



Public Art Implementation

10 YEARS OF LESSONS LEARNED
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA



Public Art Implementation: 10 Years of Lessons Learned

Meika F. Daus, AICP

Public Art Senior Manager

City of Alexandria

Recreation, Parks & Cultural
Activities Department, Office of
the Arts

Diane Ruggiero

Deputy Director

City of Alexandria

Recreation, Parks & Cultural
Activities Department, Office of
the Arts

Maya Contreras

Principal Planner

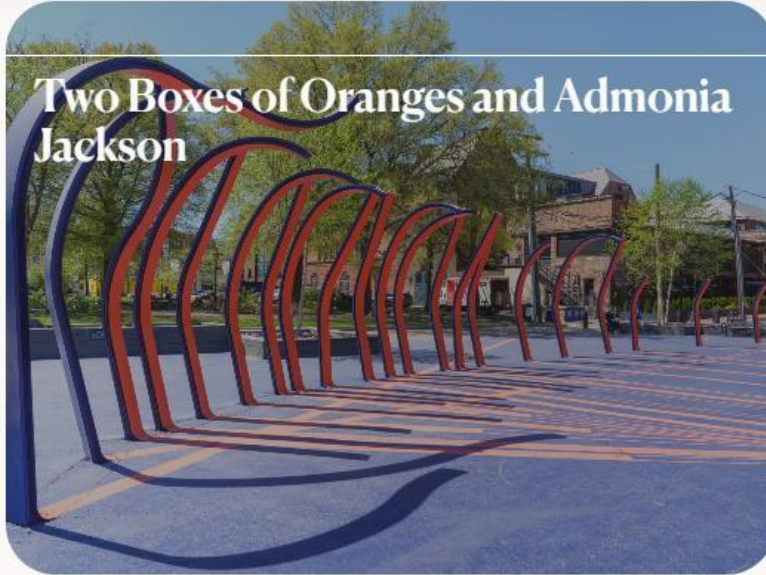
City of Alexandria

Planning & Zoning





Two Boxes of Oranges and Admonia Jackson



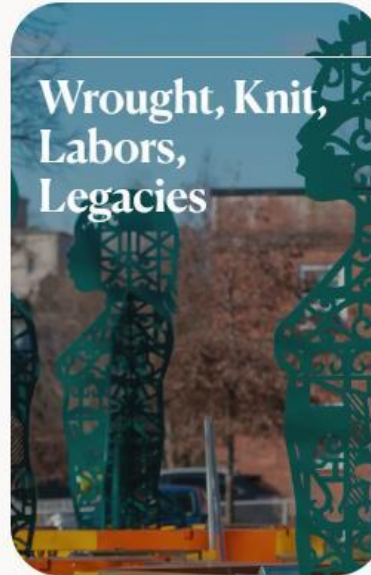
I Love You



Groundswell



Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies



Mirror Mirror





PHOTOS BY LAURA HATCHER FOR CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

‘Groundswell’: Deep dive on the shores

Alluring art installation mirrors the Potomac’s underwater topography

BY MARK JENKINS

Alexandria’s Waterfront Park appears to be a peaceful spot, but it’s actually a battleground. And while most of the conflicts waged there are safely in the past, one is looming. This imminent struggle between the Potomac



depths of the adjacent Potomac, and are spaced in rows on a painted ground mural that maps the river’s underwater topography. Atop each post is a reflective blue disc etched with concentric black ripples. These suggest a tree’s growth rings, and thus the passage of time, but also water in motion.

The pillars are meant to evoke the wooden pilings that were driven as part of the process of filling — or “reclaiming” — parts of the river for development. In Alexandria’s early years, water-

If you go

GROUNDSWELL

Waterfront Park, 1 Prince St., Alexandria. siteseealex.com.

Dates: Open 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, through November. Exact closing date to be determined, but de-installation is expected to begin Nov. 7.

Admission: Free.

GROUNDSWELL FROM 12

ly demolished, adding land but making the harbor more vulnerable to high water. (In fact, Waterfront Park is an interim project that will close temporarily in a few years so a flood-mitigation strategy can proceed.)

A corollary to the ongoing conflict between land and water is a series of tussles over ownership of the filled-in property. In the 17th century, the colony of Maryland was given ownership of the entire Potomac, all the way to the high-water mark on the Virginia shore. When the District of Columbia was created, it acquired the breadth of the Potomac within its borders. Thus new land on the



The “Groundswell” installation by Mark Reigelman, below, is an open space, but the pillars give the illusion of cordoned spaces for visitors who roam through it. And the reflective blue discs add another element of crowd appeal.



PHOTOS BY LAURA HATCHER FOR CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

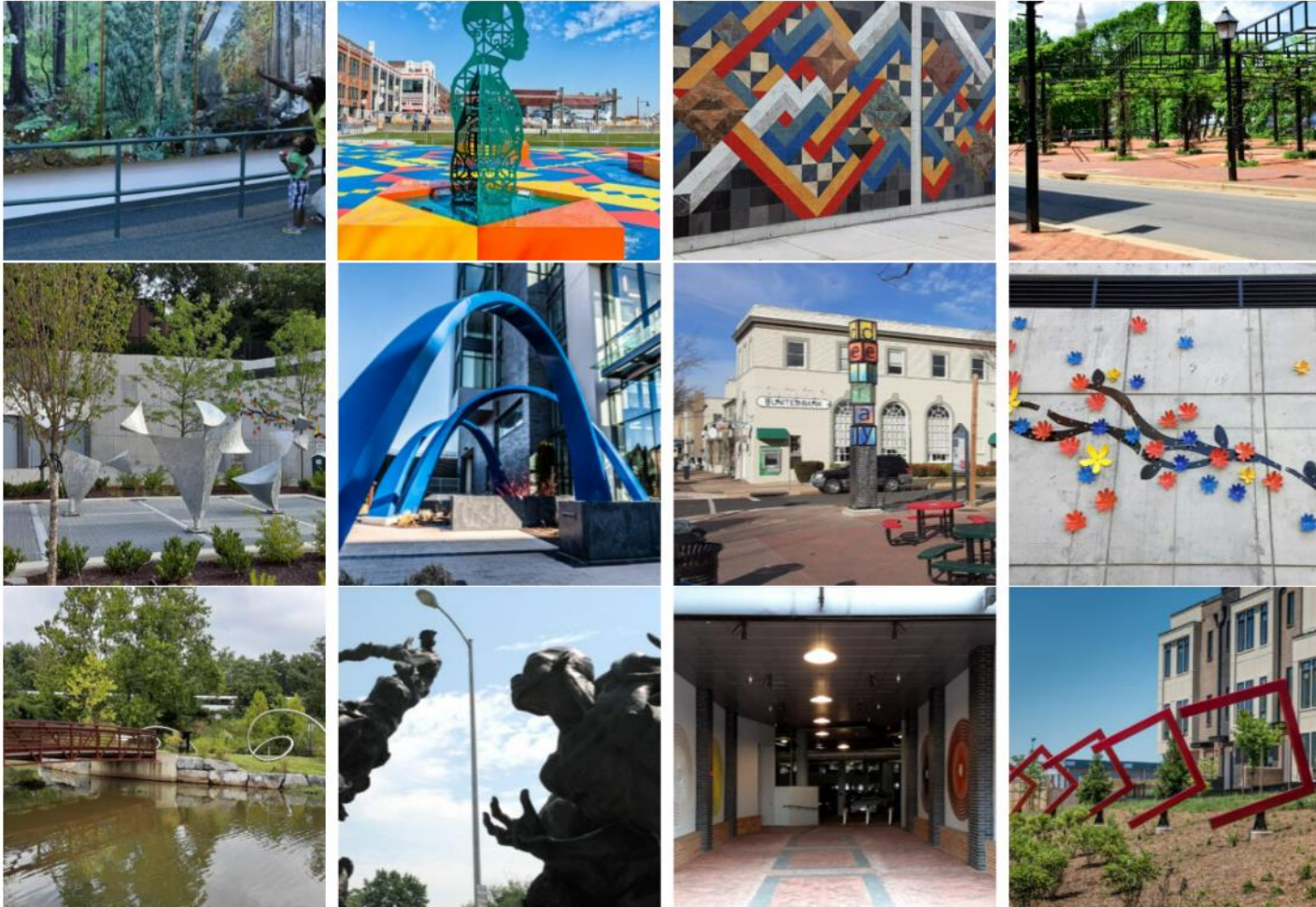


history. His work is in the tradition of architects Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, whose design for D.C.’s Freedom Plaza placed a map of L’Enfant Plan amid streets drawn by that schema. It’s a place that illustrates itself.

History aside, “Groundswell” simply outlines architectural space in a way people find appealing. The area is still open, yet feels divided into a succession of little rooms without walls, each chamber set off by the pillars. Visitors walk (or run) through the installation, finding themselves in a slightly new setting with just a few steps. Varying the heights of the posts has a similar effect. People sit (or stand) on them,



Studio KCA, *Interstellar Influencer*, Waterfront Park (2024). Photo by Matt McClain | The Washington Post.



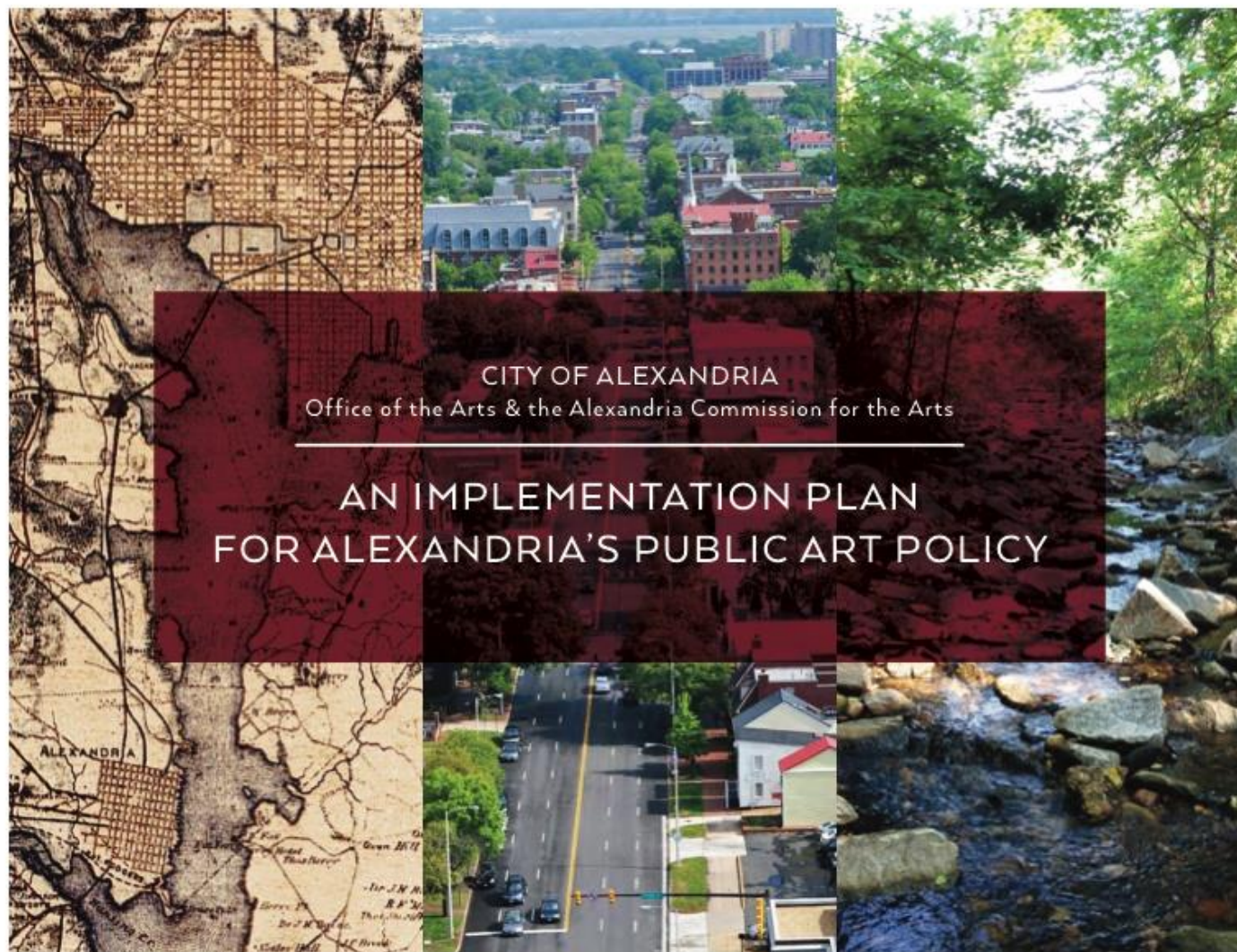
Public Art in the City of Alexandria

Project Types

1. Permanent commissions with capital projects.
2. Permanent commissions with existing facilities.
3. Temporary projects.
4. Artist residencies.
5. Public art in private development.

Background

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Public Art Program

2012: City approves public art policy

2014: City approves public art implementation plan

Public Art Vision in the City of Alexandria

Public art will:

enrich the experience of Alexandria's past,
celebrate the spirit of Alexandria's present, and
define the identity of Alexandria's future.



Eric Bloome, *Edmonson Sisters*, 2010, Edmonson Plaza.

Life before the
public art policy

Lessons Learned

Having a vision.



Having a vision.

Orange Grove Dance and Mirror, Mirror by SOFTlab, 2019 at Waterfront Park.

Lessons Learned

Community
engagement.



Community
engagement.

Kirk Seese, *Del Ray Blocks*, Pat Miller Neighborhood Square.

Lessons Learned

Public art
approval process.



Chris Erney, *Potomac Harvest*, Hotel Indigo.

Public art
approval process.

Public Art in Private Development Process

Applicant identifies if they will provide **on-site public art or an equivalent public art monetary contribution** to the city's public art fund. If the applicant chooses to do on-site public art, then...

Selecting the Artist*

Approving the Concept Proposal*

Fabrication

Installation (prior to the issuance of the first Certificate of Occupancy).

Maintenance

**with staff review*

City-Commissioned Public Art Process

Identifying the Project in the Annual Plan

Developing a Task Force**

Setting Project Goals and Parameters**

Developing the Artist Pool

Selecting the Finalists**

Selecting the Artist

Approving the Contract

Approving the Concept Proposal**

Approving Final Design

Fabrication

Installation

Maintenance

***with review by the Arts Commission*

Lessons Learned

Working with the
development
community.



Tom Fruin, *Plinth*, 2019, Gables Old Town North.

Working with the
development
community.



Working with the
development
community.

FreelandBuck, *Tunnel Vision*, 2023, Metro VA Office Building. Photo By Kevin Kunstadt.

Lessons Learned

Public art
maintenance.



Public art
maintenance.

Anne & Patrick Poirier, *Promenade Classique*, 1986, Old Town North.

Lessons Learned

Role of murals in a
public art
program.



Role of murals in a public art program.

Laura Spofford and Matthew McMullen, *Fibre Girl*, Prince Street.

Lessons Learned

Artists rights.



Karen Bailey, *Three Eggs in Space*, 2010, Mount Vernon Avenue.

Artists rights.

Lessons Learned

Major
components of a
successful public
art program.



Silas Baker, *Efflorescence*, 2024, Torpedo Factory Art Center.

Major
components of a
successful public
art program.

Lessons Learned

Finding support.



Project One Studio, *Confluent Threads*, 2021, Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library.

Finding support.

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Questions

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THANK YOU!

Maya Contreras

Principal Planner

City of Alexandria

Planning & Zoning

maya.contreras@alexandriava.gov

Tel: 703-746-3816

Meika F. Daus, AICP

Public Art Senior Manager

City of Alexandria

Recreation, Parks & Cultural
Activities Department, Office of
the Arts

meika.daus@alexandriava.gov

Tel: 703-746-5420

Diane Ruggiero

Deputy Director

City of Alexandria

Recreation, Parks & Cultural
Activities Department, Office of
the Arts

diane.ruggiero@alexandriava.gov

Tel: 703-746-5590

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