



Waterfront Park: Performing Arts Residencies

Request for Qualifications

Submission Deadline: May 15, 2023 by 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time

The City of Alexandria's [Office of the Arts](#) is seeking two performing artists or artist groups/organizations to develop and perform new work for Waterfront Park. These site-specific residencies are opportunities to collaborate with the Office of the Arts on the creation of an original site-specific performance in response to the new temporary public artwork *Two Boxes of Oranges and Admonia Jackson* by Nina Cooke John that has been installed at Waterfront Park and will be on view until November of 2023. One opportunity is for dance or movement-based work and the other is for music or sound-based work.

The selected artists or artist groups/organizations will be commissioned to create a new site-specific work through a residency process, beginning with a period of site research and exploration, followed by proposing a direction for the work, time developing and rehearsing the performance, and a minimum of four scheduled public performances. *Two Boxes of Oranges and Admonia Jackson* is the fifth artwork commissioned in *Site See: New Views in Old Town*, an annual exhibition series that brings residents and visitors to Waterfront Park to interact with contemporary art where the city's historic main street meets the riverfront. *Site See* began in 2019 with the park's opening and has become a successful and integral element of the park's program, attracting visitors, fostering interaction, providing a visual anchor for the space, and enriching the experience of Alexandria's waterfront.

Background and Context

About Alexandria's Public Art Program

Alexandria's Public Art Program has built a reputation for working with artists in innovative ways to realize new projects. The Program's vision is for public art to enrich the experience of Alexandria's past, celebrate the spirit of Alexandria's present and shape the identity of Alexandria's future.

For more information about the Public Art Program visit <https://www.alexandriava.gov/PublicArt>

About Waterfront Park

[Waterfront Park](#) opened in 2019 and is an interim public park at the foot of King Street, historic Old Town's main commercial street. The portions of King Street that join the park have been designated as a pedestrian-only plaza, with shopping and dining in the street. The new park serves as the keystone to the revitalization of the Potomac River waterfront in Alexandria. It features an open plaza, a waterfront promenade, shade structures and modular space that can adapt to different uses throughout the year.

The park is adjacent to the Torpedo Factory Art Center – a former munitions plant that is now a lively arts center with over 80 working artists' studios, galleries, and other arts organizations. This area is also a regional water taxi service hub, connecting Alexandria with the National Mall, Georgetown, the Wharf in Southwest D.C., National Harbor in Maryland and George Washington's Mt. Vernon in Virginia.

The interim Waterfront Park combines the original King Street Park and Waterfront Park sites to create a seamless transition between Old Town's historic retail corridor and the water.

About the *Site/See* Exhibition Series and *Two Boxes of Oranges & Admonia Jackson*

Since 2019, the *Site See* installations have played an important role in the success of Waterfront Park, providing engaging and interactive visual anchors that received accolades from the public and the [press](#).

While developing her piece *Two Boxes of Oranges and Admonia Jackson*, Cooke John was inspired by the remains of 18th century ships found at the Hotel Indigo site and the Robinson Terminal South site in 2015 and 2018. She was intrigued with the form and texture of the wrecks themselves, as well as the ways archeological excavations and sites reveal layers of history.

The installation she has created for Waterfront Park forms an abstracted ship's hull with steel vertical elements that rise and bend, referencing the curve of the hull's frame. The vertical elements spread across the site to form the rough outline of a ship. Visitors can stand within the space and imagine a working waterfront and a time in Alexandria's history when the ships carried not only cargo like tobacco, molasses, rum and limes, but also enslaved people who were traded as part of the transatlantic and domestic slave trades.

A full description of the work and renderings can be found at <https://siteseealx.com/installations>.

Goals and Process

Each year, The Office of the Arts develops a line-up of public programming to accompany *Site See*, which will include pop-up programming facilitated through its [Mobile Art Lab](#), performances created through the Performing Arts Residencies, and more. The intent of this programming is to support the *Site See* installations and further activate Waterfront Park, foster engagement and interaction with the temporary artwork, and attract visitors to experience the temporary artwork.

Performing Arts Residencies' Goals

Work created through each Performing Arts Residency should:

- Feature or explore themes, topics, materials, and/or concepts related to *Two Boxes of Oranges & Admonia Jackson*;
- Engage with the physical presence and impact of *Two Boxes of Oranges & Admonia Jackson*;
- Capture the public's imagination;
- Highlight and activate the park; and
- Attract new and repeat visitors to the park.

Process

Once the selected artists or artist groups/organizations are under contract they will begin a two to three week long immersive period of site research and exploration, which will include access to Office of the Arts staff and consultants, Nina Cooke John, and other City staff or partners for conversations. The artist or artist group/organization will then propose to Office of the Arts staff a direction and a schedule/timeline for the original site-specific piece they will create and perform. Once this direction and schedule/timeline is approved by staff, the artist or artist group/organization will develop the piece and conduct rehearsals, according to the agreed-upon schedule/timeline. The artist or group/organizations will work with Office of

the Arts staff to schedule at least four public performances to take place during the period from August to November 2023.

The selected artists or artist group/organizations will have access to the site in Waterfront Park for rehearsals and other preparatory activities, but the site will also be open to the public and rehearsals/activities will be in public view. The Office of the Arts may also be able to arrange for access to free, indoor rehearsal space.

Artist or Artist Group/Organization Responsibilities

The artist or artist group/organization selected for each residency will:

- Collaborate with the Office of the Arts to create an original, site-specific dance and/or movement-based performance or music/sound-based piece, approximately 7 to 10 minutes in length, that is in response to or in conversation with ideas and topics explored in Nina Cooke John's temporary public artwork *Two Boxes of Oranges & Admonia Jackson* and engages with its physical presence and impact.
- Provide a brief written narrative description of the commissioned performance.
- Work with the Office of the Arts to schedule a minimum of four performances at Waterfront Park during the period August to November 2023. Performances should be minimum of approximately 30 minutes in length and must include the commissioned site-specific piece, and can also include performance of work previously created by the artist or artist group/organization and/or work created by others, as appropriate and approved by staff.
- Work with the Office of the Arts to document and archive the performances and the process.
- Provide any additional equipment needed.
- Help promote the performances.

Office of the Arts Responsibilities

The Office of the Arts and its City partners will provide access to the site and a green room/staging area nearby for performances and rehearsals, parking for performances and rehearsals, permits, marketing and communications, and project management support.

The Office of the Arts will also:

- Approve the direction for the original site-specific work before the artist or artist group/organization embarks on further development of the idea.
- Facilitate conversations between Nina Cooke John and the selected artists or groups/organizations.
- Work with the selected artist or group/organization to develop and schedule the public performances, including approving any additional content selected for performance.
- Provide videography and photography of the performances for documentation and media purposes. The selected artists must have rights to use any recorded material included in the piece.
- Promote the performances.
- Provide an 8-channel mixer with two 15" powered speakers (with stands) and 2 microphones (with stands) that may be used by the selected artist.
- If possible, provide rehearsal space, if requested by artist.

Selection Process

A jury organized by the Office of the Arts will review submissions and select one artist or artist group/organization for the dance/movement performing arts residency and one artist or artist group/organization for the music/sound performing arts residency. The jury or staff may choose to interview candidates before making a final selection.

Budget

The artist or group/organization selected for each residency will receive an all-inclusive fee of \$8000 to develop the original, site-specific work and provide a minimum of four scheduled performances on site at King Street Waterfront Park within the period of August to November 2023.

Eligibility

This residency is open to all contemporary artists and artist groups/organizations, age 18 and older, based in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, and the District of Columbia who work in the fields of dance and movement-based work, including but not limited to choreographers, directors, dancers, dance companies, professors and students of dance or music, composers, musicians, DJs, and interdisciplinary artists.

Anticipated Schedule

Deadline for Submission: Monday May 15, 2023 by 11:59 PM

Artists Selected: Wednesday May 31, 2023

Artists Contracts: Finalized by mid June

Artist Immersion Period (Site Research & Exploration): June - July

Artists Submit Proposals for Review: Early August

Schedule of Performances: August - November 2023

To Submit

Please submit the following in a single PDF file to arts@alexandriava.gov by May 15, 2023 11:59 PM EST:

- 1) Cover Sheet with name, address, phone number, website and e-mail address of the artist or artist group/organization applying. Indicate if you would like to be considered for the Dance/Movement Residency or the Music/Sound Residency. If a group/organization, designate and name a lead artist who will be the main point of contact.
- 2) Letter of Interest of no more than 2 pages indicating your experience developing original work and your preliminary approach to the residency. If a group/organization, also briefly describe your history of working together.
- 3) Resume/CV of no more than 3 pages. If a group/organization, include the resume/CV for the designated lead artist and up to three additional resumes of no more than three pages each.
- 4) Web links for up to five video or sound clips of performances or compositions by the artist or group/organization. Videos or sound clips must be online and cannot be files that must be downloaded

to access. For each clip provide a 1-2 sentence description, including the name of the performers and/or creators and the year.

- 5) Names and contact information for three professional references.
- 6) Any information already known about your availability from June to November 2023, including weeks/months you would prefer to work and perform.

Questions

For questions about this opportunity, please contact arts@alexandriava.gov .