



# 6-Year Workplan for Public Art

DRAFT

2/28/2025







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## Introduction

The City of Mercer Island (City) began amassing a public art collection in the 1980s and established a 1% for Art in Public Places Fund (1% Fund) in 1993 to support the acquisition and maintenance of visual artworks for the public realm. Per the establishing ordinance, the 1% Fund is funded by 1% of construction costs for qualifying capital improvement projects, which include major renovations/repairs and new construction of public parks and streets. Today, the City's public art collection includes more than 60 works of two- and three-dimensional art installed in public facilities and parks around Mercer Island.

In 2022, the Mercer Island City Council (City Council) adopted the 2022 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS Plan), which identified the need to develop a long-range project plan for the 1% Fund. To achieve this goal, City Recreation and Capital division staff collaborated with the Mercer Island Arts Council (Arts Council) in 2024-2025 to draft this 6-Year Workplan for the Mercer Island Public Art Program (the Plan).

### What does the Plan include?

- Goals for the City's public art program
- Public art project opportunities to consider over the 6-year planning horizon
- Funding resources information
- Guidance for engaging the Mercer Island community in public art acquisition and exhibition
- Details about public art collection management and updating the Plan
- Roles and responsibilities for City staff and for the Arts Council in implementing the Plan
- Updated procedures for permanent acquisition, temporary exhibition, and deaccession

### Who implements the Plan?

City staff and the Arts Council are tasked with reviewing the Plan and identifying individual action items to propose for the City's Biennial Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Once the budget and CIP are approved by the City Council, items will be implemented by the appropriate City departments with Arts Council input and collaboration as necessary.

### What are the goals of the Plan?

Through the public art program, the Arts Council and City staff seek to:

- Spark curiosity where Mercer Island residents live, gather, and play.
- Cultivate community pride, civic engagement, high quality of life, and social connection.
- Share Mercer Island's rich history, natural beauty, and local creativity with Island residents and visitors.
- Invite and encourage community members to share their own diverse experiences, backgrounds, and beliefs through artmaking.
- Promote and implement sustainability practices through public art creation and exhibition.
- Provide accessible, inclusive, and safe public art experiences that make all feel welcome.
- Steward a public art collection that future generations can enjoy, engage with, and enhance.

To achieve these goals, the Plan outlines three key components – **Project Opportunities**, **Funding**, and **Public Engagement**. When coordinated, these components will result in a successful, meaningful public art program for the Mercer Island community. Details about these three components and how they relate are provided in the next sections.

# Project Opportunities

Project Opportunities represent the starting point for administering the City's public art program. What project ideas exist? Which ideas are feasible given City requirements and resources? And what will the public art program focus on over the time horizon of the Plan?

## Developing the Project Opportunities List

The Project Opportunities List is a dynamic list of public art opportunities that can be implemented by the City as resources allow. The list **supports project planning over the time horizon of the Plan and** aims to capture the following information:

- Preferred locations for installing public art projects
- Locally significant history, people, events, locations, and/or other details to highlight through public art projects
- Planned capital projects that are eligible and/or strong candidates for public art projects using 1% Fund dollars
- Project ideas proposed by Arts Council members, Mercer Island residents, local community groups, and/or others

City staff, in consultation with the Arts Council, are responsible for maintaining this list, including updating it on a quarterly basis to ensure new opportunities are catalogued. (More details about collecting community input for project opportunities are provided in the Public Engagement section.)

## Identifying Project Priorities

Recognizing that the City has limited financial, staff, volunteer, and other resources, a small number of project opportunities will be pursued during the six-year time horizon of the Plan. City staff will work with the Arts Council Chair and Vice Chair to schedule a biennial Arts Council workshop to recommend projects for the upcoming biennium. Staff are responsible for ensuring the workshop is conducted ahead of Citywide development of the biennial budget and CIP, including allowing adequate time to engage the Mercer Island community in prioritizing project opportunities if desired by the Arts Council.

After the Arts Council identifies their recommended project priorities, their recommendation will be presented to the City Council for approval via the draft Capital Improvement Program (CIP), biennial budget, and/or City department workplans as appropriate.

## 2025-2030 Project Opportunities List

The 2025-2030 Project Opportunities List was developed during a public art planning process conducted with the Arts Council from May 2024-March 2025. Project opportunities were proposed by Arts Council members, City staff, and community members, and preliminarily evaluated by staff against various factors. The Arts Council reviewed each opportunity and completed a dot-voting exercise to refine and prioritize the list into three levels:

- High (Green): Project opportunities to consider for implementation over the 2025-2030 Plan.
- Medium (Pink): Project opportunities to consider first for future 6-Year Workplans.
- Low (Orange): Lowest priority projects to consider for future 6-Year Workplans.

The 2025-2030 Project Opportunities List is included as [Appendix A](#). This list will continue to evolve as new ideas emerge and the Arts Council conducts its biennial workshop to prioritize opportunities.

## Funding

Funding is the second critical component for administering the City's public art program. What resources exist? What new funding strategies can the City consider and pursue to fund public art? And how will the City apply resources to specific projects?

### 1% for Art in Public Places Fund

The 1% Fund is established by which requires all qualifying capital improvement projects to set aside 1% of the total project cost to support permanent public art installations. Qualifying capital improvement projects are defined as:

*Projects funded wholly or in part by the City to construct or remodel any public project, including buildings, decorative or commemorative structures, parks or any portion thereof; and projects involving the construction, renovation or repair of public streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities.*

A project's 1% Fund contribution may be used to integrate a public art project into the capital project or transferred to the 1% Fund for future use. Transfers are calculated at project closeout by Public Works and Finance staff and are completed at the end of the fiscal year closeout (typically in Q2 of the following fiscal year). **City staff are responsible for tracking 1% Fund contributions and commitments.**

**The available balance (i.e. funds available for future appropriation) as of January 1, 2025, is \$120,618. More details about 1% Fund contributions for recent biennia are provided in [Appendix B](#).**

### Other Public Art Funding Strategies

Beyond the 1% Fund, other resources and funding strategies documented below may be applicable to public art projects identified in this workplan. A list of potential opportunities is provided below. Staff are responsible for ensuring these resources are current, including adding new resources as they emerge.

- City Donations program
- Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery sales
- Individual donations and crowdfunding
- Partnerships with local arts and other community organizations
- Partnerships with private developers and businesses
- Federal, state, county, and local grant opportunities (a list of grant resources is provided as [Appendix C](#))
- Fundraising events, such as local art auctions and benefit concerts/performances

### Selecting the Right Funding Source

Funding sources will be identified for specific projects as they are moved from the project opportunities list to the project timeline. When choosing funding sources for specific projects, considerations should include, but not be limited to, the following.

- Relevant community groups and others who could serve as fundraising partners and/or project sponsors for grant requirements
- Deadlines for grants and other application-based opportunities
- Match, City Resolution, and other requirements for application-based opportunities
- Fundraising goals for individual donations and other outside funding pursuits

## Public Engagement

Public Engagement is the third critical component for fostering a successful public art program. How will the community engage in the public art process from start to finish? How will the City keep the community informed about progress, engagement opportunities, and achievements?

### Community Collaboration to Develop Public Art

Collaborating with the Mercer Island community to produce public art projects is one avenue for cultivating community ownership of and pride in public art. The following methods for community collaboration will be considered throughout the process to develop and implement public art projects.

#### Community Input for Project Opportunities

Soliciting project ideas is a useful way to implement the community's public art interests and needs. Ideas may be general, such as requests for installation sites, artwork mediums/genres, or themes. General ideas will be solicited through City channels, such as the City website, Let's Talk, on-site signage, and during regular Arts Council meetings, on a rolling basis and added to the project opportunities list by City staff. Staff are responsible for updating the Arts Council when new project opportunities have been added to the list and for ensuring that the list is updated prior to engaging the Arts Council in recommending projects for the upcoming biennium.

Occasionally, members of the Arts Council, the community, or local organizations may submit a formal public art project proposal for the City's consideration. A formal proposal is one that includes a defined project scope and a request for City resources to implement, including funding. The City may choose to establish a formal "Call for Project Proposals" or accept proposals on a rolling basis. The process for evaluating community-initiated public art project proposals is provided in the Guidelines for Administering the Mercer Island Public Art Program ([Appendix D](#)).

#### Community Role in Project Development

After a public art opportunity is prioritized for a future biennium (i.e. moved to the project timeline), City staff and the Arts Council will identify the best method(s) for engaging the community in project development. These may include, but not be limited to, the following.

- Identify and engage community organizations and/or broad community feedback to develop the preferred project scope.
- Require project-specific community engagement methods in the request for qualifications/proposals.
- Partner with local schools and/or youth organizations to develop projects and foster early connection with the arts among local young people.
- Organize design workshops or charrettes for community members to provide input on project themes, design elements, and/or site-specific details.

#### Community Role in Artist/Artwork Selection

The process for evaluating submittals for a permanent or temporary public art project is outlined in the Guidelines for Administering the Mercer Island Public Art Program ([Appendix D](#)). Per the process, community members may participate in the Selection Panel to choose an artist or artwork in the following roles.

- Resident with special interest in the proposed project
- Other Mercer Island Board or Commission Member(s)
- Other individuals as appropriate



Occasionally, it may be appropriate to seek feedback from the broader community when making a final selection of an artist or artwork. Ways to solicit broader community input include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Host finalist presentations and allow the attendees to ask questions and submit comments.
- Allow the public to vote on their favorite finalist.
- Mount temporary displays of finalist proposals in high-traffic areas (e.g. Mercer Island Community and Event Center, Mercer Island Library, Town Center events, etc.) where residents can view options and submit feedback on-site.
- Invite small groups of diverse community representatives to review the finalists and provide additional insights to the Selection Panel.

### **Community Role in Artmaking**

Providing opportunities to participate in the artmaking process can transform public art from a passive experience to a deeply communal one. When developing public art projects, the City should consider opportunities for engaging the community in creation. Public art projects that may be good candidates for community artmaking include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Murals
- Graphic arts, such as printmaking and banners
- Performance and time-based art
- Environmental art installations
- Works that are created individually and assembled to create the whole, such as mosaic, collage, and fiber/textile arts

### **Public Art Activation**

Engaging the community with existing public art installations is another important way to foster connection and understanding, both with the public art collection and within the community itself. Both digital and in-person opportunities should be considered for activating public art and include, but not be limited to, the following.

- STQRY – A digital community engagement platform that includes details about Mercer Island public art, culture, and history/heritage.
- City social media accounts – Digital channels that can be used to promote STQRY content as well as implement other engagement opportunities, such as inviting residents to submit their photos and stories of works in the public art collection to highlight both public art and local community members' experiences with it.
- Interpretive signage – Signs installed at public art installations that include artwork tombstone and a QR code that sends users to STQRY.
- Public art maps – Maps of the entire public art collection and/or themed tours that can be distributed to community groups, posted on-site, and downloaded digitally.
- Events at public art sites – City-run and community-hosted events that encourage gathering at public art sites, including public art walks, large-scale special events, art-focused nature walks, community artmaking activities, and other in-person activities.
- Artist talks and/or panel discussions – In-person or virtual events where artists from the public art collection discuss their work, process, and stories behind works in the collection.
- Literary and performing arts events inspired by/incorporating public artworks – Opportunities to connect visual, performing, and other artforms to bolster awareness of the public art collection and strengthen the entire arts and culture ecosystem on Mercer Island.

## Communicating Progress and Achievements

Clear and consistent communication about public art progress and achievements is another important piece of successfully engaging the public with the public art program. City staff are responsible for producing and maintaining public art communications, which may be distributed via the following City channels:

- City website ([www.mercerisland.gov/publicart](http://www.mercerisland.gov/publicart)) – Static information about the public art program.
- Let's Talk ([letstalk.mercergov.org](http://letstalk.mercergov.org)) – Collecting community feedback and project-specific needs.
- MI Weekly newsletter – Calls to action, such as community input opportunities, event announcements, and other immediate/time-sensitive needs.
- STQRY ([mercierisland.stqry.app](http://mercierisland.stqry.app)) – Ongoing and deeper learning about the public art collection.
- On-site signage and other materials – Pop-up announcements and other timely information.



## Collection Care

City staff are responsible for managing the public art collection, which encompasses a range of tasks outlined in this section as well as other duties and responsibilities that may arise to safely maintain works in the collection.

### Documentation

When a new work of art is added to the public art collection, the artist or artist's representative will provide the following documentation:

- Artwork Statement – Facilitates understanding of the completed artwork and may be used for interpretation and engagement purposes.
- Public Art Record Form ([Appendix E](#)) – Includes tombstone (title, artist, medium, year built, acquisition method) and other object details, including size dimensions, valuation, and condition upon acquisition.
- Technical and Maintenance Requirements Form ([Appendix E](#)) – Outlines the methods and materials used to execute, install, and maintain the artwork as well as any other special considerations for collection care.

This and other documentation related to acquisition, installation, maintenance, and interpretation will be maintained in a public art record. Photographs, media coverage, and other interesting or important materials will also be kept in the public art record and may be used for interpretation and engagement activities related to the individual artwork.

### Asset Inventory

Works of art in the public art collection are tracked as City assets by the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) team. City staff are responsible for notifying GIS of new acquisitions, deaccessions, temporary deinstallations, or other changes to the public art collection to ensure the asset inventory stays accurate.

### Public Art Record

Staff maintain a public art record for each work in the public art collection. The record includes provenance documentation related to acquisition, installation, maintenance, and interpretation as well as photographs, media coverage, and other interesting or important materials.

### Appraisal

Artwork valuations are established for insurance purposes and should be estimated at the time a work is added to the public art collection. When artwork is donated to the City, appraisal is required at the time of the gift and should be provided/paid for by the donor. If updated valuations are needed, staff work with a qualified professional to appraise artworks.

### Insurance

Works of art in the public art collection and works temporarily exhibited by the City are insured by the Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA), the City's insurance provider. When updates to the collection are made through acquisition or deaccession, staff are responsible for reporting changes to the City's Administrative Services and City Attorney's office to ensure the City's property schedule is accurate.

## Routine Maintenance

City staff develop a public art maintenance plan that is updated annually and includes cleaning, minor repair, and other needs for each work in the public art collection. Routine public art maintenance is funded by the 1% for Art in Public Places Fund (1% Fund) and conducted annually by a contract art conservator in consultation with staff and based on the maintenance plan.

## Major Repair and Restoration

Occasionally, public artworks may require significant repair or restoration. Staff consult with the artist and/or a contract art conservator to develop a scope of work. When possible, the City will contract with the artist to complete the work or will engage a contract art conservator to execute the repair. Staff are responsible for determining the funding source for special repairs or restorations that fall outside the scope of routine maintenance.

## Artwork Curation

Every five years, existing public art installations should be evaluated for safety, accessibility, integration, and other site-related aspects to determine if artworks should/can be adjusted. This assessment work could be timed with annual routine public art maintenance or conducted separately by staff and members of the Arts Council as desired. If need to re-site, deaccession, or otherwise adjust an existing installation arises, staff are responsible for proposing a scope of work that will include costs, timeline, required review/approvals, and other components to successfully re-site an artwork.

## Revising the 6-Year Workplan for Art in Public Places

The Plan is intended as a living document that may be reviewed and revised at different points throughout the 6-year time horizon. This section recommends a cadence for updating the Plan. Additional reviews may be requested by the City Council, the Arts Council, or City staff, with the understanding that:

- Minor updates that do not substantively change the Plan (e.g. corrections to grammar/typos, updates to citations, etc.) will be made by City staff on a rolling basis and do not require approval; and
- Requests for significant revisions outside of the regular review cycle may require additional discussion and approvals prior to being completed.

City staff are responsible for overseeing regular, routine updates to the Plan, including compiling project ideas submitted to the City and adding them to the Project Opportunities List on a quarterly basis; and tracking 1% Fund contributions and updating the Plan annually with accurate numbers.

To **future project priorities** staff will schedule a biennial workshop with the Arts Council and **ensure the Project Opportunities List is prioritized** prior to the City's biennial budget and CIP planning process. For example, **project priorities for 2027-2032** should be recommended by the Arts Council by March 2026 and incorporated into the draft CIP and department workplans for the 2027-2028 biennium by City staff.

The guiding elements of the Plan, including the goals and the key components of Project Opportunities, Funding, and Public Engagement, should be reviewed every five years but may be revised earlier if directed to do so by the City Council.



## **Appendix A. Project Opportunities List**

The updated matrix of public art project opportunities will be included as Appendix A in the final Plan document.

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## Appendix B. 1% Fund Balance Information

City staff are responsible for tracking 1% Fund contributions and commitments. This section documents completed and anticipated contributions for 2023-2026.

### 2023 Contributions to 1% Fund – Completed

Project ID	Project Title	2023 Construction Spend	1%
PA0118	Lincoln Landing Watercourse Restoration	\$13,762.50	\$137.63
PA0125	Mercerdale Park Playground	\$48,824.39	\$488.24
PA0136	LBP South Shoreline	\$376,430.80	\$3,764.31
PA0165	Bike Skills Area	\$302,500	\$3,025
SP0100	Residential Street Resurfacing	\$978,709.21	\$9,779.27
SP0101	Arterial Street Preservation	\$42,631.25	\$416.31
SP0120	Sunset Hwy/77 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE Improvements	\$1,137,561.29	\$11,375.61
SP0129	4400 ICW Improvements	\$192,840.57	\$1,928.41
Total 1% Contribution			\$30,914.78

### 2024 Contributions to 1% Fund – Anticipated

Project ID	Project Title	2024 Construction Budget	1%
PA0109	ADP Trail Safety Improvements	\$447,701.83	\$4,477.02
PA0124	LBP Boiler Building Phase 1	\$1,884,401.10	\$18,844.01
PA0143	LBP Sport Courts Renovation	\$978,904.84	\$9,789.05
SP0100	Residential Street Resurfacing	\$481,896	\$4,818.96
SP0101	Arterial Street Preservation	\$81,401	\$814.01
SP0135	ICW Corridor Improvements	\$1,127,127	\$11,271.27
SP0111	80 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE Pedestrian Improvements	\$1,590,160	\$15,901.60
SP0137	Traffic Signal Improvements	\$161,808	\$1,618.08
Total 1% Contribution			\$67,534.00

### 2025-2026 CIP Projects Contributing to 1% Fund – Anticipated

Project ID	Project Title	2025	2026
90.25.0015	Deane's Play Area Improvements		X
90.25.0020	LBP Dock & Waterfront Improvements	X	X
90.25.0043	First Hill Playground	X	
90.25.0050	Roanoke Park Playground	X	
90.20.0001	Residential Street Resurfacing	X	X
90.20.0002	Arterial Preservation Program	X	X
90.20.0014	SE 27 <sup>th</sup> Street Overlay (76 <sup>th</sup> to 80 <sup>th</sup> )		X
	Town Center Commuter Parking Project	X	

## Appendix C. Grant Funding Resources

City staff are responsible for tracking and applying for grants. For some opportunities, City Council authorization may be required before a grant application can be submitted.

Organization	Grant	Funding Level	Match Required	Funding Cycle	Key Elements
National Endowment for the Arts	<a href="#">Our Town</a>	\$25,000 - \$150,000	Yes – equal to grant amount	Annual Due in August	Placemaking Partnerships
	<a href="#">Grants for Arts Projects: LAAs</a>	\$10,000 - \$100,000	Yes – equal to grant amount	Biannual Due Feb. & July	Partnerships
ArtsWA	<a href="#">Grants to Organizations: Art Project</a>	\$2,000 - \$5,000	No	Annual Due in Spring	Programs
WA State Historical Society	<a href="#">Heritage Capital Program</a>	\$10,000 - \$1m	Yes – 50%	Annual 2-stage process	Capital Needs Heritage
4Culture	<a href="#">Doors Open: Facilities</a>	\$250,000 - \$2.5m	No	Annual	Capital Needs Programs Partnerships Racial Equity
	<a href="#">Art Projects</a>	\$2,000 - \$10,000	No	Annual	Programs Partnerships Racial Equity
Port of Seattle	<a href="#">Economic Development Partnership Grant</a>	\$1 per capita	Yes – 50%, ½ can be in-kind support, ½ financial match	Annual	Placemaking
Mercer Island Community Fund	<a href="#">Community Grants</a>	\$500 - \$5,500	No	Annual	Community
Bloomberg Philanthropies	<a href="#">Public Art Challenge</a>	Up to \$1m	No	4-year cycle 2022 last year	Large-Scale Partnerships Community
	<a href="#">Asphalt Art Initiative</a>	Up to \$100,000	No	Annual	Safe Streets Public Space
Project for Public Spaces	<a href="#">Community Placemaking Grants</a>	Varies	No	Annual	Placemaking Public Space



## **Appendix D. Guidelines for Administering the Mercer Island Public Art Program**

The updated guidelines will be included as Appendix C in the final Plan document as a reference. The guidelines will be a stand-alone document that must be approved by the Mercer Island City Council before taking effect.

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## Appendix E. Public Art Documentation Forms

### Public Art Record

Accession Number (Asset ID) \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Artist \_\_\_\_\_

Type & Medium \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Year Built \_\_\_\_\_ Year Acquired \_\_\_\_\_

Acquisition Method \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Dimensions \_\_\_\_\_

Condition on Acquisition \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Value \_\_\_\_\_

## Technical and Maintenance Requirements

**Accession Number (Asset ID)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title** \_\_\_\_\_

**Artist** \_\_\_\_\_

**Material(s)** – Including material thickness; finishing materials (glaze, paint color and type, sanding grit, tool pattern, patina, surface sealer, etc.); welding or jointing materials; etc.

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**Fabrication Method(s)** – Including general construction techniques/methods; welding or jointing methods; casting alloy, wax body, glass or fiber type; finishing methods; etc.

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**Foundation Material/Method(s)**

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**Other maintenance considerations?**

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## **Appendix F. Terms & Definitions**

### **Accession**

Adding an artwork to the permanent public art collection.

### **Artist**

Practitioner who produces works of art for commission, acquisition, and/or exhibition.

### **Artwork**

All forms of art conceived in any discipline or medium, including visual, performance, literary, media, and other methods.

### **Conservation**

Repair of damaged or deteriorating artwork to maximize endurance while changing as little to the object as possible.

### **Deaccession**

Formal removal of accessioned artwork from the permanent collection.

### **Donation**

Artwork or sum of money given willingly and without compensation.

### **Maintenance**

Regular routine inspection and care of artwork carried out by a trained technician.

### **Medium**

May refer to both the type of artwork (e.g. painting, sculpture, earthwork, etc.) and the material(s) the artwork is made from.

### **Public Art**

Original works of art that are accessible to the public and that possess functional as well aesthetic qualities.

### **Public Art Collection**

All works of art owned and accessioned by the City of Mercer Island.

### **Restoration**

Treatment to return an artwork to a known or assumed state, often by the addition of non-original material.

### **Site-Specific**

Artwork specifically designed for and permanently installed in a particular location.

### **Temporary Exhibit**

Work or works of art loaned to the City of Mercer Island for limited exhibition in a public space.

### **Tombstone**

Lists the primary details of an artwork, including the object title, artist, creation date, and acquisition information

## **Appendix G. Public Art Project Types**

### **Earthwork or Landform**

Artwork made directly into a landscape by sculpting the land itself or making structures using natural materials such as grass, twigs, and rocks.

### **Graphic Arts**

Visual artistic expression typically produced on flat surfaces, including drawing, printmaking, banners, and tapestry.

### **Light-Based Art**

Visual artwork in which light is the main and/or sole medium of creation.

### **Mixed Media**

Artwork composed with a combination of media or materials.

### **Mosaic**

Artwork composed of tiles or other small parts traditionally made of ceramic, glass, stone, or other materials.

### **Mural**

Large-scale painting or other artwork applied directly on or attached to a wall, street, sidewalk, or other surface.

### **Painting**

Two-dimensional artwork produced by applying paint or other media on a surface.

### **Performance Art**

Artwork created through actions by the artist and/or other participants that may be live, recorded, spontaneous, and/or scripted.

### **Photograph**

Image produced by the action of light on a light-sensitive material.

### **Sculpture**

Three-dimensional artwork produced through carving, modeling, casting, constructing, or other processes using a variety of materials.

### **Sound-Based Art**

Art that uses sound as both its medium (what it is made of) and its subject (what it is about).