

Information from Meeting at Ann Arbor Art Center and email updates:

Overview: The Ann Arbor Art Center has been chosen to manage the selection of artwork to be produced on cast iron manhole covers throughout the city of Ann Arbor. This project is part of a city initiative to infuse art into the early stages of construction project planning. Three artist designs will be selected to be produced on manhole covers throughout the six-year production schedule, likely to begin in 2018. It is intended for each winning design to be produced for a two-year period. Each of the three winning designs will be awarded \$1,000 stipend payment from the City.

The Ann Arbor Art Center (AAAC) has been selected to run the preliminary phases of this project, selecting and recommending three artists works to be put on manhole covers over the next several years. Manhole covers are produced through a five-step manufacturing process: pattern making, mold preparation, melting/pouring, and cooling and finishing. New molds are prepared approximately every two years but this time length can vary based on the number of manhole covers that are replaced. During this project, as new molds need to be prepared, they will contain one of the winning artwork designs. Designs will be produced for approximately two years each but the length of time may be more or less. The City intends to produce each of the three winning designs during the course of the six-year production period. While it is the city's intent to put in place all three designs, they have said they cannot guarantee they all will be implemented.

Manhole Fun Facts: there are 24,995 manhole covers in Ann Arbor. Typically, 200-300 are replaced every year, not because of wear, but as a matter of course for large road and utility construction projects. Otherwise, they can last 80+ years. They weigh about 150 pounds.

The AAAC has met with EJ Foundry (the primary manhole cover producer based here in Michigan) to review specs, pricing, art limitations, etc. in preparation for the creation of the Call For Art. A draft of the Call has been shared with the Advisory Committee and will be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

The AAAC is also reaching out to inform the community and poll them regarding the project prior to the creation of the Call for Art so that their feedback can be included and inform the Call for Art.

Mark your calendar for 2 TOWN HALL Meetings hosted by the AAAC

- Nov. 7 at Ann Arbor District Library - Westgate Branch. 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Nov. 7 at Ann Arbor Distilling Company - 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Other meetings are in the works including one with the Neutral Zone.

Short questionnaires were distributed at some AAAC events to get feedback as well. 35 responses were received thus far.

Upcoming dates/schedule - draft

- November 1, 2017: Call for entry opens; questions period opens;
- November 15, 2017: Question period closes;
- December 15, 2017: Call for entry closes; Internal review by Art Center staff begins;
- January 15-30, 2018: External advisory committee reviews submissions resulting in 4-6 semifinalist designs;
- January 31-February 7, 2018: City-appointed fabricator reviews semifinalist designs to determine feasibility;

- February 8-18, 2018: Public voting on the top 4-6 semifinalists resulting in a finalist;
 - February 19-28, 2018: City staff work with Art Center staff to prepare for the presentation of the finalists to the Ann Arbor City Council and/or Public Art Commission for final approvals.
- Semifinalists announced prior to January 31, 2018; finalists announced after February 28, 2018.

Attachment: Image showing design space on the manhole cover.