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Local Artists to Launch the “Year of the Artist” *Roanoke Artists Network* kicks off at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 25, 2022

Roanoke, Va.—(January 11, 2022)—[The Roanoke Arts Commission](#) invites artists who live, work, or are civically involved in the Roanoke community to attend a virtual kick-off of the Roanoke Artists Network on January 25 at 6:30 p.m. with the Roanoke Artists Network meeting at the same time each week through the end of February. Those interested in participating can learn more and register to receive login information at www.roanokearts.org/YOTA.

The events will take place online for pandemic safety. Tuesday’s event will feature the release of the first of at least five calls for artists as the community prepares for Roanoke’s Year of the Artist.

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the City of Roanoke will invest a quarter of a million dollars in community-driven and artist-led projects advancing the community in a variety of key areas.

“A year ago, with adoption of the City 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the annual Strategic Plan, we reinforced our commitment to enhancing the vitality of our neighborhoods,” says City Manager Bob Cowell, “Expanding public art efforts is one way, we’re exploring alignment with the established goals in these plans. We’re inviting artists to explore with us, create with us, and help us effect change.”

Over the coming six months, artists will be invited to present strategies, respond to calls for art, and collectively explore the role of creativity in tackling community issues and making the most of Roanoke’s rich assets. Key to the strategy will be artist trainings and the creation of an active learning network.

Then, beginning in July, the community will begin to see artists at work in a variety of ways, engaging neighbors, exploring issues, and advancing community goals.

“We want to co-create these projects with our community of artists,” says Roanoke Arts Commission Chair Cari C. Gates. “We know the arts can help us form a healthier, more prosperous, and more welcoming community. The arts can foster strong and effective citizen engagement and connect us in surprising ways. With these projects, we’re setting out to learn how this can be uniquely done here in Roanoke.”

The projects are be funded by an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant and a Grants for Art Projects Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional funding from the City of Roanoke.

To learn more and register for the Roanoke Artists Network, visit www.roanokearts.org/YOTA.

Contact City of Roanoke Arts and Culture Coordinator Douglas Jackson at douglas.jackson@roanokeva.gov or 540-853-5652 with questions or media inquiries.