



NEWS RELEASE

215 Sycamore Street
Muscatine, IA 52761
Ph. (563) 264-1550

MUSCATINE ART CENTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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IDEAdash TO SEEK COMMUNITY INPUT ON PUBLIC ART

Public will have vote on artwork for roundabout; mural being painted

MUSCATINE, Iowa - Projects in development this year are bringing public art – and the arts in the general – into the community spotlight. Earlier this year, the University of Iowa's Hancher Auditorium and Ballet Des Moines brought a ballet performance to the riverfront, and the Muscatine Art Center celebrated the dedication of the new bronze sculpture by David Zahn, *Expressive Spirit*, with a performance by *Step Afrika!* in partnership with Hancher Auditorium.

The Muscatine Public Art Advisory Commission has been diligently working on two public art projects, and are ready to announce an opportunity for community involvement in planning the future of the arts in Muscatine.

Last December, the Muscatine Public Art Advisory Commission announced a Call for Organizations to propose mural concepts for the retaining wall along Houser Street between Hershey and Lucas that is part of the West Side Trail, Muscatine's newest trail segment.

The Friends of the Fairport Fish Hatchery (FFFH) presented a concept exploring the history of the fish hatchery and Muscatine's pearl button industry. Artist Janet Hoopes created the design, including buildings at the biological station. Hoopes has devoted many hours to scaling up the



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original drawing and painting it on the retaining wall. Sandy Stevens, President of the organization, as well as other FFFH volunteers have played supporting roles in bringing the mural to fruition. Hoopes hopes to complete the current phase of the project by November 1, 2021.

The Advisory Commission also released a Request for Qualifications in December

2020, seeking artists to prepare concepts for public art in the roundabout at Mulberry and 2nd Street. Seventeen artists responded to the RFQ with 14 submitting completed applications. The Advisory Commission worked with City departments to ensure that the artists met project criteria and would be capable of carrying out a project of this scale.

Three artists, Daniel Miller of Iowa City; Nathan Pierce of Cape Girardeau, Mo.; and Greg Mueller of Lutsen Mountain, Minn., were selected in early 2021 to develop full concepts.

"The concepts from the artists were submitted in September," Melanie Alexander, City staff liaison to the Public Art Advisory Commission and Director of the Muscatine Art Center, said. "It was such a thrill to open the documents provided by each artist. The Advisory Committee was pleased to see three very different concepts, using different types of materials. Now, it is time for the Muscatine community to help make the final decision."

An online survey to gather community input on the three concepts is in development. The survey is scheduled to be released in mid-November with a window of more than a month for voting. A press release announcing the details of three concepts, biographies about the three artists, and the next steps for the roundabout installation will be distributed in mid-November.

The first opportunity to vote on the concepts will take place during the IDEAdash event set for November 16.



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"The IDEAdash is a community brainstorming session focusing on the arts in Muscatine," Alexander said. "It's a process that fosters innovation and creative thinking led by staff from the Innovation Lab of Dubuque. The format is fast-paced and fun, and we hope many in the community will step forward to share their ideas."

The IDEAdash will be held online from noon to 3:30 p.m. and in-person at the Rendezvous from 4 to 7:30 p.m. No prior experience with public art or the arts in general is needed to participate. Information about the event can be found at www.innovationlab.us.



It is necessary to register in advance through the Innovation Lab's website. Space is limited to 40 participants per session. The Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Muscatine Art Center are sponsoring the sessions.

Questions regarding the mural, the process for the public art installation for the roundabout, and the IDEAdash may be directed to the Muscatine Art Center. Please call 563-263-8282 or email Melanie Alexander at malexander@muscatineiowa.gov.

The Muscatine Art Center is located at 1314 Mulberry Avenue in Muscatine, Iowa. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Thursday evenings until 7:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Admission is free. Donations are appreciated. Visit muscataineartcenter.org for more information about programs and events and to download a quarterly newsletter.

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