



**City of New Orleans Percent for Art Program
Call for Artists – Request for Qualifications (RFQ)**

Project Name: The Puppetry Parade

Project led by Arts New Orleans in partnership with NORD, New Orleans Public Library and City of New Orleans

1. RFQ Release Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2026

Application Deadline: Wednesday, July 29th at 11:59 PM CST

Budget: Total \$175,000 | Artist commissions \$30,000 - \$35,000 per site

Application:

<https://artscouncilofneworleans.submittable.com/submit/360273/puppetry-on-parade>

Artists who are interested in submitting to the Call for Artists- Request for Qualification are encouraged to contact Arts New Orleans with any questions about the project, its scope, or requirements, or how to complete an application after reviewing the Call for Artists- Request for Qualification

*Joycelyn Reynolds, Arts New Orleans President & CEO
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Contact:

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Puppets have long functioned as vessels for collective storytelling, protest, celebration, satire, and transformation. Existing somewhere between sculpture, performance, procession, and public ritual, they possess a unique ability to translate complex civic realities into experiences that are emotionally resonant, visually compelling, and accessible across generations.

The Puppetry Parade invites New Orleans artists, makers, culture bearers, and puppeteers to create illuminated puppets and puppetry inspired designs that respond to this moment in the city's history; exploring themes such as resilience, environmental change, education, public safety, cultural identity, economic inequality, joy, remembrance, and collective imagination.

Artists are encouraged to consider the puppet not simply as an object, but as a civic storyteller: a living monument capable of moving through neighborhoods, gathering communities, provoking dialogue, and embodying the spirit, tensions, and aspirations of contemporary New Orleans. Through light, movement, sound, and performance, these works can transform public space into sites of reflection, wonder, and shared experience.

Selected finalists will be presented to the public in two chapters. First, the puppets or puppetry inspired design will premiere at LUNA Fête, Arts New Orleans' annual festival of light, art, and technology, where they will be activated through procession, performance, and public interaction before audiences of more than 40,000 attendees. LUNA Fête (www.lunafete.org) will be held from November 13-15, 2026 in downtown New Orleans.

Following their festival debut, select works will enter the City of New Orleans' Percent for Art collection through permanent installation at designated New Orleans Recreation Development Commission and New Orleans Public Library sites. In this second life, the puppets will evolve from temporary performance objects into enduring civic artworks continuing to inspire imagination, dialogue, and community connection long after the festival concludes.

Eligibility

To qualify, applicants must:

- Be 18+ and legally authorized to work in the U.S.
- Reside in Orleans Parish or the greater New Orleans metro area
- Meet all contractual obligations and adhere to the timeline provided.
- Artists must be available to exhibit work during LUNA Fête, November 13 – 15th from 5pm – 10pm nightly

To support a broad range of artists over time, applicants are not eligible to apply if they are currently under contract for another Percent for Art project. However, artists with an active contract dated and signed prior to December 2023 remain eligible to apply for this opportunity.

All interested artists are invited to apply to this public art commission. Arts New Orleans is committed to centering racial equity in the selection of artists and artworks. Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other artists of color are highly encouraged to apply.

Information Sessions

- Session #1: Monday, July 13th at 5:30pm CST in person at 1474 N. Broad Street
- Session #2: Wednesday, July 15th at noon via Zoom, Session will be recorded and added to Submittable page following session
 - RSVP to join session:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/C9lOVS1iTVu84xhVvnqkXA>

Questions outside of sessions: Lindsay Glatz, lindsay@artsneworleans.org

About Arts New Orleans

The mission of Arts New Orleans is to improve the quality of life in New Orleans by supporting, activating, and investing in our city's greatest natural resource: our artists, cultural producers, and creative community. Arts New Orleans is a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded in 1975, designated by the Mayor and City Council as the city's official community arts agency.

Building on the abundant cultural wealth and creativity of our community, Arts New Orleans envisions a New Orleans in which arts and culture play a pivotal role in all areas of policy, planning, and placemaking. We believe arts and artists should be central to all community and economic development efforts, from public health to public safety, education, and infrastructure.

Arts New Orleans is the largest producer of public art in New Orleans. We offer artist and youth training programs, produce cultural events, and champion new opportunities for artists to develop their crafts. As a local/regional Arts Council, we advocate for expanded arts investment and serve as an intermediary grant-maker.

About Percent for Art

Begun in 1986, the Percent for Art program is the City of New Orleans' public art collection, managed by Arts New Orleans. Percent for Art places original works by local artists throughout city-operated public spaces, everywhere from branch libraries to City Hall to recreational centers to neutral grounds. There are currently more than 400 Percent for Art artworks enlivening our city's landscape, representing the creativity and strength of the artists who make New Orleans unlike any other city in the world.

About New Orleans Recreation Department

The New Orleans Recreation Development (NORD) Commission offers programs, events, and facilities for residents of all ages. From youth athletics and after-school programs to arts, fitness, and senior activities, NORD creates opportunities for the whole community to engage, learn, and have fun. Their vision is to advance the physical, mental, and social well-being of New Orleanians by providing safe and welcoming environments for recreational, athletic, and cultural experiences.

About New Orleans Public Libraries

The New Orleans Public Library is committed to equity in library services, collections, programs, and staff. By being a catalyst for change, maintaining an environment of diversity, inclusion, and respect, and eliminating barriers, they set the standard for an equitable City of New Orleans. The New Orleans Public Library is a catalyst for change in a growing, connected, and vibrant city. Their mission is to: Transform Lives, Enrich Neighborhoods, and Preserve History.

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Background

Puppets have historically been potent tools for social justice and community engagement, as well as entertainment. They possess a unique ability to distill complex social issues into accessible and compelling narratives, enabling them to reach diverse audiences across age, culture, and literacy levels.

Arts New Orleans is calling for local artists to create illuminated puppets or puppetry inspired elements to be exhibited as part of LUNA Fête, New Orleans' festival of light, art, and technology.

After LUNA Fête, artworks will be permanently installed in local New Orleans Public Libraries and New Orleans Recreation Department facilities as part of the City's Percent for Art permanent public art collection. Exact sites and puppet specifications will be provided to selected artists in the Request for Proposals (RFP).

In the RFP, artists selected to create proposals will be asked to design puppets or puppetry elements informed by Louisiana's rich cultural heritage, local histories, contemporary civic

issues, and the lived experiences of community members. The resulting designs should showcase research and engagement activities which explore regional traditions, environmental and social themes, neighborhood identities, and other relevant cultural considerations that will inform the artistic approach and ensure the work reflects the unique character and values of the communities it represents.

By weaving local narratives and characters into their storytelling, artists and puppeteers can highlight key social issues facing New Orleans including educational disparities, the impacts of crime, economic inequality, and environmental challenges in a manner that is accessible and resonant with both young audiences and the broader community.

A goal of the project is that the puppet performances bridge cultural and socioeconomic divides, bringing diverse community members together to witness, reflect, and act. Through the universal language of puppetry, complex civic issues are rendered into compelling stories that inspire empathy, awareness, and, ultimately, community-led solutions to the challenges New Orleans faces.

Project Scope

- Commission of 5 permanent, site-specific puppetry inspired public artworks
- Artworks will be exhibited at LUNA Fête and then placed for permanent installation in New Orleans Public Libraries or New Orleans Recreation Department buildings
- Location: Exact location of permanent puppet sites will be announced in the Phase 2 Request for Proposals (RFP)
- Artworks should be durable, low-maintenance, and context-responsive
- Puppet display may be suspended, self supporting, or placed within a artwork display case. The concept design should be suitable for one of these installation methods
- Community engagement required in proposal design process

This commission is for permanent public artwork(s) with a lifespan of 20+ years. Artists must propose materials, fabrication, and installation methods suitable for durability within an interior environment. Artworks must be durable, structurally sound, long-lasting, and low maintenance. Materials and maintenance plans will be reviewed and approved by Arts New Orleans as part of the design proposal

Artwork Parameters

- 5 permanent site-specific puppetry inspired public artworks
- Artworks must explore civic issues and values using puppetry as the overarching artwork theme. Final Proposed designs may encompass:
 - Interior puppet sculptures
 - Interior suspended puppets
 - Interior freestanding puppetry elements – ex: puppet theatre or backdrop

Site Details

Specific site details will be released in the RFP. Sites include areas for freestanding puppets, puppetry inspired structures, and suspended puppets.

Artist Responsibilities

Selected finalists will be expected to:

- Conduct site visit(s) to LUNA Fete and potential installation site(s).
- Include a community engagement plan in their submission materials
- Develop puppet concepts that reflect and celebrate Louisiana's diverse cultures, histories, communities, and contemporary issues.
- Utilize research, storytelling, and community input to shape the artistic vision and design of the puppets.
- Work collaboratively with Arts New Orleans, NORD, New Orleans Public Library, and the selection committee to develop concepts, incorporate feedback, and refine proposals.
- Prepare and submit final design proposal(s) for review and approval.

If selected to move forward beyond the finalist phase, the artist or artist team will additionally be responsible for:

- Developing and managing the project budget, including the artist fee
- Creating a detailed materials list, project budget, and work plan for approval
- Collaborating with Arts New Orleans' project management team through fabrication and installation
- Identifying and contracting with fabricators, engineers, or other professionals as needed
- Completing the project within the agreed-upon budget and timeline
- Securing all required insurance for the duration of the project
- Providing a comprehensive maintenance manual prior to project closeout

Arts New Orleans Responsibilities

Arts New Orleans will provide overall project management and administrative support, including:

- Leading project management for the duration of the project, including drafting and executing contracts with the selected artist and project partners, establishing meeting schedules, and processing invoices
- Coordinating with the City of New Orleans and other relevant agencies to obtain required permits and approvals

- Leading marketing, communications, and public engagement related to the project
- Coordinating professional documentation of the project, including photography and archival materials
- Maintaining project records and administrative documentation

Project Schedule

Artist Selection Process Part 1 – Request for Qualifications (RFQ)	
Project Component	Dates – All 2026
RFQ Released	Wednesday, July 1
RFQ Information Session / Q&A (optional)	Monday, July 13 at 5:30 PM at 1474 N. Broad Street
RFQ Information Session / Q&A (optional)	Wednesday, July 15 at noon
Deadline for RFQ Submission	Wednesday, July 29th at 11:59 PM CST
Application Review	Monday, August 3 – Monday, August 10
Artist Notification (finalists)	Tuesday, August 11

Artist Selection Process Part 2: Request for Proposals (RFP)	
Project Component	Dates
Pre-Proposal Meeting & Site Visit	Monday, August 17 – Wednesday, August 19
Proposal Deadline	Sunday, September 13 at 11:59 PM CST
Proposal Review	Monday, September 14 – Friday, September 18
Selection Committee Meeting	Monday, September 21
Winning Artists Notification	Tuesday, September 22

Commission Award	
Project Component	Dates
Contract Execution	Friday, September 25
Fabrication	Friday, September 25 – Friday, November 6
Artwork Delivery	Friday, November 13, before 2pm
Artwork Unveiling at LUNA Fete	Friday, November 13 – Sunday, November 15
Installation	Monday, November 16 – Friday, December 4

Arts New Orleans reserves the right to change the project schedule.

PROJECT BUDGET & ARTIST CONTRACT TERMS

Site budgets will range from \$30,000 - \$35,000

The selected artist/artist team will be in a contractual agreement with Arts New Orleans. An example of the Percent for Art Standard Agreement can be found [here](#).

Prior to performing any works or services with Arts New Orleans, the selected artist/artist team will be required to hold (at the artist's expense) and show proof of insurance. Insurance requirements can be found [here](#).

ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS

This opportunity will be conducted as a two-part competition. In Part 1: Request for Qualifications (RFQ), interested artists are invited to submit materials via Submittable demonstrating their qualifications (examples of previous work, resume, statement of interest, etc.). From this pool, finalists will be selected to advance to Part 2: Request for Proposals (RFP). Each selected finalist will receive a \$2,500 stipend to develop a detailed proposal for The Puppetry Parade.

Part 1: Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

The application period will remain open until **Wednesday, July 29th at 11:59 PM CST**. RFQ submissions will be reviewed by Arts New Orleans, LUNA Fête committee members, and a selection committee that includes members of the Percent for Art Committee.

The selection committee will review all RFQ applications using the established selection criteria. Based on this evaluation, the committee will select finalists to advance to Part 2: Request for Proposals (RFP).

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 1. Artistic Excellence:** Quality of past work, creativity, and uniqueness of the applicant's concept and design, strength of artistic voice and concept development, visual impact, and craftsmanship.

2. Relevant Experience: Experience with puppetry, costumery, or working in similar styles, along with collaboration with partners, stakeholders, and communities.

3. Approach to Community Engagement: Demonstrated ability to meaningfully engage with community stakeholders and integrate public input into the artist process.

4. Project Understanding & Approach: Demonstrated understanding of the project goals, site, and theme, and the strength and thoughtfulness of the artist's proposed approach to engaging with them.

5. Overall Project Fit: Overall alignment of the artist's practice, experience, and perspective with the project's goals, context, and community.

All RFQ applicants will be notified by August 11th of the committee's decision, and finalists will receive instructions for submitting detailed proposals, including paperwork to issue the \$2,500 stipend provided to develop their proposals.

Part 2: Request for Proposals (RFP)

The finalists will be invited to create and present a proposal for The Puppetry Parade. Each finalist will receive a \$2,500 stipend to support the development of a proposal, which may include written descriptions, images, models, renderings or other visual materials, and must show an understanding of how their artistic practice aligns with the goals of the commission and the core values and placemaking principles of the project. Proposals (RFP) must be submitted by **Sunday, September 13 at 11:59 PM CST**. The selection committee will review the five (5) finalist proposals and recommend one winning artist or artist team.

Pre-Proposal Meeting & Site Visits - Monday, August 17 – Wednesday, August 19

After finalists are selected, a mandatory Pre-Proposal Meeting and Site Visits will be held to give finalists detailed information on the project, the site, and the requirements for submitting a proposal.

Proposal Development

Finalists will have the opportunity to receive project development guidance and technical support from Arts New Orleans public art consultant in the areas of materials selection, budgeting, and fabrication feasibility.

Submission of Proposals

Final Proposals must be submitted by **Sunday, September 13 at 11:59 PM CST** - *proposal submission accepted only through Submittable*.

The finalists will submit original proposals that include visual renderings and drawings of the proposed artwork, along with written narratives that describe the concept, material choices, community engagement, schedule, budget, and maintenance plan.

Committee Selection

September 21, 2026 – time TBD

The finalists will give a presentation about their proposal to the Selection Committee and answer any questions about their designs.

Winning Artist Notification (email) - September 22, 2026

Contract Execution - September 25, 2026

Once the winning artist receives approval from the Design Feasibility Review, the artist will enter into a Standard Public Art Agreement with Arts New Orleans for the fabrication and installation of the artwork. Once a contract with Arts New Orleans is in place, the artist will begin receiving payment and start fabrication of the artwork.

APPLICATION

Artists interested in applying will be asked to complete the application through Arts New Orleans' online Submittable system. A Submittable account setup is required to apply. Artists should prepare the following information and materials before submitting them online.

2. **Artist/Studio Name**
3. **Email**
4. **Phone Number**
5. **Address**
6. **Council District** Please list all Districts you and/or your collective are active in
7. **Outside Orleans Parish** If located outside Orleans Parish please indicate your connection to New Orleans and why you would like to be considered
8. **Website** (if applicable)
9. **Social Media Handles** (if applicable)
10. **Personal Identification:** Which category/categories best describe your race/ethnicity? Check all that apply or self-describe (Optional)

11. **Availability:** Are you available for the duration of the outlined project schedule? Yes or no
12. **Community-Engaged Projects:** Do you have previous experience creating and managing a project with community members? Yes or No, please explain (1,000 character max)
13. **Community Engagement Ideas** Artist to outline their plan to meet the required community engagement component (1,000 character max)
14. **Artist/Studio Statement:** A short-written response that addresses (3000-character max):
 - a. Your artistic practice
 - b. What motivates you / interests you most about this project?
 - c. Your community/stakeholder engagement approach during the design phase of the project
 - d. Your general availability during the project period. Please indicate other professional obligations and any other constraints on your availability
15. **Resume/CV:** Acceptable file types: .pdf, .doc, .docx. (up to 2 pages)
Please label your file: "**First Name_Last Name_Resume**" or "**Studio Name_Resume**"
16. **Work Samples:** Submit a minimum of 5 and up to 10 photos of past completed work that you consider relevant to this project.
 - a. Acceptable file types: .jpg, .png, .mov, .mp4 and must be no more than 300dpi
 - b. Label each file:
"**ArtistLastName_WorkSampleName** or "**StudioName_WorkSampleName**"
17. **Work Sample Description List:** For each work sample submitted, list the following (1 page max). Acceptable file types: .pdf, .doc, .docx.
Artwork title, Artist name
Location, Date of completion, Budget
Medium, Dimensions
Brief description
Label your file: "**ArtistLastName_WorkSample DescriptionList**"
or "**StudioName_ WorkSampleDescriptionList**"
18. **Submittable application link:**
<https://artscouncilofneworleans.submittable.com/submit/360273/puppetry-on-parade>