

The Town of Concord, Massachusetts is pleased to announce a

Call for Art

On a prominently situated lawn in historic Concord Center, we seek a temporary art installation to creatively interpret the ways in which people have struggled for the fight for freedom through time in Concord, Massachusetts. Taking inspiration from the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution in 2025, the town seeks artists to consider the ways in which two 19th century Concord residents – Henry David Thoreau (1817 – 1862) and Ellen Garrison (1823 – 1892) - continued this fight for independence through the abolitionist cause. Through a visually compelling artwork, we hope to more deeply investigate a pivotal time in Concord’s past to bring overlooked stories to the fore and to more actively grapple with our generation’s work to provide liberty and justice for all.

This project is presented by the Town of Concord as part of “Making It Public,” a program of the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) with Forecast and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). This program seeks to support more diverse, inclusive, and equitable public artmaking across Massachusetts.

Applications close on January 8, 2024



Town of Concord
22 Monument Square
Concord, MA 01742

PublicArtCall@ConcordMA.gov

CALL FOR ART

The Town of Concord seeks a temporary art installation to creatively interpret the ways in which people have struggled for the fight for freedom through time in this community. Taking inspiration from the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution in 2025, the town seeks artists to consider the ways in which two 19th century Concord residents – Henry David Thoreau (1817 – 1862) and Ellen Garrison (1823 – 1892) - continued this fight for independence through the abolitionist cause. Through a visually compelling artwork, we hope to more deeply investigate a pivotal time in Concord's past to bring overlooked stories to the fore and to more actively grapple with our generation's work to provide liberty and justice for all.

The site for this installation is one with historic significance. In July 1846, author and abolitionist Henry David Thoreau spent a night in the county jail on the very spot that has been selected for this work of art. Thoreau refused to pay his annual poll tax saying "I cannot for an instant recognize . . . as my government [that] which is the slave's government also." By not paying this tax he thus spent one night in jail and this event inspired him to give an antislavery lecture, which was later published and known as "Civil Disobedience." Today, a small plaque makes note of the event at the old site of the jail.

Thoreau's abolitionist thinking was greatly influenced by the leadership of the women in town who were members of The Concord Female Anti-Slavery Society, including his two sisters and mother. These women determined to do their part to right the wrong of enslavement. They raised money by hosting fundraising fairs. The money provided food, clothing, and train tickets for people fleeing enslavement and helped cover the fees for antislavery speakers to appear throughout the state. Through their efforts, they brought a young Frederick Douglass to speak in Concord on three separate occasions. Among the 61 members was Black abolitionist Susan Garrison, the only member of color in the Concord society.

Susan Garrison's daughter, Ellen, grew up free in the town of Concord. Her grandfather was Caesar Robbins, a formerly enslaved man who fought in the American Revolution as a Patriot of Color. Her father, Jack, was born into slavery in New Jersey. Ellen and her siblings were able to attend the Concord Public Schools, but she was not a stranger to racial discrimination. She followed in her mother's footsteps to become an antislavery activist. As an adult she moved to Boston and became engaged with influential Black abolitionists there. Later, Ellen became a teacher to newly freed people in the South. In 1866 she tested the nation's first Civil Rights Act in court after she sat in a segregated waiting room in a Baltimore train station and was "forcibly ejected." She felt it was her duty to test the new law. "I feel as though I ought to strive to maintain my rights... it will be a stand for others...."

This project strives to spark new conversations amongst residents and visitors to town about what freedom and independence mean as we head into the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. After this installation, the town hopes to create a permanent memorial at this site with Ellen Garrison as its center. The memorial will honor the legacies of those who have fought for the rights of all people and inspire current and future generations to continue to strive for freedom and justice, no matter the cost. It is our hope that this initial temporary installation will start these conversations in Concord and help to inform the goals of the permanent installation.

PROJECT GUIDELINES

- **Eligibility:** Artists, aged 18 and over, working individually or in teams, in any phase of their career are encouraged to apply.
- **Creative Approach:** Preference given to designs that support more diverse, inclusive, and equitable public art and creatively respond to the proposed site. We encourage imaginative interpretation of the theme and invite a variety of conceptual approaches, materials, scale, and design.
- **Honorarium:** Semi-finalists will receive a \$500 stipend to refine their concepts. The artist/creative team selected for installation will receive \$20,000 to execute their work.
- **Presentation:** The semi-finalists will present concepts at a public forum prior to final selection.
- **Installation:** The art installation will be a temporary activation of the site roughly in the autumn of 2024. The intended display period is early September through late November 2024. However, the specific dates and installation period shall be determined in dialogue with the selected artist(s) with an eye to how the artwork is best suited to engage the public in meaningful ways.
- **Project Assistance:** The Town will facilitate any necessary municipal permits and collaboration with town departments.

SELECTION PROCESS

Submissions will be reviewed by an Advisory Committee consisting of Town of Concord staff, residents, business owners, and public art/placemaking enthusiasts. The group will review applications and work samples to select 3 to 6 semi-finalists. Semi-finalists will receive a stipend of \$500 to refine their concepts and develop a complete design to present at a public forum in the Concord Town House in February 2024.

At the public forum each semi-finalist will be asked to detail their idea in a 10-minute presentation that shall include not more than 10 digital slides and two display boards. During a casual reception, semi-finalists will have an opportunity to talk more casually with attendees about their proposals.

A contract will be awarded in late March 2024 for installation in the autumn of 2024. As part of municipal contracting requirements, proof of general liability insurance is required.

Selection Criteria:

Applications will be evaluated including, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- Preference will be given to Massachusetts-based artists; BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ artists are particularly encouraged to apply.
- Artistic merit of body of work samples;
- Strong site-responsive design concept;
- Potential for artist's work to engage passersby of diverse backgrounds in complex ideas in an accessible way;
- Feasibility of successful execution of project within the proposed time frame and budget;
- Effective communication and organizational skills; and
- Completeness of application.

PROJECT TIMELINE

- Info Sessions:
 - Virtual Sessions: attendance is optional
 - Monday, November 20, 2023 at 7 pm
 - Thursday, December 7, 2024 at noon
 - Site visit: attendance is optional
 - Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at 3 pm and 6 pm
- Concepts Due:
 - January 8, 2024 at midnight
 - Concept Application requires:
 - Rough sketch and written description of your idea
 - Up to 8 slides illustrating related work and/or previous installations
 - Resume and/or artist bios
- Semi-Finalists Announced:
 - No later than February 1, 2024
 - Semi-Finalists will receive stipends for concept development through grant agreements with the Town of Concord.
- Community Forum at Concord Town House by Semi-Finalists:
 - Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 6:30 pm
 - Attendance at this event is required of semi-finalists
 - Presentation format:
 - 10-minute public presentation
 - Submission of up to 10 digital slides and two display boards
- Finalist Project Selected:
 - By end of April, 2024
 - Artist will enter into grant agreement with Town of Concord for fabrication and installation
- Art Installation:
 - September through November 2024
 - Specific dates and display period shall be determined through dialogue with the selected artist

CONTEXT

Concord has long claimed an oversized role in the development of American political thought. This community actively preserves and treasures its historic legacy, consciously rooting its future in continuity with its past. In the middle of a wider conversation about race, justice, the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples, and the legacy of enslavement in the United States today, Concord seeks to continue reckoning with its own part in that history. As our country wrestles with a more complicated and still incomplete understanding of its history, communities like Concord are called to bring its skills of historic inquiry to more deeply examine its self-narratives and share this process of investigation.

In recent years, the Town of Concord has engaged in efforts to preserve and lift up the stories of the town's historic Black residents such as Caesar Robbins, Ellen Garrison, Zilpha White and George Washington Dugan. An African-American history walking tour highlights important sites in the town's Black and abolitionist histories, while special programming showcase specific individuals and events.

This temporary art installation will be part of the early commemorations in Concord 250, a celebration of the events that sparked the beginning of the armed struggle for American independence. Publicity and associated events for the artwork will be coordinated with other programming in the area during a time of heightened attention and activity.

The site has been selected a permanent memorial of the 250th anniversary, with construction tentatively scheduled to launch not long after the removal of this temporary artwork. The stated intention of the permanent memorial is "...for those who have come before but whose voices were not always heard, honored or remembered. With native daughter Ellen Garrison at its heart, the memorial will honor all those who came forward and stood for all people who struggled and said, 'I too shall participate in the gift of human liberty, human equality and human dignity...no matter the cost.'"

An online folder of resources can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/Concord-ArtCall>

SITE



The site is a partially shaded, sloping lawn at 12 Main Street on Monument Square in Concord, Massachusetts. In the heart of Concord Center, the town-owned property identified as Parcel 1693, is often overlooked. The first non-Indigenous settlement was here at the site of the Milldam. A water wheel once powered a gristmill, used by the surrounding farms. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the home of the Middlesex Hotel, a prominent gathering place for town people and visitors with business at the courthouse nearby. George W. Dugan worked here before volunteering to serve and dying in the Civil

War as part of the famed group of Black soldiers of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment. The small county jail was at the rear of the property. In a derelict condition, the property was donated to the town and the hotel demolished in 1900, as a commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the American Revolution on April 19, 1775.

The entire parcel today includes a cluster of memorials and historic markers, a municipal parking lot, and open green space. Key landmarks surrounding the site include Wright's Tavern (a muster point for Minutemen during the Battle of Lexington and Concord), the former County House (now a Catholic

rectory), the Town House (Concord's primary municipal offices) and a large granite obelisk honoring the Union soldiers of Concord who died in the Civil War.

A vibrant town center, Concord Center serves nearly 20,000 residents and tens of thousands of visitors each year. The neighborhood is rich with unique retailers, restaurants, and cultural sites within well-preserved historic properties.

The art installation site itself is the open green space of Parcel 1693. The defined area is approximately 120 feet deep and 70 feet wide. An open lawn is punctuated by a single tree with a bench facing Monument Square. The lawn gently slopes to the wetland vegetation surrounding Mill Brook, a narrow waterway that flows under Main Street. A stone and bronze marker at the rear of the site marks the approximate site of the former county jail. Subsurface stormwater management is located deeply below portions of the lawn area.

Artists/creative teams may incorporate landscape and architectural features provided there is no permanent impact. Water and electricity access is not available within the installation area itself but is proximate.

ADVISORY GROUP

Community and Cultural Advisors

Art for All: Margo Kimball

Concord Center for Visual Art: Kate James

Concord Prison Outreach: Sam Williams

Concord Museum: Susan Foster

Robbins House: Jen Turner, Liz Clayton, Anne Forbes

Thoreau Farm: Rebecca Migdal

Umbrella Arts Center: Jerry Wedge, Stephanie Marlin Curiel

51 Walden: Carole Wayland

Town of Concord Committee Representatives:

Concord 250 Executive Committee: Gary Clayton

Concord Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee: Joe Palumbo

Concord Historical Committee: Melissa Saalfield

Town of Concord Staff:

Concord Department of Public Works: Steve Dookran

Economic Vitality Manager: Mimi Graney

Tourism Manager: Beth Williams

Communications Manager: Donna McIntosh

Concord Free Library: Emily Smith

PROPOSAL

Due by **Monday, January 8, 2024 at midnight.**

Send to PublicArtCall@ConcordMA.gov. Applications will receive a response email to confirm receipt.

Include the following materials with your application as a single PDF.

1. Cover letter (up to 300 words) that includes:
 - a. Name of artist or creative team and names of participating individuals
 - b. Mailing address
 - c. Phone and email

2. Sketch and written description of your idea (no more than 4 pages):
 - a. Include description of materials, scale, and installation methods.
 - b. Provide information on relevant technical issues such as access to water and electricity, maintenance.
 - c. Describe how the site would be returned to its original condition.

3. Artist Statement (up to 800 words):
 - a. Explain how the piece relates to the Call's theme. How does this illustrate ideas related to freedom, liberty and justice? In what ways is your concept inspired by Henry David Thoreau and Ellen Garrison? What key message, insight, or question is communicated in the work?

4. Examples of Past Work:
 - a. Up to 8 slides illustrating related work and/or previous installations. For each cited work include details on date, dimensions, and a one sentence description.

5. Resume(s) and/or artist bio(s).