



Royal Oak Roots

Artists: Laurie Eisenhardt and Marcia Hovland

Artist Laureate Program



Royal Oak COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS

2021 Annual Report

A Special Thank You To

Funding Partners

Royal Oak City Commission
Royal Oak Downtown Development Authority

2021 Artists

David Petrakovitz
Francis Vallejo
Lisa Goedert
Steve Miller
Emilie Fantuz

Commission for the Arts Members

Jason Gittinger, Chair
Alesha Beistline
Pat Paruch
Denise Reske
Jodie Ellison
Laura Bonnell
Melissa Tobias

The volunteers who help make items for Share the Warmth including Rebecca Brockwell, Stacey Gray, Helping Hands group, Nancy Vickers, Ewe-nique Knits and many other anonymous donors.

Mission

The primary goal of the commission is to encourage and promote arts and culture in the community. The City of Royal Oak recognizes the importance of arts and culture to a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable community. The city strives to promote and encourage arts and culture through the public and private display of art.

Pandemic Response

The Commission for the Arts took a pandemic pause through much of 2020 and early 2021. As a result, many regular programs did not occur.

In both 2020 and 2021, the summer concert series and the public piano project did not occur as a result of gathering limits and uncertainty in how the pandemic would continue to unfold.

Art pieces that were installed as a part of the 2019-2020 Art Explored program remained in place and were relicensed in 2021. Relicensing the pieces ensured that the community would continue to have art displayed, and supported artists through this challenging time.

The Commission for the Arts heard from many residents about these programs and looks forward to continuing to support them in 2022. In the 2021 year, efforts focused on preserving the existing pieces and preparing for a new cycle in 2022.

2021 Goals

The Commission for the Arts did not meet through 2020 and early 2021. This year the main efforts focused on restarting the existing programs and working within changing COVID restrictions. The commissioners decided to revisit their 2020 goals and see what they could accomplish in the remainder of 2021.

- 1. To become a more sustainable committee.** With this goal in mind, the Commission for the Arts discussed programs and began developing success metrics for different programs. Staff is working on documenting the policies and procedures for each program.
- 2. Run a community survey.** The survey ran and concluded at the end of November 2021. Staff is analyzing the results, some of which are shared in the next few pages.
- 3. Build on existing programs.** This was done through the continuation of Art Explored, Sharing the Warmth, the development of #ROMakesArt and supporting the Parks Art Contest. These effort will continue into 2022 as new cycles of Art Explored and the Artist Laureate programs start.

Art Explored

The Art Explored program allows the Commission for the Arts to select pieces of art to display throughout the downtown area for one year. Each year the pieces are licensed to the city for public display.

In 2021, previously licensed pieces were re-licensed which allowed the commission to support the arts while ensuring that the pieces would remain on display.

Artist: David Petrakovitz

Quixotic Visions

Fourth Street and Center Street

Artist: Lisa Goedert

House on a Hill

310 S. Troy Street

Artist: Steve Miller

Ben Jamin

300 S. Center Street

Artist: Francis Vallejo

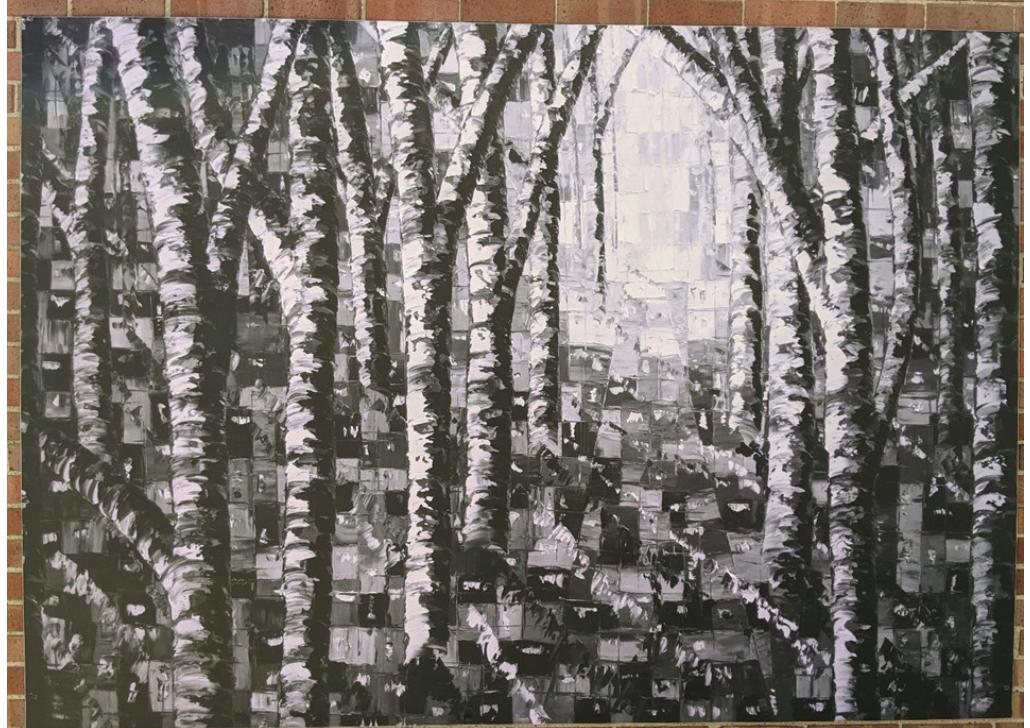
Assembly Line

201 W. 4th Street

Artist Emilie Fantuz

Forest Light

200 S. Washington Street



Forest Light

Artist: Emilie Fantuz



House on a Hill

Artist: Lisa Goedert

Permanent Collection

Royal Oak does have a permanent collection of art within the city. Notably, Star Dream Fountain is one of the most prized pieces in the community. The 11 Mile Art Project added pieces along 11 Mile Road to our permanent collection. A few pieces have been such as those on 4th Street remain from their original Art Explored terms.

While this program allows a portion of the art to remain consistent over time, it does require some additional care in maintenance. Currently there is only a maintenance budget for the cleaning of Star Dream Fountain. In the future pieces may need to be evaluated to ensure they are in good shape or maintenance can be performed to increase their life span.



Considering Evolution
Artist: Michael Jones



Summer Concerts

This program brings concerts to the downtown area during the summer. Typically held on a weeknight, it brings people downtown, and support local musical acts. In 2020 and 2021, the summer concert series did not occur. This is largely due to the COVID restrictions on gatherings, as well as the risk of changing restrictions in 2021. The Commission for the Arts intends to bring this series back in 2022 and is looking forward to having concerts downtown again.

Public Piano Project

The Public Piano Project brings together the painting arts, community art, and music to put pianos around downtown. The pianos are typically donated, painted by different Royal Oak community groups and tuned for anyone to play. At the end of the summer most pianos are removed as they are no longer in good condition. A few have remained over the years, most noticed is the one by the farmers market (shown here).





X's and O's

Artist: Mark Beltchenko

Share the Warmth

Share the Warmth combines textile arts with offering a helping hand to our unhoused, and low-income neighbors. Volunteers knit hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and other cold weather necessities throughout the year and the Commission for the Arts puts them on display at the library. Items are available for anyone who needs them on the outside of the building.

The items displayed are displayed along the 11 Mile Road entrance. As the park is finalized additional items may be displayed. In the past, about 120 items are taken throughout the winter.

#ROMakesArt

New in 2021 was the #ROMakesArt initiative which was an effort to get residents engaged throughout the summer. Each week different challenges were available, including Zoom into Summer, and Culinary Creations. Each challenge awarded prizes to a few winners with downtown dollars.

Image by #ROMakesArt winner.



Survey Results

The Commission for the Arts completed a community survey in November 2021 with over 700 responses. It was advertised on the home page of the city's website, weekly email newsletter; on the city hall and CFA Facebook pages, and through the Commission for the Arts member's networks. 97% of respondents live in Royal Oak zip codes with most other responses coming in from Oakland County.

52% of survey respondents said that it was extremely important to them to see and experience art within the community. When asked what it meant to them one respondent shared:

“Public Art transcends the mundane, stimulates higher thoughts and ideas. It creates a vitality and vibrancy enriching spaces . It has the potential to give the viewer an experience that is almost like a gift. When a city supports the Arts and budgets for it, it shows that they are progressive and evolved, recognizing a sign of a city’s health and well-being is it’s support of Arts and Culture.”

The top types of art people wanted to see are: 3 dimensional art, 2 dimensional art, musical performances, and functional art. This aligns relatively well with programs hosted by the Commission for the Arts. Respondents are interested in seeing more art from artists based in southeast Michigan, and Michigan in general.

The summer concert series was the most known program according to respondents. 50% of respondents were not familiar with any of the Commission for the Arts programs by name.

As anticipated, art brings out a different opinions about what is beautiful and worthy of using public funds to purchase or license within the community.

Below are comments provided in the survey about what art in the community means to them. Survey says...

"It makes me happy to see it, feels like I live in a vibrant and creative town and gives it a young forward thinking positive vibe. It's important to see and experience beauty around us in day to day life to remain grounded and take time to stop and be enriched by it. Art in the community does that."

"Everything, without art and individual expression we would live in a lifeless void. More art! More murals! More personality and celebration of artistic expression!"

"Art is an important part of my life and I would like to see more events and exhibits in our city."

"When I see public art installations, I feel like the city is a well-rounded, diverse, open-minded community. ALL art, including well done graffiti."

"Public art gives everyone a chance to experience art in an environment that isn't stuffy or pretentious. It can beautify a city and it can cause reflection or conversation. It brings art exposure to everyone regardless of status."

"Many don't have access - displays in the libraries, schools, malls etc make it accessible to everyone. Art activities my family has participated in at the library are invaluable and fun ie loved the paint along with Bob Ross and gave me my daughter a deeper appreciation for art. Not everyone can go to the dia , pay for classes/concerts/ events etc especially low income families and now art exposure/exploration is so limited in the schools"

2022 Goals

The Commission for the Arts wants to work on five primary goals in 2022.

1. Become a more sustainable committee.

The committee felt like there was work to be done in order to create some procedures for different programs. This would ensure long term viability of programs as members change over in the future.

2. Build collaborative, community based art program.

The pandemic has been challenging for all of us, and has isolated many. This goal is create arts-based programs that bring people together, either in person or virtually, to help build community.

3. Identify our local artists.

A renewed effort to reach out to our local artists to better support them in the future, to showcase their art in our programs, and to develop a new partnership opportunities.

4. Develop an art requirement for future public buildings.

The commission would like to explore policies that requires public art in future public buildings and spaces.

5. Improve communication and outreach to Royal Oak residents.

The community survey found that many respondents did not know much about Commission for the Arts programs. The commission would like to explore opportunities to improve communication and outreach to a variety of audiences.



Whimsy of Whales
Artist: Jennie Burt

“Public art gives joy and meaning to life. It gives hope. It stirs the imagination. Creativity is one of the things that is ingrained in humanity. It is needed.”

- Community Survey Response

Questions or Additional Information?

Staff Contact

Susan Barkman

Assistant to the City Manager

ROCFA@romi.gov