



Royal Oak

**COMMISSION
FOR THE ARTS**

Annual Report 2022



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Mission

The primary goal of the **Royal Oak Commission for the Arts** is to encourage and promote arts and culture in the community. The City of Royal Oak recognizes the importance of arts and culture to a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable community. The city strives to promote and encourage arts and culture through the public and private display of art.



Letter from the Chair

Commission for the Arts Members

Jason Gittinger, Chair
Com. Patricia Paruch
Alesha Beistline
Denise Reske
Jodie Ellison
Laura Bonnell
Melissa Tobias

Royal Oak Commission for the Arts

203 S. Troy Street
Royal Oak, MI 48067

January 1, 2023

The Honorable Mayor Fournier and Members of the City Commission:

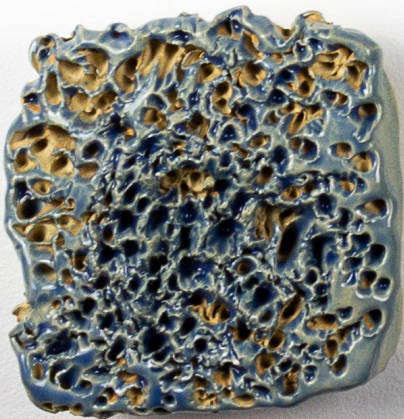
Each year, the Royal Oak Commission for the Arts (ROCFA) is required to report on the progress of its prior year's goals and submit an updated plan for encouraging and supporting arts and culture in the City of Royal Oak.

On behalf of the Commission for the Arts, I am proud to present our annual report. This year our wonderful and diverse team of volunteers and city staff has kept our great programs moving forward, developed some fantastic new projects, and been able to encourage and support the work of many talented local artists. We have also been able to acquire some incredible and loved community pieces to display in public spaces.

Encouraging and promoting arts and culture in our community is the mission of this commission. We cherish the opportunity to steward this effort for the community and look forward to continued success on this mission in 2023. We invite you to accept this report and applaud our city's progress. Still, most of all, we invite you and others to join us in exploring the different forms of world-class art, music, dance, film, theater, and literature that are performed, displayed, and celebrated throughout our great City of Royal Oak year-round.

Jason Gittinger

Chair, Commission for the Arts





With Special Thanks

Funding Partners

Royal Oak City Commission

Royal Oak Downtown Development Authority

2022 Art Explored Artists

Debra Burr

Fran Wolok

Julie Friedman

Kelsey Fox

Melissa Mitchell

All other Art Explored applicants

Artist Donors

Emilie Fantuz

Jamie Burt

Nick Wecker

Lisa Geodert

Steve Miller



The many volunteers who made items for Share the Warmth.

Goals 2022

The Commission for the Arts worked on five primary goals in 2022.



Become a more sustainable committee: The committee felt like there was work to be done to create some procedures for different programs. This would ensure the long-term viability of programs as members change.

The Commission for the Arts has become more sustainable by reducing the number of printed materials necessary for the meetings. Transitioning to digital handouts before the meeting and displaying those same handouts on TVs in the conference room during the sessions has allowed the Commission for the Arts to become more sustainable. We have also transitioned most of our promotion to a digital platform.



Build a collaborative, community-based art program: The pandemic has been challenging for all of us and has isolated many. This goal is to create arts-based programs that bring people together, either in person or virtually, to help build community.

The Commission for the Arts is still working toward engaging more effectively. The Art Explored program is a great way for artists to have a chance to display their work in the city. There is a great desire among the board members to further engage the local youth by allowing them to express themselves artistically.



Identify local artists: A renewed effort to better reach out to local artists and support them in the future, showcase their art in our programs, and develop a new partnership opportunity.

This goal will be a never-ending routine; we will continue to make meaningful connections with local artists and establish collaborative relationships. The Commission for the Arts aims to promote and encourage arts and culture; this will continue as we explore new endeavors and possibilities within the means we have possible.



Develop an art requirement for future public buildings: The commission would like to explore policies that require public art in future public buildings and spaces.

This is an ongoing project that staff members are actively working on and will continue to make progress on moving forward. This goal will be a carryover to the list of 2023 goals.



Improve communication and outreach to Royal Oak residents: The community survey found that many respondents needed to learn more about Commission for the Arts programs. The commission would like to explore opportunities to improve communication and outreach to various audiences.

The Commission for the Arts has ramped up its digital communication efforts in 2022 and will continue this trend in 2023. As new programs are created, and milestones are met, the Commission for the Arts will continue to inform the residents of Royal Oak through the most effective means.



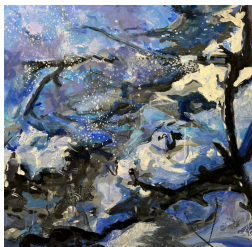
Art

Expored

The **Art Explored** program allows community members to submit original artwork. Once submitted, the Commission for the Arts undergoes a selection process to decide which pieces will be publicly displayed in Royal Oak. This unique program allows the city to highlight artistic talent from everyday individuals. This year marks the first time each submission was bought from the artist rather than licensed. It will enable the city to immediately add them to its expanding permanent collection.



Artist: Debra Burr
White Covered Bowl
Size: 6"x 8"x 8"
Medium: stoneware piece, wheel thrown and hand carved



Artist: Fran Wolok
Close to Where the Deer Sleep
Size: 24"x24"
Medium: Gessoed masonite, Acrylic paint and medium



Artist: Kelsey Fox
Coffee for My Community
Size: 30" x 30"
Medium: The Office Coffee Shop coffee grounds, brew, and acrylic on canvas.



Artist: Melissa Mitchell
Fractured Rainbows
Size: 24" x 36"
Medium: Fiber art/mixed media collage



Artist: Julie Friedman
Sometimes Always and Maybe Never at All
Size: 12" x 48"
Medium: Acrylic on canvas

Permanent Collection

Royal Oak's **permanent art collection** is no different than any collection that grows over time. In 2022 the city added six pieces to its permanent collection, all previously part of the Art Explored program. With this growing collection, comes required maintenance to ensure these assets last lifetimes. The Commission for the Arts recognizes this need. It has made it a priority in 2023 to budget for maintenance needs and acquire a maintenance assessment to document each piece's specific timeline moving forward.



1

Artist: Emilie Fantuz
Forest Light
200 S Washington

4

Artist: Nick Wecker
Fractured Excavations Tile Series
Coming soon to the senior center

2

Artist: Emile Fantuz
Life in the City
Royal Oak City Hall

5

Artist: Lisa Geodert
House on the Hill
310 South Troy Street

3

Artist: Jamie Burt
Whimsy of Whales
East Third and Main
Streets

6

Artist: Steve Miller
Been Jamin'
300 South Center Street

Share
the Warmth

New
Murals

Share the Warmth combines textile arts with offering a helping hand to our unhoused and low-income neighbors. Volunteers knit hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and other cold-weather necessities throughout the year. The Commission for the Arts puts them on display at the library. Items are available for anyone who needs them outside the building. The articles are displayed along the 11 Mile Road entrance. As the park is finalized, additional items may be displayed. In the past, about 170 items have been taken throughout the winter.



4425 Fernlee Ave

Distinct Life

Detroit entrepreneur and self-taught artist Rick Willams has created public art display at the Distinct Life office in Royal Oak. Distinct Life works with local and national companies to promote inspirational stories in unique ways through art and marketing. Their mission strives to "Inspire, Challenge, and Celebrate culture for the betterment of all humankind ." This proposed mural will be part of an Inspire Walls collection to remind viewers to take action and INSPIRE. Each mural will have a unique QR code that will link them to [INSPIREWALLS.com](https://www.inspirewalls.com).



29402 Woodward Ave

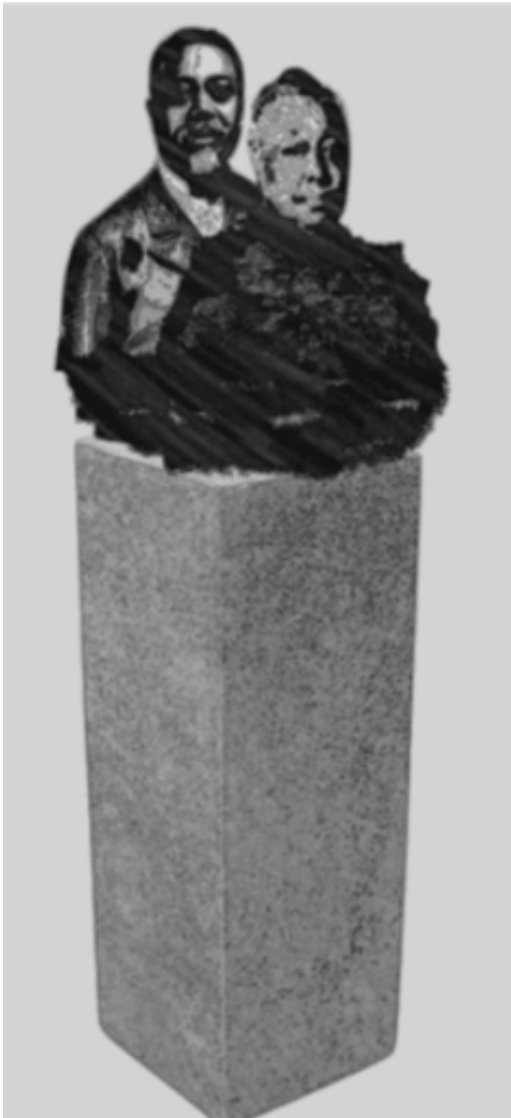
Pet Supplies Plus

This location of Pet Supplies Plus is located on Woodward and is in the heart of the Dream Cruise. An artist reached out to the owner of the store weeks before the Dream Cruise looking to put a creative mural on the side of the building.

Collaboration Giving Back

Hamer Finch Wilkins Park

Earlier this year, the City of Royal Oak worked alongside the decedents of Henry and Elizabeth Hamer to rename a park after this historical Royal Oak resident. Henry and Elizabeth Hamer escaped slavery and eventually made their home in Royal Oak. Henry once worked for the Starr family but eventually was able to start a farm after purchasing more than 6 acres of land. The newly named Hamer Finch Wilkins Park sits on a portion of the original 6 acres; the city plans to relandscape the park with a garden for reflection and signage denoting the historical significance. The Commission for the Arts has denoted money for the renderings and a down payment for a bronze bust to be made of Henry and Elizabeth Hamer that will be placed in the renovated park.



Location: 706 Walnut Ave

Goals 2023

The Commission for the Arts wants to work on five primary goals in 2023.

1

Build a collaborative, community-based art program

The pandemic has been challenging for all of us and has isolated many. This goal is to create arts-based programs that bring people together, either in person or virtually, to help build community.

2

Develop an art requirement for future public buildings

The commission would like to explore policies that require public art in future public buildings and spaces.

3

Review and revise the Sign/Mural ordinance

The commission for the arts desires to streamline and better define the Mural approval process. The current ordinance is effective but could be made better for the consumers.

4

RFP to understand the maintenance needs and structural integrity of the permanent collection

As the city looks to expand the influence of art across the community, this often means acquiring art for the permanent collection. To ensure the integrity of all assets that the city controls, the Commission for the Arts will need a plan to understand further the maintenance needs and cost of the work they oversee.

5

Expansion of art outside of the DDA

While Royal Oak is known across Metro Detroit for its vibrant downtown, more locally, we are known for our amazing parks and neighborhoods. The downtown area often overshadows other beautiful parts of the city. The Commission for the Arts recognizes this and would like to explore opportunities to bring art into these neighborhoods.



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