

TIME & PLACE: EXHIBITIONS OF PUBLIC ART AND HISTORY

2026 PUBLIC ART PROJECT PLAN

Approved:

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Table of Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. Time & Place 2026 Curatorial Focus
- III. Time & Place 2026 Goals
- IV. Location
- V. 2026 Project Process
- VI. Timeline
- VII. Budget
- VIII. Community Engagement, Marketing, and Communications

I. Introduction

The Public Art Implementation Plan outlined a vision and goals for the public art program and established three Creative Directions: Time and Place, Neighborhood Identity, and Urban and Natural Systems. The Plan suggests that a key component of the Time and Place creative direction should be periodic, curated exhibitions of temporary public art projects in a variety of media that examine aspects of the city's history, and that the focus of each exhibition would be determined by a curator through conversation with the Office of the Arts, the Office of the Historic Alexandria (OHA), and relevant boards and commissions. Artists would be given the opportunity to draw on and draw inspiration from the historic, archival, and archaeological resources that the City has available.

Exhibitions of public art and history are a unique aspect of Alexandria's Public Art Program, distinguishing it from its peers in the region, and establishing national leadership in the field while also allowing artists to play a central role in Alexandria's ongoing dialogue with history.

In 2017, the Office of the Arts commissioned the *Time & Place* pilot projects. Three artists – Sheldon Scott and the team of Lauren Adams and Stewart Watson – were selected to explore and create work at Gadsby's Tavern Museum. Both projects won the Americans for the Arts' Public Art Network Year in Review Award for the best projects completed in 2017.

In 2024, Dee Dwyer was selected to create work in recognition of the City's 275th anniversary related to the theme for the anniversary, "One Alexandria, Many Stories."

This Project Plan outlines the development of a 2026 *Time & Place* project.

II. Curatorial Focus

Time & Place 2026 will be part of Alexandria's efforts to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The United States, Virginia, and Alexandria are celebrating this through programs that reflect on the founding of the country, the democratic experiment, and the future of the nation.

III. Time and Place 2026 Goals

Time & Place 2026 will invite an artist to create a visually compelling temporary public art that reflects on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and what the ideas of this document mean for today and the future. The artist will look at how the nation has been created over time and how people are continuing to work toward a nation that lives up to the ideals stated in our founding document.

The goals of *Time & Place 2026* are to:

- Be legible and accessible to a broad audience.
- Contribute to Alexandria's commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence with a public artwork that ignites our imaginations, elevates diverse stories, and demonstrates the lasting durability of the American project.
- Reflect on our nation's past and look ahead to the future we want to create for our community, the next generation, and beyond.

- Explore Alexandria’s stories and ideas that shape our past and inspire our ongoing work to form a more perfect union and live out American ideals.
- Result in a visually compelling and impactful work of art that attracts, engages, and generates conversation about the contributions of all Americans to the democratic experiment.
- Continue to distinguish the Alexandria Public Art Program from its peers in the region and establish national leadership in the field.

IV. Location

The work will be sited at an outdoor, public location that is highly visible and accessible and where it will be seen by a broad audience of residents and visitors and can be safely installed for approximately six months.

Office of the Arts staff are currently securing use of a location that meets these criteria.

V. 2026 Project Process

The Office of the Arts has engaged the consulting firm Via Partnership to facilitate artist selection and manage the overall project. To meet the timeline of the project and install work in conjunction with the national and Virginia 250 anniversary events, Via will work with City staff and the *Time & Place* Task Force to facilitate a limited invitational selection process.

Time & Place Task Force

The *Time & Place* Task Force helps shape the Project Plan for the exhibition and recommends selection of an artist and approval of concept.

The two Commission for the Arts representatives on the *Time & Place* Task Force, appointed by the Commission are:

- Robin Jordan
- Jason Longfellow

The additional members recommended for the Task Force include:

- Katherine Glennon, Community Stakeholder
- Turner Houston, Community Stakeholder
- Linda Powell, Community Stakeholder
- Melanie Gonzalez, Project Stakeholder, Office of Historic Alexandria
- Michele Longo, Project Stakeholder, Office of Historic Alexandria

Artist Selection Process

A limited invitational process will be used to select artists for *Time & Place* 2026.

Based upon the approved Project Plan, the Office of the Arts, working with its project consultants, will draft an Artist Brief that will be sent to a short-list of artists developed by the project consultants. Interested artists will submit a statement of interest and qualifications.

The Task Force will review the statements of interest and qualifications and recommend an artist for the project. The Task Force may choose to interview artists as part of the selection process. The selected artist will be approved by the Commission for the Arts.

The artist will come to Alexandria for a kickoff meeting and tours before developing a Concept Proposal. The Concept Proposal will include a rendering, narrative description, fabrication methods, installation plans, budget and timeline. The Concept Proposal will be reviewed for feedback by the Task Force. The Concept Proposal will be approved by the Commission for the Arts prior to execution of the final artwork.

VI. Tentative Timeline

February 2025	Task Force reviews and approves Project Plan.
February 2025	Project Plan to Commission for the Arts for approval.
Late Feb. 2025	Artist brief sent to prospective artists
Late March 2025	Submittals due.
April 2025	Task Force reviews submittals and selects Artist.
April 2025	Commission for the Arts approves artist.
May 2025	Artist kick off meeting and tour.
July – Sept. 2025	Artist submits Proposal. Proposal approved by Task Force, Commission for the Arts.
May – Nov. 2026	Project on Display

VII. Budget

2026 Exhibition – From Public Art Fund	
Exhibition costs (artist fees, fabrication, installation, de-installation)	\$35,000

VIII. Community Engagement, Marketing and Communications

The project should be geared toward reaching a broad audience in Alexandria and engaging participants and visitors in meaningful dialogue and experiences with the artwork. Marketing and communications should be aligned with Alexandria’s overall “250” activities and marketing.

Stakeholders

Community engagement, marketing and communications should build upon the existing stakeholder base for art and history in Alexandria. This will be a natural audience for participation, engagement and for spreading the word about the project. As the artist develops their concept and the location is secured, additional stakeholders will emerge.

Marketing and Communications

The Office of the Arts staff, working closely with OHA and Visit Alexandria, will develop a marketing and communications strategy that will align with other activities throughout the city commemorating the 250th anniversary and will include:

- Web-based information about the exhibition.
- Social media announcements about specific events.
- Print materials about the exhibition to be distributed throughout the community and at OHA sites and other local tourist information areas.

Additionally, the Office of the Arts will work with the city's marketing staff to explore opportunities for media releases to local and national publications and blogs; and also print and/or online advertising in local and regional publications.