



Art + Environmental Justice | Call to Artists

Release Date: Tuesday, November 17, 2020

Budget: Two project grants of \$15,000 (including artist fee)

Deadline: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 (11:59pm)

Eligibility: Any artist living and working within the Memphis metropolitan area. Artists are invited to submit collaborative work if desirable. Community organizers, educators, and activists are also encouraged to apply.

BACKGROUND

Urban Art Commission (UAC) works to create opportunities for artists and neighborhoods to connect and shape spaces through public art. Since 2002, UAC has managed the City of Memphis's Percent-For-Art Program, which allocates funds annually to develop public art in connection to capital improvement projects.

Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For over 30 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative process, to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives.

The Art and Environment Initiative is a public art program launched by Mural Arts Institute in 2018. UAC, in partnership with Clean Memphis and the Memphis Medical District Collaborative, was selected to participate in this program along with organizations in Akron, OH and Detroit, MI. In its first year, the program sponsored the creation of two mural projects about neighborhood environmental concerns in Uptown and Frayser.

SCOPE OF WORK

Environmental justice (EJ) is an approach to activism that emphasizes the way ecological concerns intersect with struggles for social justice - including movements focused on racial justice, economic inequality, and women's and LGBTQ+ rights. EJ activists look at how harm to the environment uniquely affects marginalized communities, and advocate solutions that address the needs of both the planet and its people. The practice of placing dumps and factories in communities of color, forced migration in response to climate change, and the health

disparities created by unequal access to healthy food and clean water are just a few of the issues addressed by this movement.

In Memphis, past EJ campaigns have advocated for the cleanup of toxic waste sites, the closure of chemical plants, and the relocation of proposed landfills. To learn more about historical and ongoing environmental justice work in Memphis, please visit:

- [Memphis Environmental Justice Timeline](#) - University of Memphis
- [The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Shelby County \(Video\)](#) - University of Memphis
- [Toxic Battles: The Fight for Environmental Justice in Memphis](#) - Memphis Flyer
- [Environmental Justice and COVID-19](#) - NCRC
- [The Pandemics: Decades of environmental racism](#) - High Ground News

We believe that art can play a key role in advancing the cause of environmental justice in Memphis. This fall, UAC hosted a virtual conversation series with leading EJ-focused artists from around the country. The projects they shared are good examples of the many creative, impactful ways artists can approach this topic:

- [Cannupa Hanska Luger](#) built mirrored shields for the Water Protectors at Standing Rock. These practical items helped keep protestors safe, while forcing law enforcement officials to confront their own reflections.
- [Shana M. griffin](#) studied segregation and displacement in New Orleans, and shared her research through a public walking tour and zine.
- [Shanai Matteson](#) opened a tap-water only bar, which served as a space for hosting workshops related to water and climate change. For Matteson, the conversations and collaborations that emerged are as much a part of the artwork as the Water Bar itself.
- [Shari Hersh and Ron Whyte](#) helped create the Trash Academy program, which uses billboards, murals, installations made of recycled materials, neighborhood pop-up events, and costumes to change the conversation about trash in Philadelphia.
- In Memphis, [Khara Woods and Jamond Bullock](#) worked with Art and Environment to create two community mural projects. Bullock's *Stand Up For Our Streets* depicts Frayser residents standing against dumping and a proposed landfill, while Khara Woods' *Basin Portraits* visualizes research into water quality and litter in Uptown. To support the projects, the artists organized community meetings, cleanups, and block parties.

PROJECT EXPECTATIONS

UAC is excited to announce a new open call for two more public art projects addressing environmental justice in Memphis, with generous support from Mural Arts Institute. Proposed projects should follow these general guidelines:

- **All media are acceptable.** Possibilities include murals, sculptures, community art projects, publications, videos, research projects, crafts, installations, and more.

- **Your artwork does not have to be physical.** Performance, dance, social practice projects (artistic approaches to community organizing or direct action), educational events and workshops, and other live events are all encouraged. (Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person events will be required to follow UAC safety guidelines. These guidelines will be updated as the situation evolves.)
- **Community engagement and collaboration is important.** If you're addressing a specific community or neighborhood, how are members of that community included in the process of designing, developing, and creating the artwork? If you're addressing a specific issue, how do you plan to collaborate with people affected by this issue? We encourage you to involve others in your process, especially residents, activists, organizations and nonprofits, and other artists who are already engaged in ongoing work related to your project.
- **The project must be publicly accessible.** For example, artwork located outside or in a public place, projects which invite participation, or materials distributed in print or online.
- **Projects should have a clear mission.** If the project is informational in nature, will it raise awareness, offer critique or protest, create conversations, or celebrate a success? If the project will have an immediate effect on an issue or a location, how will this be accomplished - direct action, events, renovation of a space, reuse of materials, etc?

A selection committee organized by UAC will review portfolios and project proposals. The committee will select artwork based on artistic merit, the relevance and potential impact of the proposed project, alignment with the strategic goals and values of UAC including equity and representation, and professional or community recognition. The selected artists will be expected to work closely with UAC to execute the proposed project.

Selected artists will have the opportunity to schedule one-on-one virtual feedback meetings with visiting artists Cannupa Hanska Luger, Shana M. griffin, Shanai Matteson, Shari Hersh, and Ron Whyte, and local artists Khara Woods and Jamond Bullock. Following these meetings, artists will submit an updated design and project plan to the selection committee for final approval.

UAC is committed to equity and inclusion in our work. People of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, differently-abled and neurodiverse persons, indigenous peoples, youth, seniors, and women are strongly encouraged to apply.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

Britney Thornton	JUICE Orange Mound, Founder
Janet Boscarino	Clean Memphis, Executive Director
Khara Woods	Artist
Rita Harris	Sierra Club, National Board Member

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

UAC posts all open opportunities and accepts applications online through Submittable. Follow the steps below to apply to an open UAC opportunity through Submittable:

1. To apply to this call, go to www.uacmem.org/calls-to-artists. Click on the opportunity that you are interested in to view more details.
2. Clicking on the Submit button will redirect you to our Submittable page, which contains all of our current open opportunities. Click the Submit button next to the opportunity that you wish to apply for, or if you are already within an opportunity, scroll down to the Create your account / Have an account? Sign in form.
3. If you already have a Submittable account, click the Have an account? Sign in tab to sign in to your account. If you don't remember your password, use the Forgot? link.
4. If you don't have a Submittable account, you must create one to apply. Create your free account by filling out the Create your account form. Fill in all information and click the Create Account and Continue button to continue with the submission process.
5. From there, you will be able to complete and submit your application.

If you have difficulty accessing the website, wish to submit in hard copy, or require any other assistance with your submission, please contact Brett Hanover at brett@uacmem.org

Please submit the following materials online by following the “Art + Environmental Justice” link at www.uacmem.org/calls-to-artists:

- **Cover Letter** (1 page or less) Introduce your work as an artist and/or activist.
 - **Project Proposal:** (1 page) Please describe your idea in detail, addressing the ways your project aligns with the goals described in the Scope of Work and Project Expectations. This proposal will not be considered a final draft, but provide as much detail as you can. Some questions to consider:
 - How does this project connect to your previous work?
 - What are your goals for the project, and who is the audience?
 - Who are some possible collaborators?
 - What materials and resources will you need?
 - What is your estimated timeline, and what are some major milestones?
 - **Portfolio:** Up to 20 images of recent 2D and/or 3D art and design work. (If you wish to include videos, or images of community events, live performances, or other multimedia projects, please attach a separate document with descriptions.)
 - **Résumé or CV** (2 pages or less)
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INFORMATION SESSIONS

UAC will host a virtual information session about this opportunity on **December 8 at 6:00pm**

To join the Zoom event: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83779210822?pwd=ZVRwUVpNOXZGYSt2bJjWcWthVU1nQT09>

Artists may schedule a meeting with UAC staff to review their proposal and portfolio. This is highly encouraged for first-time applicants. Appointments are available **December 15 and 17**. Contact A.M. O'Malley-Miller at am@uacmem.org to schedule a meeting.

DISCLAIMERS

Applicants will be notified as to the status of their application. Commissioning of artists by UAC and the pursuit of all UAC activities are implemented without preference to racial or ethnic origins, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, disability, or age.

UAC reserves the right to modify this solicitation and to request additional information from participating artists.

UAC reserves the right to accept or reject, at any time prior to the commissioning of a work, any or all proposals when the acceptance, rejection, waiver or advertisement would be in the best interest of the project.

The staff of UAC will be responsible for all correspondence and communication by and between applicants and members of selection panels. Discussion regarding these projects by and between any applicant and any member of a selection panel outside of regularly scheduled meetings during the selection process may be grounds for the disqualification of the applicant. Such determination shall be at the discretion of UAC.

For more information about this project, please contact:

Brett Hanover | Project Manager | brett@uacmem.org

View all UAC's open calls-to-artists at: <https://uacmem.org/opportunities>