



CITY OF MUSCATINE
215 SYCAMORE STREET
MUSCATINE, IA 52761
PH. (563) 264-1550 • FAX (563) 264-0750

MUSCATINE ART CENTER PRESS RELEASE

1314 Mulberry Avenue, Muscatine, Iowa 52761
563.263.8282 | www.muscatineartcenter.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Melanie Alexander
Muscatine Art Center Director
Public Art Advisory Commission Staff Liaison
563-263-8282
malexander@muscatineiowa.gov

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TWO PUBLIC ART PROJECTS MOVING INTO THE NEXT PHASE

Two organizations selected to paint murals on Houser Street retaining wall

MUSCATINE, Iowa - Two public art projects are moving into the next phase with the selection of two organizations for the Houser Street mural project and the finalists for the Mulberry Roundabout art project.

The Public Art Advisory Commission announced Wednesday (June 9) that the Friends of the Fairport Fish Hatcher and Calvary Church will complete murals for the retaining wall on Houser near the intersection with Hershey Avenue. The two murals are expected to be completed by October. The Advisory Commission is also working with a third organization, LULAC, on a mural concept for a location in downtown Muscatine.

The Commission also announced the selection of Daniel Miller, Nathan Pierce, and Greg Mueller, as well as two alternate artists, for the Mulberry Roundabout art project.

“It is really exciting to move into the next phase for both of these projects,” explains Melanie Alexander, Staff Liaison to the Advisory Commission. “Members of the group have been considering these projects and talking with artists for the last half year, and we are eager to share the news with the community.”

KEVIN JENISON, Communications Manager | kjenison@muscatineiowa.gov | (563) 264-1550

In December 2020, the Public Art Advisory Commission for the City of Muscatine announced two new public art projects – murals for retaining walls on Houser Street and concept design proposals for the area near the roundabout at Mulberry Avenue and Second Street. Three organizations responded to the call to submit mural concepts while 14 artists submitted applications for the roundabout project.



The Friends of the Fish Hatchery’s mural will be completed by Janet Hoopes to share “the rich and significant history of the Fairport Biological Station and its important ties to the pearl button industry.”

Artist Johan Umana from Calvary Church hopes to bring positive messages to the community through his work. Umana recently completed a mural for the Muscatine Prevent Violence Coalition and shares his message of “Live to Love”.

After careful consideration of each application, the Advisory Commission determined that the three top artists have the relevant prior experience, ability to create a work that is unique to Muscatine, and the potential to develop a concept that would resonate with the local community. The three artists will spend this summer developing their ideas and will submit their proposals with drawings, a budget, timeline, and installation requirements by September 7, 2021.

The proposals will then be shared with the broader community with opportunities for the public to provide feedback that will help determine which of the three artists will be selected to implement the selected plan in 2022. For their concept development work, artists will receive a stipend of \$750 paid from a Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine Impact Grant.

Each artist will bring their own unique flair to the community.

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“Our intention is to synchronize thoughtful design with the symbolism of the Muscatine Story,” Mueller said.

Mueller received his MFA in Sculpture from Montana State University School of Art and has completed commissions in states from Ohio to South Dakota.



Daniel Miller - Public Art Installation - Webster City

Daniel Miller, Associate Professor in the School of Art and Art History at the University of Iowa, wants his projects to “engage and interact with communities, enhancing public centers and gathering spaces.”

In a recent commission for Webster City, Miller installed an outdoor sculpture that echoes the “meandering shape of the Boone River and transforms it into a stylized functional bench made from stainless steel that emits light.”



Greg Mueller Public Art Installation - Webster City

Nathan Peirce of Cape Girardeau, Mo., has a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Sculpture and has completed a wide range of commissions and public art installations.

“I love the surprise that we get from seeing out of the ordinary things in ordinary places,” Pierce said in his artist statement.

Pierce’s work reminds the viewer that art can be used to blur the lines between people and place.

Each of the selected artists and organizations have unique messages and abilities to increase Muscatine’s vibrancy through creative placemaking.



Nathan Pierce - Public Art - Decatur, Georgia

The Muscatine’s Public Art Advisory Commission was formed in July 2019, with five community members appointed by the Muscatine City Council. They are joined by one staff member from the Muscatine Art Center and one from the Parks and Recreation Department.