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Through the Arts.

REQUEST FOR ARTIST QUALIFICATIONS:

**Public Art for North Carolina's African American Music Trail
Neuseway Park bandstand, Kinston, North Carolina**

BUDGET: \$65,000

DEADLINE: September 1, 2010, at 5:00 PM EST (this is *not* a postmark deadline)

Please note: This RFQ is one of two concurrent public art calls to artists related to the African American Music Trail in Kinston, but commissioned by two different agencies. This Kinston Community Council for the Arts RFQ refers only to the Pearson Park (formerly Neuseway Park) bandstand project, not to the separate All-America Park RFQ, which is under the auspices of the North Carolina Arts Council. Artists may apply to both RFQs, but separate applications are required.

Project Context and Background

The [Kinston Community Council for the Arts](#) (KCCA) seeks to commission an artist, artist team, or designer to create a site-specific, outdoor bandstand canopy which provides functional shelter for performers and interprets, commemorates, and celebrates the African American musical history, heritage, and culture of Eastern North Carolina, in particular the City of Kinston and Lenoir County. The commissioned artist will design and produce an artful canopy enhancement to be installed on an existing, unsheltered bandstand in Pearson Park, overlooking the Neuse River in downtown Kinston, NC.

This public art and design project will be a prominent component of the African American Music Trail (AAMT), a creative economies initiative of the NC Arts Council, an agency of the NC Department of Cultural Resources, in partnership with the KCCA, the Golden Leaf Foundation, the NC Department of Transportation, and local arts councils, government agencies, musicians, and community stakeholders. The Pearson Park bandstand component of the AAMT is funded by a grant from the Golden Leaf Foundation.

Research Materials and African American Music Trail Resources

The AAMT region as a whole includes eight neighboring counties: Edgecombe, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Nash, Pitt, Wayne, and Wilson. However, the current public art and design phase is limited to Kinston, the location of the park site for the commissioned artwork.

A historic music center of Eastern North Carolina and a hub of the AAMT, Kinston has fostered a deep and diverse African American cultural heritage of musical tradition-bearers and innovators. Among many other notable achievements, the city has been home to five members of James Brown's classic 1960's and 1970's bands, including Maceo and Melvin Parker and Nat Jones. The personalities, sites, careers, and traditions associated with the AAMT in Kinston provide a wealth of evocative historical and contemporary material for artists to explore. These elements of local musical culture—which AAMT folklorists have documented with ongoing artist interviews, discographies, and media collection—should help inform the selected artist's process and product. For more information on the AAMT, Kinston's rich musical history, Pearson Park, and the Neuse River, please consult the following document. <http://www.ncarts.org/elements/docs/AAMTReport.pdf>

[The AAMT Kinston Pilot Design Study, developed by an NC State University College of Design team, in consultation with community stakeholders, is available here.](#) (Please note that this pdf file is 16 mb and may take some time to download.) See in particular pages 16 and 24-25, which describe the selected site. Pages 13 and 20 provide, respectively, a map of historic sites of musical significance and a conceptual schematic for a potential trail alignment in downtown Kinston.

Please note: Subsequent park design phases will be relatively compatible with the general and long-term design recommendations for the trail outlined in this document, but the Pearson Park artwork and bandstand canopy concepts therein (i.e., the gateway structures and the kinetic canopy projection surfaces) represent only preliminary ideas and suggestions and are not meant to influence artist proposals. The pilot study report is intended to inspire and inform potential artists and to furnish an open-ended design context and vision for future project phases into which the public art should fit, not to constrain the selected artist's artwork concept or design.

Artwork Intent, Design Considerations, and Goals

For the purposes of this project, “public art” should be construed broadly as any functional artwork or artful design enhancements which are relevant to the AAMT and provide durable shelter for performers on the existing Pearson Park bandstand in Kinston. Pearson Park is located

on the western edge of downtown Kinston, overlooking the Neuse River, and the bandstand has the potential to serve as a significant amenity for the city and the AAMT.

Artists should concentrate on compelling canopy design concepts that sensitively respond to the cultural, historical, and musical contexts of Kinston and Lenoir County in particular and the AAMT region in general, as well as the existing and planned natural and built environments. Canopy designs should impart a strong sense of place and contribute to the community use value of the park, appealing to tourists, local residents, and musicians alike, as well as visitors of diverse age groups and cultural backgrounds. The canopy may be executed in any medium, as long as it is appropriate to the site, structurally integrated with the bandstand, and pertinent to the project and the community as a whole. (See “Research Materials” above.)

Note: The selected artist or artist team will be expected to engage in research and workshops with community stakeholders to inform and refine the form and content of the final bandstand canopy that develops from the preliminary design proposal. Dialogue with local musicians is highly encouraged—these individuals represent the AAMT’s primary subjects, greatest resources, and ultimate authorities. Although the final artwork will be entirely the product of the artist’s vision, consultation with local stakeholders is necessary to understand the cultural and design contexts of Kinston and the AAMT.

Site Description and Resources

Please consult the [AAMT Kinston Pilot Design Study](#) for further site details, maps, and images of Pearson Park, as well as significant historical and musical contexts for Kinston and Lenoir County. (See “Research Materials” above.) Additional photographs are available at the end of this document.

The licensed site for the artwork is the minimal concrete bandstand located on the eastern bank of the Neuse River, on the western edge of Pearson Park, west of the intersection of Herritage and Gordon Sts. The bandstand is 32 inches high with a 10 inch surrounding brick face. The rear and sides of the bandstand are 23 feet in length with the front portion of 40 feet and is slightly rounded. Front to back measurement is 25 feet.

The Pearson Park serves as a community gathering place. Performances on the bandstand there have proved to be popular, and the nearby pavilion functions as a site for a well-attended local farmer’s market. With the transformed bandstand performance space, which overlooks the river, Pearson Park can become a central trail site and identifying feature for downtown Kinston.

Public Art Budget

The total budget for the artwork portion of this project, including selection process expenses, design fee for the commissioned artist, site preparation, fabrication, installation, and all necessary travel and subcontracts, is **\$65,000**. If the selection process includes a proposal stage,

finalist artists will receive travel compensation of \$1000 for their design proposals, interviews, and site visits.

Artist Qualifications

An interest in and knowledge of African American culture and musical traditions; experience with public art projects involving a similar budget, scale, and scope; experience integrating public art enhancements or design features into existing architectural structures; and experience working with community stakeholders are all preferred qualifications. Applicant artists must be American citizens or legal residents aged eighteen years or older. Interdisciplinary design teams and artist teams and partnerships are encouraged to apply. Currently enrolled students are ineligible.

How to Apply

All applicants should submit the following materials on a PC-compatible CD or DVD clearly labeled with artist's name and contact information.

We cannot accept slides, faxed materials, or emails with attachments. The KCCA will not return any submission materials.

Letter of interest and references

A Word file or pdf not to exceed 750 words (no more than approximately three double-spaced typewritten pages.) The letter of interest should briefly explain the artist's or team's interest in the project and potential approaches; the relationship of the project to the applicant's artistic practice; and relevant past experience, specifically experience with public art commissions. If the applicant has collaborated with government agencies, arts councils, neighborhood organizations, musicians, or other relevant organizations and individuals, please describe those working relationships and how they impacted the research and design processes. Describe any experience with fabrication, installation, and conservation/maintenance planning for outdoor artwork or design enhancements of similar scale and scope. If you are applying as an artist team, please identify the lead artist and indicate if the individuals and/or organizations that comprise the team have previously collaborated in a similar capacity, and if so, the nature of the association. Please also include contact information for three references.

10 digital work samples

Jpegs of recent related artworks at reasonable resolution (72-300 dpi), dimensions (1920 pixels maximum on the longest side), and file size compression (no larger than 2 mb). Please include only one artwork image per image file, and label files clearly in the following format: "lastname_01_title.jpg." A maximum of 2 different angles for each three dimensional project please.

Annotated image list

A Word file or pdf listing all work samples by two-digit identification number, followed by *artist; title of work depicted; year completed; media; dimensions (height x width x depth);* and if appropriate: *location; collection or recent exhibition history; budget (for public art projects);* and *one line of project contextual information.*

Resume/CV

A Word doc. or pdf. If applying as a team, include all team members' resumes within one document. Please include links to relevant websites or additional online materials.

Submission Deadline

All above materials must be received at the Kinston Community Council for the Arts office no later than September 1, 2010, 5:00 PM EST (this is *not* a postmark deadline)

The KCCA will not be responsible for applications delayed or lost in transit. While all reasonable care will be taken in the handling of materials, the KCCA will not be liable for late, lost or damaged materials.

The KCCA reserves the right to withhold the award of a commission or re-release the call for entries should it be determined that the applications submitted are of insufficient quality.

Selection Process

The KCCA will solicit artists nationally through an RFQ process. An artist selection committee composed of arts professionals, community stakeholders, musicians, local government representatives, site representatives, and other parties will select up to three finalists to interview. The final decision may directly follow these initial phone interviews.

However, depending on the strength and competitiveness of submissions, finalists may be asked additionally to conduct a site visit and to develop and present a site-specific artwork proposal. If the selection process includes a proposal stage, proposals and design concepts from finalist artists will begin on October 1, 2010 and evaluated shortly thereafter. All finalist artists who are asked to develop a project proposal will be compensated with \$1000 for design fees and travel reimbursement. The selected artist contract will begin in early December and the project must be completed by April 1, 2010

Project Timeline

The estimated timeline is as follows:

September 1, 2010: RFQ deadline

September 10, 2010: Committee meets to select finalists.

October 1, 2010: Finalist site visits and interviews scheduled, as needed.

Late November: Finalist proposals due, if required. Phone interviews as needed.

Early December: Committee meets to select artist to offer the commission. Contract period begins. Dialogue with landscape design team and community stakeholders. Preliminary design.
Winter 2010-11: Design development, refinement, and final review.
Spring 2011: Fabrication. Engineer's and conservator's reviews.
April 2011: Installation and project completion.

Submission Addresses

Mail Submission Address: Community Council for the Arts, 400 North Queen Street, Kinston, North Carolina 28501 Attention: Canopy Project Administrator

Email: Sandy Landis - slandis@kinstoncca.com or Matt Amante – mattamante@hotmail.com

Contacts and Sources for Additional Information

Sandy Landis
400 North Queen Street
Kinston, NC 28501
252-527-2517
252-527-8280
slandis@kinstoncca.com
www.kinstoncca.com

Matt Amante
400 North Queen Street
Kinston, NC 28501
252-527-2517
252-527-8280
mattamante@hotmail.com
www.kinstoncca.com

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Site Photos



