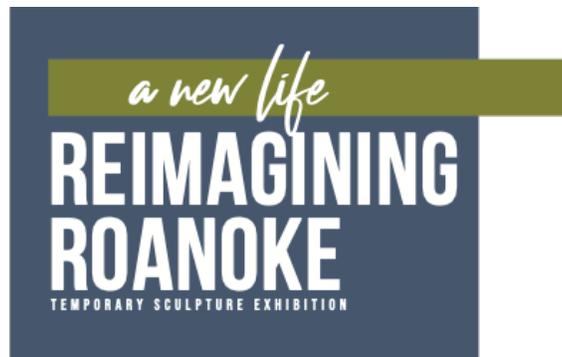




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Roanoke Arts Commission Calls for Sculpture “Reimagining Roanoke”



Roanoke, Virginia: The Roanoke Arts Commission has announced a call for outdoor sculpture for a two-year, temporary exhibition running May 17, 2021 through April 14, 2023. The theme of the call is “A New Life: Reimagining Roanoke.”

“In our sixth *Art in Roanoke* exhibition, we want to engage artists in a conversation about our community,” says Roanoke Arts Commission Chair Cari Gates. “Roanoke is a dynamic city that has been imagined and invented by those living and investing in it. We constantly discover and rediscover what it and our people have to offer.”

Established in 1884 in a valley of Virginia’s Blue Ridge, the city of Roanoke grew from the committed investment of local leaders—residents eager to create a thriving place at the crossing of two rail lines. Now, 137 years later, Roanoke continues stepping into the future with renewed commitment to its place and people, reassessing and deploying the resources at hand. Old warehouses and garages from the 1900s house local craft breweries and apartments offering residents and visitors easy access to outdoor recreation, a thriving arts and

cultural community, and growing research opportunities along the Innovation Corridor.

Simultaneously, the community is embarking on a new 20-year comprehensive plan that emphasizes equity throughout every aspect of investment and service delivery. As the nation considers how it works better for ALL of its citizens, the City of Roanoke is acting locally, making strides and committed to a welcoming, diverse, and equitable future.

Because the future depends upon the welcomed contributions of all, women and artists of color are especially encouraged to submit proposals.

“We really want to encourage submissions from artists with connections to the region who understand the beauty, the strengths, and the challenges we face here,” says Janet Carty, chair of the Collections Committee. “This is an opportunity to reimagine what Roanoke can be, express that vision through public art, and engage the community in dialogue.”

Other committee members involved in the development of the project include community volunteer John Hitchins, architect Lora Katz, musician William Penn, and designer Tranay Wilson.

“We developed the call through a series of conversations with local artists and partners this fall,” says Penn. “The Arts Commission and the community as a whole felt the power of art in this summer’s implementation of the END RACISM NOW mural. So we’re interested in how we can use this call to similarly reflect on ourselves and our future.”

Much of the work will be centered on the Elmwood Park Artwalk, where up to eight concrete pads will be available for new artwork beginning in May. Since being purchased by the city in 1910, Roanoke’s Elmwood Park has been a gathering place where residents and visitors attend events, enjoy the outdoors, and spend quiet time. Elmwood Park is located on both the Innovation Corridor and the Roanoke River Valley Greenway system. Today Elmwood is known as Roanoke’s premiere festival park with more than fifty annual events, including the annual Henry Street Festival.

“While we’ve got an anchor site at Elmwood,” says Lora Katz, “we’re also interested in getting art around the City, so in the next few months we’re going to be exploring that potential. Expect to see this exhibition expand beyond the park.”

Submissions can include existing work or proposed work, but the work must feature at least 50% repurposed materials. “We hope that direction like this will remind us to look around and do as much as we can with what’s at hand,” says committee member John Hitchins. Materials used might reflect:

- the natural world,
- the city’s industrial and cultural history,
- the knowledge-based activity of the Innovation Corridor, and
- strides in equity as the city reconsiders and invests in itself and this place.

The use of materials should reflect the strength, resilience, imagination, aspirations, and inclusive nature of the city and its creative cultural community.

“We’re really excited to see how concepts are developed,” says committee member Tranay Wilson. “I’d love to see a youth team work to submit a proposal.” While a lead artist must be at least 18 to contract with the City, submissions from teams involving youth are encouraged. “It’s really for future generations that we’re building this place. We want to hear from young people.”

There is no entry fee. Artists chosen to participate will receive **a stipend of up to \$4,000 per selected artwork.**

The City is accepting submissions now through **January 18, 2021 at 11:59 PM Eastern.** Get more information, including the full call, at www.RoanokeArts.org or www.artinroanoke.org.

The Roanoke Arts Commission is a 15-member volunteer commission appointed by City Council. Apply to serve on the arts commission or any other appointed City board at www.roanokeva.gov.

