Site See: New Views in Old Town
Performing Arts Residency at Waterfront Park

The City of Alexandria is seeking a performing artist or artist group/organization for a mini-residency to develop and perform a new, site-specific dance or movement-based work in response to the new temporary public artwork Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies by commissioned artist Olalekan Jeyifous, installed at Waterfront Park in historic Old Town Alexandria, Virginia.

The selected artist or artist group/organization will create new site-specific work through a mini-residency, 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.

Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies is the second artwork commissioned in the Site See: New Views in Old Town public art series, an annual exhibition of temporary installations with the goal to attract visitors, foster interaction, provide a visual anchor and enrich the experience of Alexandria’s waterfront.

Background and Context

About Alexandria’s Public Art Program
Alexandria’s emerging Public Art Program is managed by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities through the Office of the Arts. It is building 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.

About Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies
Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies is the second work in the Site See: New Views in Old Town public art series. It will be installed in March 2020 and will remain on view until November 2020. Commissioned artist Olalekan Jeyifous’ work frames Alexandria’s African American history through the lens of the city’s industrial and merchant history from the 17th to 20th centuries. Once a prosperous port city that was home to one of the largest domestic slave trading firms in the country, Alexandria was a major center for shipping and manufacturing with an economy inextricably tied to the work of enslaved and free African Americans.

The installation seeks to stitch Alexandria’s story together, featuring symbols that represent Alexandria’s merchant and manufacturing history, including factories, tobacco warehouses, breweries and railways. The ground mural will incorporate African American quilting and textile motifs, which are historically tied to storytelling and oral tradition. When viewed as a whole, the pattern will become an abstract grid or map. From this colorful and rich surface, four large ornate metal profiles will face the water, wrapped in sculptural seating platforms that are illuminated in low light.

A full description of the artwork is available at alexandriava.gov/104495.
About Site See: New Views in Old Town

Site See: New Views in Old Town is an annual series of temporary public art installations that showcase Alexandria’s Public Art Program through new, exciting, high-quality contemporary artwork at a key riverfront location. The series fosters engagement and interaction with contemporary works of art on Alexandria’s historic waterfront. It amplifies Alexandria’s reputation as an arts destination with new work that captures the public’s imagination and is unlike anything that can be experienced in the region.

About Waterfront Park

Waterfront Park expanded at the foot of King Street, historic Old Town’s main commercial street, in 2019. The new space serves as the keystone to the revitalization of the Potomac Riverfront in Alexandria. It features an open plaza, a waterside promenade, shade structures and modular space that can adapt to different uses throughout the year.

Goals and Process

Along with this Performing Arts Residency, Alexandria’s Office of the Arts is developing a robust line-up of public programming to accompany Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies, which will include pop-up programming, performances created through a spoken-word residency, as well as workshops and panel discussions. The intent of this programming is to support the Site See exhibition series and further activate Waterfront Park, foster community engagement and interaction, attract visitors and encourage repeat visits to the park.

Performing Arts Residency’s Goals

Work created through the Performing Arts Residency should:

- Feature or explore themes, topics, materials, and/or concepts related to Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies.
- Make use of and engage with the interactive qualities of Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies.
- Capture the public’s imagination.
- Highlight and activate the park as a new civic space.
- Attract new and repeat visitors to the park.

Process

Once the selected artist or artist group/organization 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, artist Olalekan Jeyifous 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 for the original site-specific piece they will create. Once this direction is approved by staff, the artist or artist group/organization will develop the piece and conduct rehearsals. Rehearsals may be on site in Waterfront Park in public view, keeping in mind the park cannot be closed to the general public during on-site rehearsals. The artist or group/organization will work with Office of the Arts staff to schedule at least four public performances during the period from June to November 2020.
Artist or Artist Group/Organization Responsibilities

The artist or artist group/organization selected for the Dance/Movement Residency will:

- Collaborate with the Office of the Arts to create an original, site-specific dance/movement-based performance that is in response to or in conversation with Jeyifous’s temporary public artwork Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies.
- 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 of June to November 2020. Performances should be a minimum of 30 minutes in length, 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.

Office of the Arts Responsibilities

The Office of the Arts and its City partners will provide access to the site, a green room/staging area for performers, parking, permits, marketing 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 Jeyifous and the selected artist or group/organization.
- Work with the selected artist or group/organization to develop and schedule the public performances, including approving any additional content selected for performance.
- Provide professional photography of the performances for documentation and media purposes.
- Provide one sound system with an eight-channel mixer and two speakers.

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 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 $8,000 to develop the original, site-specific work and provide a minimum of four scheduled on-site performances at Waterfront Park within the period of June to November 2020.
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, including but not limited to choreographers, dancers, dance companies, professors, and students of dance.

To Submit

Please email the following in a single PDF file to Anne O’Dell at anne.odell@alexandriava.gov by 5:00 p.m., February 24, 2020:

1) **Cover Sheet** with name, address, phone number, website and e-mail address of the artist or artist group/organization applying. 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 two 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 three 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 videos of performances** by the artist or group/organization. Videos must be online and cannot be files that must be downloaded to access. For each clip provide a one to two sentence description, including the name of the performers and/or creators.

5) Names and contact information for **three professional references**.

Questions

Please submit your questions about this opportunity via email to Anne O’Dell at anne.odell@alexandriava.gov.