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Respect The Process

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I'm New Here

we aspire for art to be integral to a thriving and equitable Memphis.

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UrbanArt Commission

Shaping Space Through Public Art



The UrbanArt Commission, founded in 1997, established and now manages the City of Memphis Percent-for-Art Program, which annually allocates a percentage of capital improvement funds to public art projects. UAC partners with artists and community stakeholders, including neighborhood groups and municipal authorities, to produce public artworks in a wide range of media.

An independent nonprofit, UAC manages and is a leading partner on City initiatives such as Blight Out, Memphis 3.0, and the District Mural Program. UAC also develops grant and privately funded projects, sponsors temporary projects, and provides professional development resources for artists.

since its founding, UAC has commissioned over 130 works of art that have been placed in neighborhoods throughout Memphis.



Danielle Sierra
The Four Way Restaurant Mural

the public art process

1 Identify funding

Percent-for-Art funding is usually tied to a specific place, such as a park or community center, or a current city project, such as the construction of a new library. Other UAC projects are funded by grants and private clients.

2 Form a selection committee

Each project has its own selection committee. Most committees include two neighborhood representatives, two practicing visual artists, one partner or client representative, and one architect.

3 Create a call to artists

After determining the criteria for the project, the selection committee releases a call to artists or the request for qualifications (RFQ). Calls may be local, national, or invitational. Artists submit a letter of interest, resume, and portfolio.

4 Review submissions and select artist

The selection committee selects 3-4 finalists, who are given an honorarium to develop site-specific proposals. The artists present their designs, and one finalist is selected to develop their proposal.

5 Refine the design

UAC works with the commissioned artist, residents, and other community stakeholders to refine the design. A final design must be approved by the selection committee before fabrication and installation can begin.

6 Support and manage project execution

UAC supervises the fabrication and installation of each project. This includes helping artists identify contractors and engineers and keeping track of project milestones.

7 Celebrate!

Finished projects are submitted for final approval, and a public celebration is held to dedicate the new public art project.

UAC creates opportunities for artists and neighborhoods to connect and shape spaces through public art.