Partner with HopeWorks to build a map of public art in Camden

- Build on ongoing community mapping work led by Camden FireWorks to identify public and private property for future public art projects

LONG TERM:

- Develop sustainable funding for public art projects through a percent-for-art allocation, fundraising efforts, and corporate partnerships
- Maintenance and deaccessioning of artworks plan development
- Equity audit of the public art collection annually to prioritize future needs and priorities for the public art program (identify gaps and goals)

artists with an interest in participating in public art

- Develop a resource guide for ongoing artist development opportunities nationally/regionally including [Shiftworks](#) in Pittsburgh, PA and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts
- Build public workshops with established public art partners such as Mural Arts Philadelphia or Forecast Public Art
- Create temporary and design only public art opportunities that will serve as entry points for artists new to public art
- Calls for Artists can be issued as design only projects where selected artists are charged with creating the design for public art and work with fabricators or other contractors who build and install the project

Develop resources and training opportunities for Camden and South Jersey artists to expand their studio practices to support making work for public spaces.

SHORT TERM:

- Release artist survey to better understand the needs of Camden



LONG TERM:

Develop a fellowship program that provides intensive professional development for 5 - 10 artists covering:

- Building proposals and navigating artist selection processes
- Developing budgets
- Scaling work (using programs such as Sketch Up)
- Installation methods
- Travel opportunity
- Provide opportunities to directly use knowledge gained throughout the fellowship to create public art (temporary or permanent)
- Pull in feedback from artist survey
- Identify opportunities for local artist apprenticeships on large-scale public art projects working with experienced public artists from other cities



Leverage public and private partnerships to invest in public art.

SHORT TERM:

- Identify funding from local municipalities, corporate, and community partners to fund initial public art projects to demonstrate the value of this initiative
- Establish partnerships between Mayor's office, different government departments, and City Council
- Consider City of Camden mayoral priorities shared in [2024 State of the City](#) address including street repaving, restoring city parks, dumping, improvements to water system, and the development of Walter Rand Transportation Center



- Nonprofit to apply to be a vendor of City and County to support working on project opportunities ahead of a percent-for-art ordinance
- Large companies to approach with a presence in Camden: American Water, 76ers, Subaru, Michaels, NFI, Connor Strong, Campbell Soup, Lockheed Martin, Holtec Int., Eds and Meds institutions, Virtua Health, Rutgers, Cooper University Healthcare

- Leverage buy-in from municipal authorities to encourage private corporations to invest in public spaces in Camden

Create different ways for Camden residents to participate in developing public art for their communities, noting where there are opportunities for community input, outreach, and engagement.

LONG TERM:

- Establish sustainable annual funding for public art through a percent-for-art ordinance or other funding mechanism in partnership with the City of Camden or Camden County
- Execute a contract between the nonprofit and local government to manage the public art program and collection with an annual contract fee and project management fees paid to nonprofit
- Establish a public art commission/committee with participation from municipality contributing funding
- Develop program guidelines for percent-for-art projects
- Develop annual plan connected to capital projects with local government
- Ongoing partnerships with corporations with operations in Camden

SHORT TERM:

- Share Art in the Commons with the community along with next steps and establish opportunities for mutual accountability in its execution
- Invite community members to participate in artist selection processes, and design and installation opportunities as possible
- Celebrate new projects and milestones with the community

LONG TERM:

- Add in progress projects to the map of public art in Camden with updates at different project stages
- Identify ways for Camden residents to inform the allocation of future public art project budgets



BUDGET

Based on the public art program budgets of small to mid sized cities across the country, a modest public art program should have a full time Executive Director, a project manager, and services that are contracted out, such as support for accounting, fundraising, communications, collections management, interns, technology, supplies, etc. To support the execution of the Art in the Commons plan, an annual administrative budget of \$150,000 - \$200,000 is recommended to establish operations and launch the initiative.

This budget can be scaled over time as support and funding is generated for the program. The first year could start with \$65,000, providing the ability to hire an Executive Director. The ED could hire the Project Manager in year 2, for a total administrative budget of \$100,000. Year 3 would increase to \$150,000 to support additional programs, with a steady increase to \$200,000 by year 5 in order to meet the recommendations within this plan.

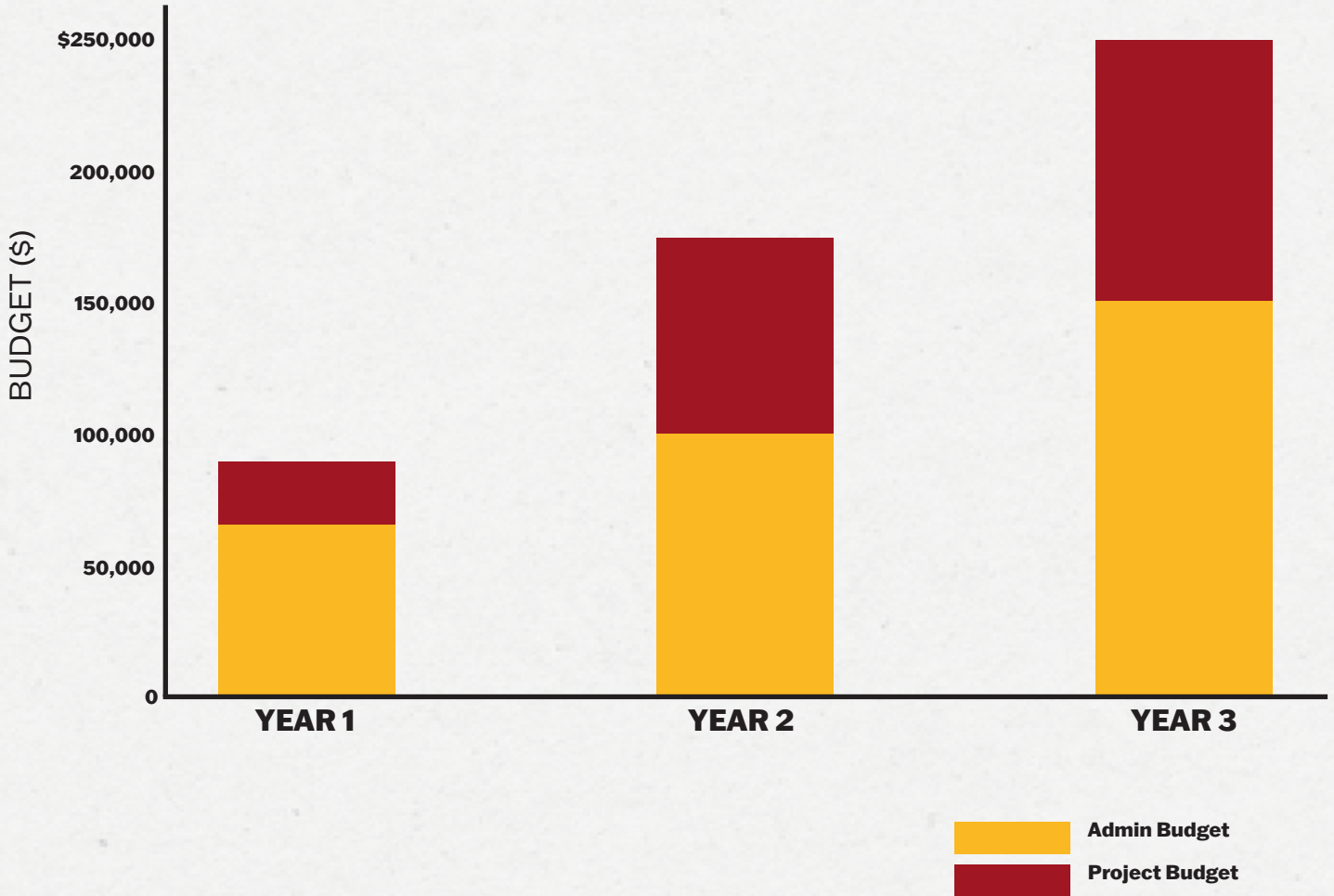
In the short-term, administrative and project funds should be identified through a variety of grants and sponsorships. Long-term financial sustainability will be established through an annual allocation of public art funding in partnership with local municipalities supporting an annual contract fee to the nonprofit and project management fees of 20% of the total public art funds. Potential funders include Subaru Foundation, 76ers, Dave and Jane Hummel, Penn Foundation, Knight Foundation, and a Land Art Generator partnership.

In addition to the administrative budget, an annual project budget should be established to provide core activities within the public art program. These core activities would require an additional \$175,000 per year:

- 4 - 5 \$5,000 demonstration/ temporary projects: \$20,000 - \$25,000
- Permanent project (with apprenticeship opportunity): \$100,000
- Fellowship program for Camden artists new to public art: \$50,000 supporting 5 - 7 artists

As this is a new initiative, the core activities could be scaled and ramped up over time, just like the administrative budget mentioned earlier. Begin year 1 with the demonstration/temporary projects for a total project budget of \$25,000. Continue these projects every year, and in year 2 add in a fellowship program for Camden artists new to public art. This would make the year 2 project budget \$75,000. In year 3, introduce a large scale permanent project at \$100,000 making the total project budget \$175,000. Additionally, explore implementing public art projects alongside Capital Improvement Projects with budgets of \$500,000 or higher, utilizing 1-2% of the overall project budget to develop public art, or to go into a general public art fund that can be used to initiate projects or create grant opportunities for artists in Camden.

BUDGET ALLOCATION OVER 3 YEARS



LET'S BUILD ART TOGETHER!

Art in the Commons is a "We Focused" and Centered Plan

Sign up to share feedback and be part of Camden's growing public art community.



GET INVOLVED
AITC@CamdenFireWorks.org





APPENDICES



● CASE STUDIES

Creative Waco, Waco, TX

Creative Waco was founded as a Local Arts Agency to support a thriving cultural and creative community in Waco and McLennan County, TX. Beginning in 2017, private funding to support public art created along the Brazos River leading to the Cameron Park Zoo led Creative Waco to develop a partnership with the City of Waco to manage public art development on a project by project basis. Following a public art planning process with Forecast Public Art to establish a dedicated percent-for-art program for public art, two positions within the City of Waco have been created to facilitate the ongoing partnership between the City and Creative Waco. Creative Waco is also in the process of advocating for a percent-for-art ordinance to be established by the City of Waco to be managed in part by the nonprofit organization.

UrbanArt Commission, Memphis, TN

UAC is a nonprofit organization established in 1997 to support the development of public art in Memphis, TN. Early projects were funded through grants and individual donations, building a case statement for the value of public art and ultimately leading to a percent-for-art ordinance established by the City of Memphis in 2002. Since the inception of the percent-for-art program, UAC has held a contract with the City of Memphis to manage the development of the City's public art program and maintain the growing collection of public art throughout the city. The organization's responsibilities include recommending new projects to pursue during the City's annual budget process, facilitating artist selection, overseeing the Public Art Oversight Committee, managing the public art development process, inventorying and maintaining the City of Memphis' public art collection.



The Arts Council of Lake Oswego, Portland, OR

The Arts Council of Lake Oswego is a nonprofit overseeing the City's extensive public art program and collection following the establishment of the Lake Oswego Arts Commission in 1992. Their programs include a rotating sculpture exhibit in downtown Lake Oswego called Gallery Without Walls, permanent and temporary (including an extensive loaned art program) projects throughout the city, curatorial projects with Artspace, and monthly events including exhibitions receptions and workshops.

● BEST PRACTICES FOR PUBLIC ART

While there are no universally agreed upon standards in the field of public art at this time—you don't need a license to practice, and there is no "rulebook" to follow—this section of the plan is meant to share some of the basic steps involved in a typical public art project and highlight best practices. The vast majority of public art is visual art, therefore this plan focuses on the process of commissioning visual art projects, however most of the best practices and process information can be applied to performances, and non-visual art forms. From the early stages of developing a project concept to fabrication and installation of the artwork, the effort involved in bringing a

public art project to life can be complex and require more time and money than may be imagined at the outset. The following list of topics and tasks—described in more detail below—takes into account both traditional and nontraditional forms of public art, including outdoor sculptures, performance events, temporary installations, and projects engaging community members.

- **Idea Development:** Whether commissioned or independently developed, most public art projects start with an idea hatched in the imagination of an artist, or an artist working in cooperation with others.
- **Location Analysis:** Every location—whether assigned by a commissioning agency or selected by the artist—plays a significant role in the development of a public art project. Knowing how to look at a site, or plans for a site, can be very helpful.
- **Permissions and Permits:** For artists, knowing where and how to gain permission for a project is critical. For cities, developing welcoming guidelines can be key to attracting talent.
- **Financing and Funding:** There are many ways that public art projects are funded. Learning how to find support—and make the most of the funding you have—is a skill worth practicing.

- **Artist Selection & Commission Process:** Selecting the best artist for a public art opportunity requires thoughtful planning and facilitation, as well as familiarity working with artists and professional project management.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging community members in one or more aspects of public art projects has become increasingly valuable for both artists and public art project managers. There isn't one right way to do this, but there are plenty of lessons learned; it helps to examine case studies.
- **Fabrication and Installation:** While some artists still produce all aspects of their work themselves, most hire outside fabricators or vendors with specialized skills or equipment. Likewise, installation of a major artwork can be complex and costly.
- **Conservation and Restoration:** It is wise to plan ahead for the preservation of projects as well as plan for the rejuvenation of neglected works in your public art collection.

IDEA DEVELOPMENT

A public art project can be born out of community need, artist inspiration, civic engagement, neighborhood beautification, or be required as part of a municipal ordinance (requiring a Call For Artists). It can also be forged out of public will and fiscal policies. While

there is no one way to birth an idea, there is one combination of elements that is integral to all public art projects: the intersection of art, space, and the public.

EXERCISES FOR IDEA GENERATION

- **Brainstorming with artists.** Once you have some basic parameters or goals in mind, think about images and concepts that align. Doodles on napkins, a descriptive phrase, word association games, and open-minded dialogue can trigger lots of possible directions.
- **The site can often be the key inspiration for an artist.** The content of meaningful public art today is often informed by the context. It helps to research the historical and cultural significance of the site, talk with local communities about the local "flavor," and consider who makes up the audience for the site. What do you know about them? What kind of impact do you want to have on the audience?
- **Check out a few books, scan through a back issue of Public Art Review magazine, or perform a Google search for "public art," "street art," "outdoor art," or "community art," etc.** What projects interest you? Why? The answers will help you begin to narrow down from many options to a smaller facet of public art that you might wish to pursue.
- **Read through a few Calls For Artists (Requests for Qualifications) and see**

what commissioning agencies are looking for, along with their criteria for selection. This can trigger ideas that combine your interest with their goals.

- What issues in the community are of importance to you? What local or global concerns are you most passionate about? Do some research, talk to someone working in that field, think about places and people most associated with the issue (if there are any), and go exploring. What do you want to say to people or make them think or feel? The answers should give you clues to ideas that relate.
- Keep in mind that you don't have to know how to make everything your mind can imagine. Like architects, public artists are free to imagine and design, and then get help from others to realize their ideas.

LOCATION ANALYSIS

The site you select—or the site identified by a commissioning agency—is critical to the development of most public art projects. Consideration of the site's context helps inform the idea, design, and goal of a public art project, and distinguishes a customized project from simply placing art in public. To avoid the downsides of “plop art” or art that is simply placed in a public space rather than created for that site, an artist or commissioning agency should take time to research the site and communicate with audiences that

use the site. A public artwork can have greater impact if its design takes into account the site, its history, the traffic, the surrounding environment, and the characteristics of its setting.

PERMISSIONS AND PERMITS

Permission and permits can often be the most frustrating and time consuming aspect of a public project. Sometimes the process can go smoothly, but it's good to be prepared for the long haul.

There are many factors to consider.

- Is the site publicly owned or privately owned?
- Does the site have any special considerations, such as historical status or weak infrastructure?
- Is the project temporary or permanent?
- Who will maintain ownership and maintenance responsibility?
- What are the legal concerns or city permitting procedures?

The discussion should always start with the site owner followed up by a call to City officials to understand permit and regulation issues. Once permission is secured, a letter of agreement should be created and signed with the site owner or whoever is assuming responsibility for maintenance and ownership of the final project.

If the project is to be sited on City property, it may be necessary to present to the City Council or agency responsible for the site. It's important to remember that public art often involves partnerships, compromise and communication. If you demonstrate good will and do your homework, chances are people will work with you, not against you. If you run up against a roadblock, it's useful to pause and examine the root cause of the problem. It helps to be open to criticism, demonstrate respect for key stakeholders, and be open and flexible to adapting to meet needs and concerns expressed by others. This does not mean that you have to water down your ideas or do whatever other people tell you. Public art is a negotiated art.

FINANCING AND FUNDING

Public art can be financed in a myriad of ways. Many cities adopt a percent-for-art program to fund projects. Private foundations can be a source for grants to artists or arts organizations. Corporations and businesses hire or sponsor artists to design and build new works for their public spaces, and community organizations can sponsor projects or help raise funds to support a project of benefit to the community. For example, the City of Stevens Point, Wisconsin has a room tax fee that funds, among other initiatives, arts activities in the city; and Portland, Oregon used a "golf tax" that supports public art (\$1 per golf bag rented).

Artists can fund their own projects through fundraising efforts or out of their own pockets. The famous artist team of Christo and Jean-Claude funded their Gates Project for Central Park by selling preliminary renderings to museums and collectors worldwide. Many community-based projects offer opportunities to secure a mix of funding sources, as well as "in-kind" contributions of goods and services. To be effective at fundraising, it's important to match the project with the appropriate types of support.

Developing your budget is a critical phase of your project if you hope to secure funding from public or private sources. A simple "one pager" can be helpful for fundraising. It is wise to include compensation for the artist as well as any design phase required to develop the project. It is also a good idea to have two versions (or more) of your budget. One should be a "bare bones" budget (the minimum amount it would take to complete the project) and one should be the ambitious budget—the ideal scenario—in case there is strong interest in the project. This helps you to think big and expand your project but have a realistic back-up plan.

ARTIST SELECTION AND COMMISSIONING PROCESS

Working with artists can be complicated. Depending on your goals and what kind of results you're after, there are many options and many considerations. This is true for artists seeking commissions or pursuing independent projects as

well. Commissioning a new work of art or getting a commission is about relationships, and like any relationship it involves respect, communication, and flexibility. It also requires business skills, negotiations, and mindfulness. The primary systems for artists getting connected with public art opportunities are through:

- Request For Qualifications
- Request For Proposals
- Roster of Pre-Approved Artists
- Private Invitations
- Direct Commissions
- Self-Initiated Productions

The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is the most common artist selection process currently in use by public agencies in America. RFQ's are sent out like a "Call for Artists," broadcast to specific regions or nationally. The RFQ outlines the project location, eligibility, budget, scope, theme, timeline, and other specifics relevant to the project, and offers applicants instructions for submitting. Artists are usually asked to submit a letter of interest, a resume, and work samples of past work (with descriptions of each work sample). A selection committee is typically established by the project manager on behalf of the commissioning agency, made up of key stakeholders, as well as professional artists. The Committee reviews submissions and narrows

the pool of applicants to a smaller number of finalists who are then contracted to produce proposals—or simply interview to determine the preferred artist. It is standard practice to compensate artists for proposal development, although the amount varies from project to project; there are no standards in the public art field. Artists should be given adequate time to develop proposals or designs, and be given opportunities to analyze the site, and meet with committee members and site designers early in the design process.

RFQ's are popular with commissioning agencies and artists because they are simple, don't require much time at the outset, and offer the committee a spectrum of possible candidates. Successful applications provide committee members with a good idea of who the artist is, what kind of work they've done in the past, and how they would approach this opportunity. RFQ's may be widely distributed and promoted or targeted to a select number of qualified artists. Keep in mind there may be restrictions imposed by the funding source; some publicly funded programs require open competitions. It is also critical to adequately budget for the administrative time required for the project. Open calls require much more time and expense than an invitational call. "Invitational" RFQ's are RFQ's that are sent to a pre-selected, qualified pool of artists, and not broadcast to all artists.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) asks applicants to submit ideas, sketches

and even budgets for a proposed project, often without compensation. Current best practices dictate that artists should be compensated for proposal development. If you are asking artists to create a design proposal, you should compensate them for their time. If you have funding to pay for design proposals for a specific project and a list of qualified artists who would be good for the job, an RFP can be an effective way to get to a number of good options to consider. This is basically an invitational.

Some agencies maintain registries or utilize online registries to pre-select artists and, instead of asking them for proposals, they invite a small group to visit the site and meet the committee. This method focuses on the artist, not the artwork, and presumes that all the candidates would be able to produce something great. After the interview, an artist is hired for the full job, with the understanding that their design must meet approval before fabrication can commence.

Directly selecting an artist is rarely done by public agencies utilizing public funds, yet private corporations do this frequently, often with the aid of an art consultant or curator.

Self-initiated productions avoid the entire artist selection process, and place the entire burden on the artist to design, develop and produce their project as best they can. Keep in mind that some projects created by independent artists are legitimate, legally sanctioned, or permitted projects, and some are unexpected,

illegal, and even unwanted projects; illegal graffiti is a major concern in most American cities, requiring millions of dollars for clean up. In order to obtain approvals, permits or grants, independent artists often discover they must make compromises or revise their original vision in order to proceed with their projects.

Participating in a selection process—as an artist and as a panelist—is a great way to get educated about public art. For panelists, it’s a great way to learn about artists working in the field, and in your area. If you are managing the committee process, it is helpful to educate your committee about public art and the types of projects that are possible. It is important to ensure that everyone is on the same page as far as goals and expectations for the project.

Once the committee has selected an artist they will need a contract to enable them to commence with the services you have determined in your call, or through discussion with the artist. The contract should address timeline, payment schedule, copyright, insurance, and many other topics. There are many sample contracts available to adapt for your use.

COMMUNITY INTERACTION

To help ensure the success of your public art project, a good first step is to define the audiences or communities being served. The community may be different from the audience being served, so it is good to consider both

of these stakeholders. The community can—and, in some cases, should—be involved in every stage of the public art process. Consider the difference between community input [asking for feedback], community outreach [providing information], community engagement [deep interaction with residents to understand their thoughts and ideas in order to incorporate them into the project], and a community driven project. Engagement creates deep relationships and collaboration, and any of these three options will require time and effort to organize and facilitate. Consider what steps of the project require interaction with community members, and then determine who should carry it out. Not all artists incorporate community interaction in their process. The Commission could also assess its own skill set and determine where and how they can engage with community members. It is also very important to circle back to folks you engage so they are continually involved in the project. Education and media coverage about your project—and the process—are useful ways to connect with the community and extend the life of your project. Supportive individuals can help with advocacy, educational efforts, and even fundraising to enhance the budget. Consider working with a community organizer or volunteer coordinator.

PLANNING

Create a public art advisory committee made up of key stakeholders of the project (representatives from the City,

the site, the neighborhood, individuals with a vested interest in the project). This advisory committee can help connect you to resources to enrich your project, help select the artist and serve as ambassadors for the project by providing promotion and education. Hold educational workshops or presentations on public art and your project. These can take place in small venues that are highly accessible, and can include dialogues with artists and folks who have already done public art in the community. Invite the community to participate in the visioning of the project (but be clear about where their input will be used). This can be done in conversation, via project websites or through creative workshop settings.

IMPLEMENTATION

Consider using social media to keep the community up to date on your project. Before going this route, determine how many people prefer this type of communication. Invite people to participate in the creation or installation of your work, if appropriate (via workshops, generating content or ideas, volunteer labor, etc). Be very clear about the skill sets you need and try to control expectations (if it's not about letting everyone be the artist, make clear everyone's roles).

COMPLETION

Hold a celebratory event! This could range in scale from intimate to massive. Share your story—speak at schools, community groups, and other venues to tell people how the project came to

be, what the process was like, and little known facts about the project. Be in contact with the media. Let them know the story behind the story. Offer quality images to encourage their coverage. Utilize technology to create avenues for the public to interact with each other and the work (social media, a website with a comments section, etc).

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is useful to have at various stages of any project. Still photos and video are beneficial for promoting your project at various stages. With viral marketing and photo sharing, this represents another way to engage the community in helping promote and discuss your project. Documentation is crucial for the artist and commissioning agency, in order to promote the project, record the condition, and create a record. Consider using the free, online Public Art Archive (www.publicartarchive.org) as a place to store and share data about your project, and your collection.

FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION

While the traditional notion of “artist-as-craftsman” still persists, many artists working in the public art field today wear many hats: designers, art directors, or even project managers (not to mention publicist, secretary, and office manager). For many large scale projects, it’s necessary to engage a variety of professionals in the process, including design, engineering, lighting, site excavation, construction, and

installation. The process is similar to architecture, filmmaking or theater, in which the artist plays a central role, but employs others to carry out the vision.

People who build things for artists are called fabricators. They are often multi-talented, working in a variety of materials. Some specialize in metal casting, glasswork, wood construction, or ceramic work. Some carve or weld, and some create computer generated 3D models. Many fabricators used by artists specialize in custom work for display companies, theatrical sets and props, advertising agencies and sign companies. Given the high cost of fabrication, it is wise to set aside a good portion of the budget for this purpose. Keep in mind, when problems arise, the cost usually goes up and the schedule is delayed. It is recommended that artists spend time researching options available to them—in their region and around the world. If you find someone good to work with, it often leads to long-term relationships and potential collaborations. Your fabricators can easily become “partners” in your project. Consider using a blanket form for fabricators and subcontractors to sign to protect your copyright.

A critical phase in many public art projects is the installation. It can be a minor effort or require an enormous amount of time and money. Again, it’s wise to research different companies and get bids prior to hiring an installer for your project. Be sure the equipment is right for the job, as the cost can go up significantly for hydraulic lifts, large moving equipment or cranes. It’s also

wise to ask if your installers have been trained as riggers if they will be lifting and moving large objects. Rentals are a critical part of most project budgets, and it is wise to include a contingency of 5% or more for unexpected expenses or last-minute purchases or rentals.

CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

Many great public art projects, including some that are temporary, suffer from lack of attention after they are “completed.” The fact of the matter is, once the artwork is installed, its life is just beginning. Most plans for public art forget the reality of maintenance, or there are simply not enough funds available for the ongoing care of public artworks. For permanent projects (lasting several years or more), a smart approach is to involve a conservator early in the process of planning and design. A professional conservator can help the artist and the commissioning agency anticipate future challenges, save money on future repairs, and provide a maintenance schedule that will preserve the quality and stability of such a major investment.

Once an artwork has fallen into disrepair, its deterioration accelerates and the cost of restoration increases. There are hundreds of murals and sculptures in the U.S. that are beyond repair. If a public artwork appears to be in need of restoration, it is wise to hire a conservator to produce a condition report and assess the damage as well as estimate the cost of restoration. Once the cost is known, it may be helpful to engage the community to determine if

the work should be saved, and if so, how it will be paid for. If it is beyond saving, or the cost is simply too high, the work may be deaccessioned—removed and either destroyed or stored. The cost of removing a sculpture can also be expensive. One alternative is to find a new home for the work, requiring the new owner to restore the work. Regardless, it is helpful to document the project before it is destroyed, and make the images available to your local historical society.

Sample RFQ
Sample artist commissioning contract
Sample deaccession policy and process
Visual Artists Rights Act information

[Proposed Best Practices for Public art, Americans for the Arts](#)

[Design and review criteria for public art, from Project for Public Spaces](#)

<https://roswellartsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/General-Public-Art-Select>

● PUBLIC ART PROJECT BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

The following projects are shown note: the desired scale and materials of a public art project is an important consideration in determining an appropriate budget. Generally speaking, budgets can increase significantly as the intended scale of the public artwork grows. The numbers provided are intended to give a starting range based on existing project examples across the country.

MURALS



Facing History and Ourselves,
Nelson Gutiérrez and Cedar Lorca Nordbye,
Memphis, TN

\$15,000 - \$30,000 for smaller to medium sized mural projects
\$100,000+ for large-scale murals



SCULPTURE



Talking Wall,
Bernard Williams,
Indianapolis Cultural Trail, IN

\$15,000 - \$30,000 for smaller to medium sized mural projects
\$100,000+ for large-scale murals

FUNCTIONAL ART INCLUDING BIKE RACKS, SEATING ELEMENTS, WAYFINDING, NEIGHBORHOOD LANDMARKS



Raleigh bus shelter, Rachel Briggs,
Memphis, TN

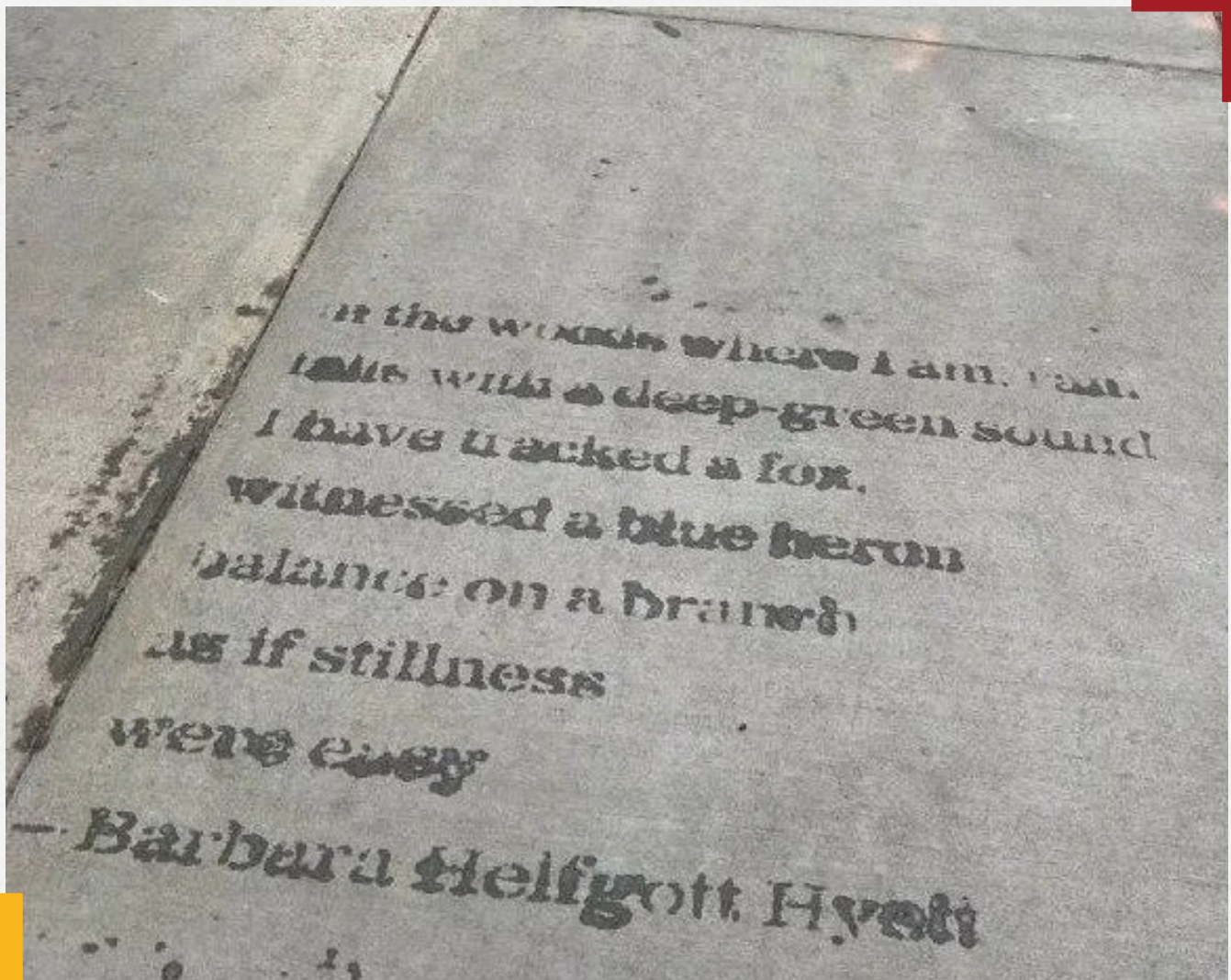
\$15,000 - \$65,000



Cherokee Heights project,
Ahmad George & Lawrence Matthews,
Memphis, TN

\$15,000 - \$65,000

EPHEMERAL/TEMPORARY PUBLIC ART PROJECTS



Sidewalk Poetry Project,
Cambridge, MA

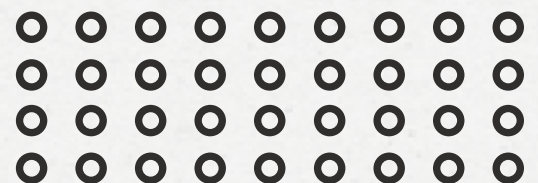
\$5,000 - \$20,000



PERFORMANCE ART



Archive as Impetus (Not on view), Xaviera Simmons, MOMA, NY



LIVING ART



Earth Goddess, Mosaïcultures Internationales de Montréal, Atlanta, GA

MURAL FESTIVAL



Such as [Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival](#) in Minneapolis, MN

Approx. \$100,000

Reet Starwind

It can be said of many,
if not every, all, and any
continent, country, state and city
that art
is a sign of the times
working with those confines
to define our timelines
would it not be romantic
to explore what art means
to the city of Camden
in the year 2024

A collection of collages declaring the
city invincible,
legacied graffiti new developments render invisible
legend of Walt Whitman and his famous works
a nonprofit hosting an art show at Camden FireWorks
local lyricists sewing together street sutures
while students at Creative Arts
actively craft our future murals that plead
“stop the violence”
and long roads of abandoned homes, deafening in their silence.

I guess you could say that the art of Camden
is at the heart of Camden
and it may even be the most important part of Camden
because so many great artists will get their start in Camden
whether at the cypher
or on Rutgers' campus
and as we're planning new leaps
and planting all our new seeds
we must remember that they deserve and are demanding
our support and understanding
to yield results that aren't simply systematic
a true modern day democratic
and I would sing my new song of democracy
sans the hypocrisy
with my mind on a more modern philosophy
one predicated on inclusion
and refusing the illusions
that refute us becoming something more than our differences
a unified force making differences
presently preserving our past for the future's existence
it's the preservation of these moments that motivates these poets
and if art truly is a sign of the times,
then we should use our art to target these violent crimes
that own our reputation
while illuminating our brightest minds
to one day run this nation.

If this rhyme can be the art that helps signify this time
may we never forget our positions during this period of transition
or our personal mission
to use our vision,
the ability to see things differently
and reveal the world truths that oft remain hidden.



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camdenfireworks.org