

# URBANART COMMISSION

2023  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

Cover: Juneteenth Legacy Mural | Douglass Park  
Artists: Jamond Bullock + Eric Okdeh



# A NOTE FROM UAC'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the new Executive Director of UrbanArt Commission (UAC), I am honored to address you at the close of an eventful and transformative year. Although I joined the UAC team in November 2023, the remarkable achievements and deep-rooted impact of our organization throughout the past year have profoundly inspired me.

2023 was a year of resilience and innovation. Our commitment to enriching our city through public art has never wavered. We've seen firsthand how art can uplift spirits, foster community, and spark meaningful conversations in times of uncertainty.

Reflecting on the past year, I am particularly moved by the ways UAC has continued to support the creative community. Our initiatives have not only provided essential financial support to artists but have also carved out new avenues for artistic expression and engagement. From multimedia installations to community-driven projects, UAC has demonstrated a steadfast dedication to making art accessible and relevant to all.

As we look ahead, I am excited to build upon this legacy of impactful work. My vision is to further deepen our connections within the community, explore new collaborations, and continue to champion the vital role of art in our city's cultural fabric. We are at a pivotal moment where the power of art to heal, unite, and inspire is more evident than ever.

I am grateful to my predecessor, Lauren Kennedy, for her exemplary leadership and to each of you for your unwavering support of UAC. Together, we will continue to navigate these challenging times with creativity and hope, reinforcing the transformative power of art in our community.

Thank you for being a part of this journey. I look forward to what we will accomplish together in the coming year.

With grace and gratitude,  
Lakeisha Edwards





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@okdehmurals

Juneteenth Legacy Mural | Douglass Park  
Artists: Jamond Bullock + Eric Okdeh

# IN 2023, UAC WORKED ON PUBLIC ART PROJECTS WITH OUR NEIGHBORS IN:

Binghampton

Collierville

Cordova

Douglass

Downtown

Frayser

Hickory Hill

Hollywood & Vollintine

Liberty Park

Mallory Heights

North Memphis

Orange Mound

Raleigh

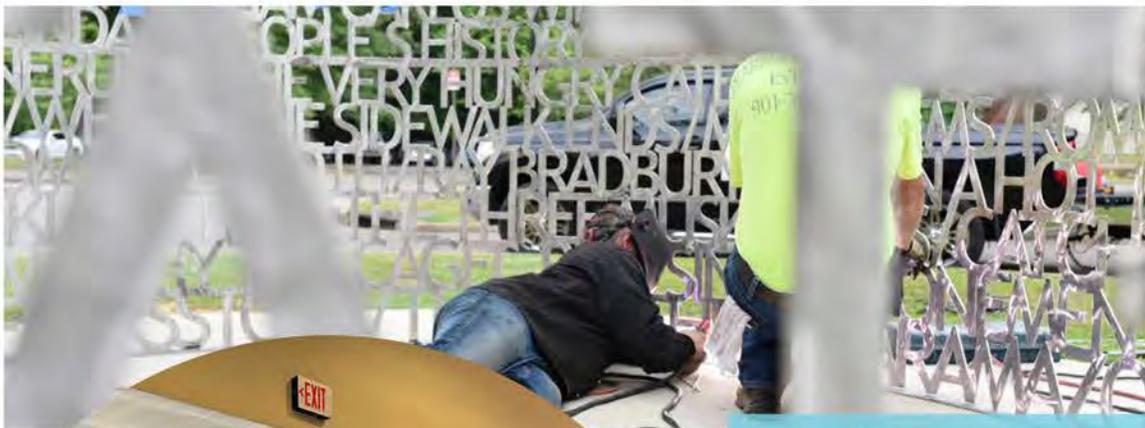
Soulsville

South City

South Memphis

Westwood

Whitehaven



Cordova Library sculpture installation  
Artist: Youngblood Studio



Mallory Heights bus shelter enhancements  
community engagement  
Artists: Lawrence Matthews + Ahmad George





**Over \$1.8 million in active project contracts**

**75**

artists supported in the last year through active projects and programs

**96%**

of artists selected are based in Memphis



**52%**  
artists of color  
**57%**  
wxmen artists



Artist: Kiersten Williams | BRIDGES mural dedication



Artist Tony Hawkins painting a Welcome to Westwood mural through the Neighborhood Art Initiative (NAI) program

# ARTISTS COMMISSIONED IN 2023

**Accelerate Memphis:**

**Orange Mound**

The Metal Museum

**Art & Environment:**

**Carpenter Art Garden**

Kelsey Harrison

Suzy Hendrix

**Art & Environment:**

**Hollywood & Vollintine**

Kendrick Pendleton

Reanna Ruddick

**Gooch Park**

Jamond Bullock

**IKEA Memphis**

Brandon Marshall

**Jesse Turner Park**

Maxwell Emcays

**Kroger Collierville**

Juan Rojo

**Memphis Sports & Events Center**

**in Liberty Park**

Allie Mounce

Anthony Lee

**Revisiting & Responding**

Hope Hudson

Kiersten Williams

Rodney Ellis

**UAC Tiny Gallery**

**& Billboard**

Jasmine Marie

Kate Roberts

Nick Peña



UAC Tiny Gallery  
Kate Roberts

# OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

2023 was a year both anchored in established connections and open to new opportunities. UAC partnered with several people and places to support local artists and engage communities in public art.

We hosted art exhibitions, a new cohort of New Public Artists (NPA) fellows, public art yoga, artist happy hours, and artists workshops, all at no cost to attendees. From office to art gallery, UAC's own doors were open to the public year round as we conferenced with artists and neighborhood stakeholders as well as showcased installations for the Tennessee Triennial for Contemporary Art exhibition, studio work from our NPA fellows, and the City's most recent round of Movable Collection direct purchases.

UAC bid farewell to our beloved former Executive Director, Lauren Kennedy, as she embarked upon her dream venture opening Sheet Cake Gallery and then welcomed our new Executive Director, Lakeisha Edwards, with open arms. The future is bright!



UAC team poses with new Executive Director Lakeisha Edwards



# JET LAG EXHIBITION



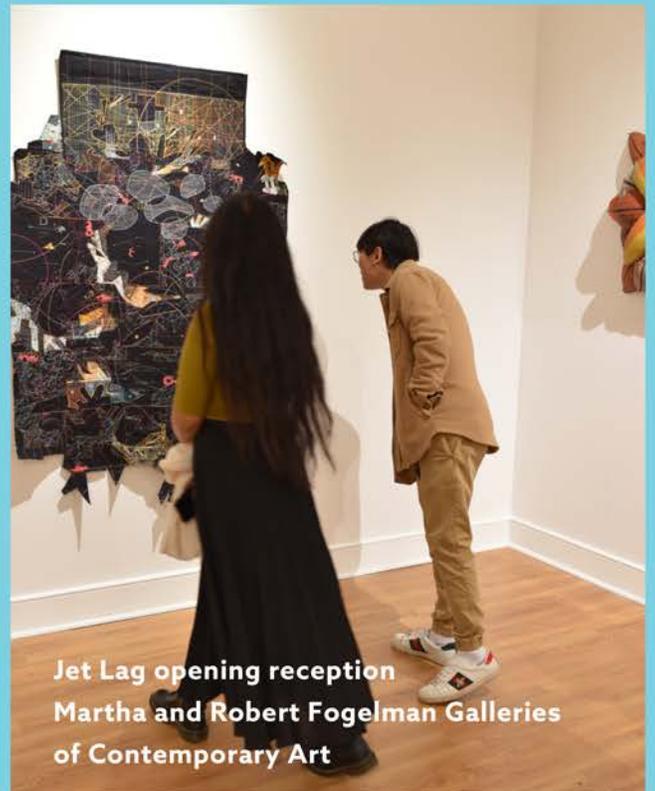
Jet Lag opening reception  
Martha and Robert Fogelman Galleries of Contemporary Art

# JET LAG EXHIBITION

UAC, in collaboration with the University of Memphis Department of Art, kicked off 2023 with an exhibition highlighting works from sixteen artists included in the new collection at the Memphis International Airport.

This exhibition, entitled *Jet Lag*, celebrates a diverse body of works representing the wildly vibrant and dynamic creative community of Memphis. The collection offers an introduction to the many sides of Memphis; for those who call the city home, it is a warm welcome, familiar but never predictable.

Featured Artists: Danny Broadway, Roger Allan Cleaves, Brandon Donahue, Melissa Dunn, Beth Edwards, Catherine Erb, Nelson Gutierrez, Erin Harmon, Chuck Johnson, Paula Kovarik, Susan Maakestad, Lawrence Matthews, Carl Moore, Nick Peña, Veda Reed, Vitus Shell, and Jared Small



# JET LAG EXHIBITION



Jet Lag opening reception  
Martha and Robert Fogelman Galleries of Contemporary Art

# TENNESSEE TRIENNIAL FOR CONTEMPORARY ART



Tend To opening reception  
UAC office

# TENNESSEE TRIENNIAL FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

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UAC was proud to participate in the inaugural 2023 Tennessee Triennial for Contemporary Art with *Tend To*, a flora-filled group exhibition featuring works from artist and curator Joel Parsons, interdisciplinary sculptural artist Sarah Elizabeth Cornejo, and floral designer and botanical artist Verushka Dior of the Mane Wildling.

Exploring themes of healing, growth, and self identity, this installation of curated objects and site-specific sculptural works invited the viewer to ponder how and by what means does one begin to care for themselves, others, and the world around them. Programming for this installation included a bustling opening reception, a meditative sound bath, and a lively artist talk to close.

**Tend To exhibition**

**Artists L-R: Sarah Elizabeth Cornejo, Joel Parsons,  
and Verushka Dior of The Mane Wildling**



# TENNESSEE TRIENNIAL FOR CONTEMPORARY ART



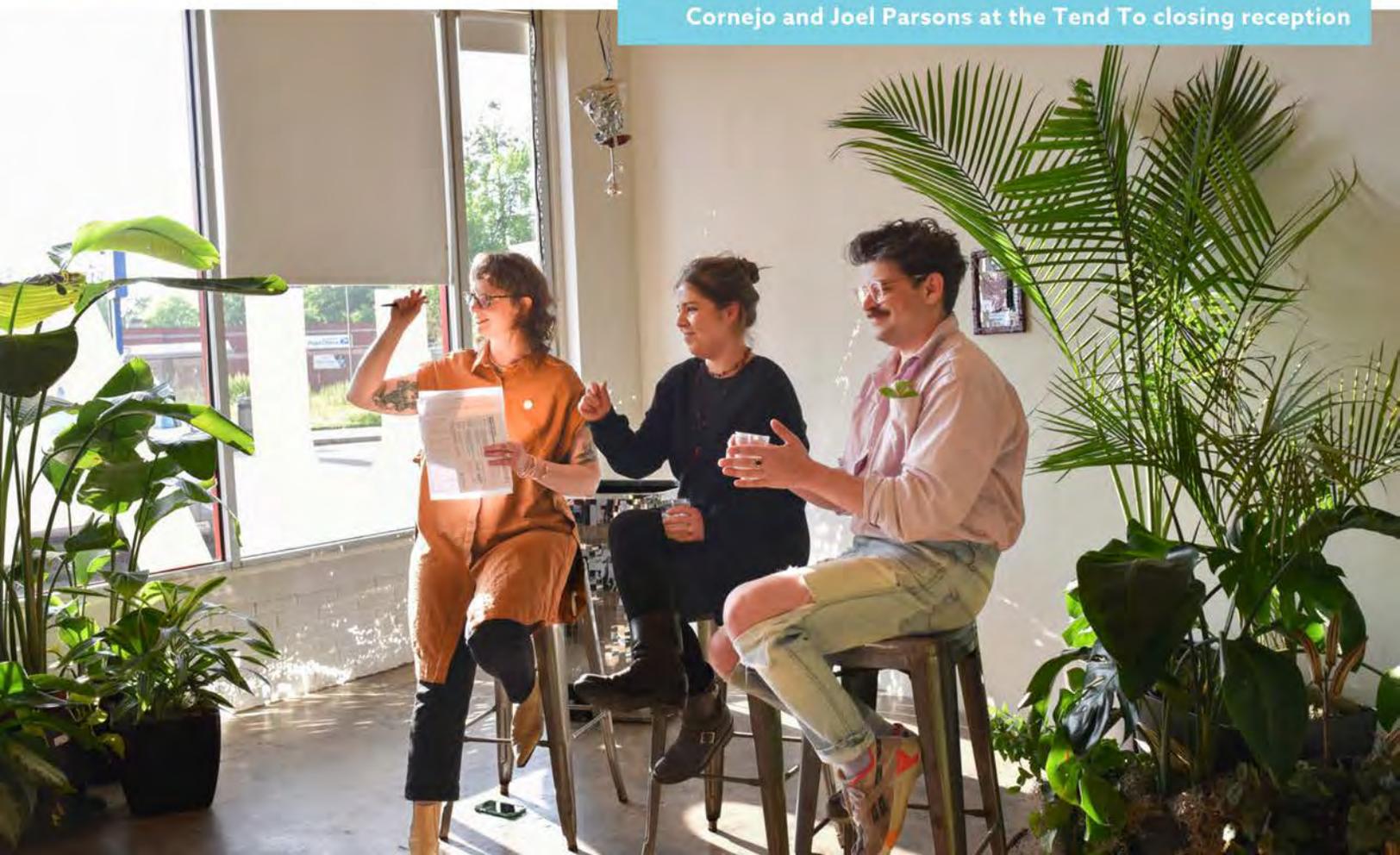
Tend To Opening Reception + Sound Bath  
left: opening reception  
right: Caroline Collins poses before hosting  
her soundbath + breathwork session



# TENNESSEE TRIENNIAL FOR CONTEMPORARY ART



Lauren Kennedy moderating an artist talk with Sarah Elizabeth Cornejo and Joel Parsons at the Tend To closing reception



# TENNESSEE TRIENNIAL FOR CONTEMPORARY ART



Sarah Elizabeth Cornejo



# NEW PUBLIC ARTISTS FELLOWSHIP



## **New Public Artists Fellowship**

The 2023 cohort visited Governor's Island in New York as part of their research and development image of fellows viewing artist Rachel Whiteread's installation 'Cabin'

# NEW PUBLIC ARTISTS FELLOWSHIP

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In 2023, UAC launched the second New Public Artists (NPA) fellowship in partnership with the University of Memphis Department of Art and with support from Tennessee Arts Commission. NPA is an intensive professional development program for artists who are interested in expanding their artistic practices and pursuing large-scale sculpture commissions. The selection committee for this fellowship prioritized awarding the opportunity to artists of color and women to address the lack of diversity and equity in the field of public sculpture.



## New Public Artists Fellowship

Our 2023 cohort includes Justin Bowles, Kong Wee Pang, Kendrick Pendleton, Ethan James McVay, Brandon Scott, & Pam McDonnell

# NEW PUBLIC ARTISTS FELLOWSHIP

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The 2023 NPA cohort traveled to New York in February as part of their research and development process, viewing public sculptures in Governor's Island and Storm King Art Center and visiting with artists at Sultz Fabrication and various other studios and galleries.



The fellows continued their training with weekly classes throughout the spring of 2023, which equipped them to develop site-specific design proposals for public sculptures. Their studio work was also featured in an exhibition at UAC in the fall of 2023. The fellows are fabricating large-scale temporary public sculptures to be installed on the University of Memphis campus in the spring of 2024.



# NEW PUBLIC ARTISTS FELLOWSHIP

NPA exhibition | UAC office

top: Kong Wee Pang

bottom L-R: Brandon Scott, Kendrick Pendleton



# NEW PUBLIC ARTISTS FELLOWSHIP

NPA exhibition | UAC office  
top L-R: Pam McDonnell, Ethan James McVay  
bottom: Ethan James McVay



# NEW PUBLIC ARTISTS FELLOWSHIP



NPA exhibition | UAC office  
Justin Bowles

# ENGAGING PUBLIC ART



Public Art Yoga returned in 2023 featuring instructors Caroline Collins, Candace Hermine, and Andrea Jacobo paired with public art works across our city.

# ENGAGING PUBLIC ART



A MONUMENT TO LISTENING

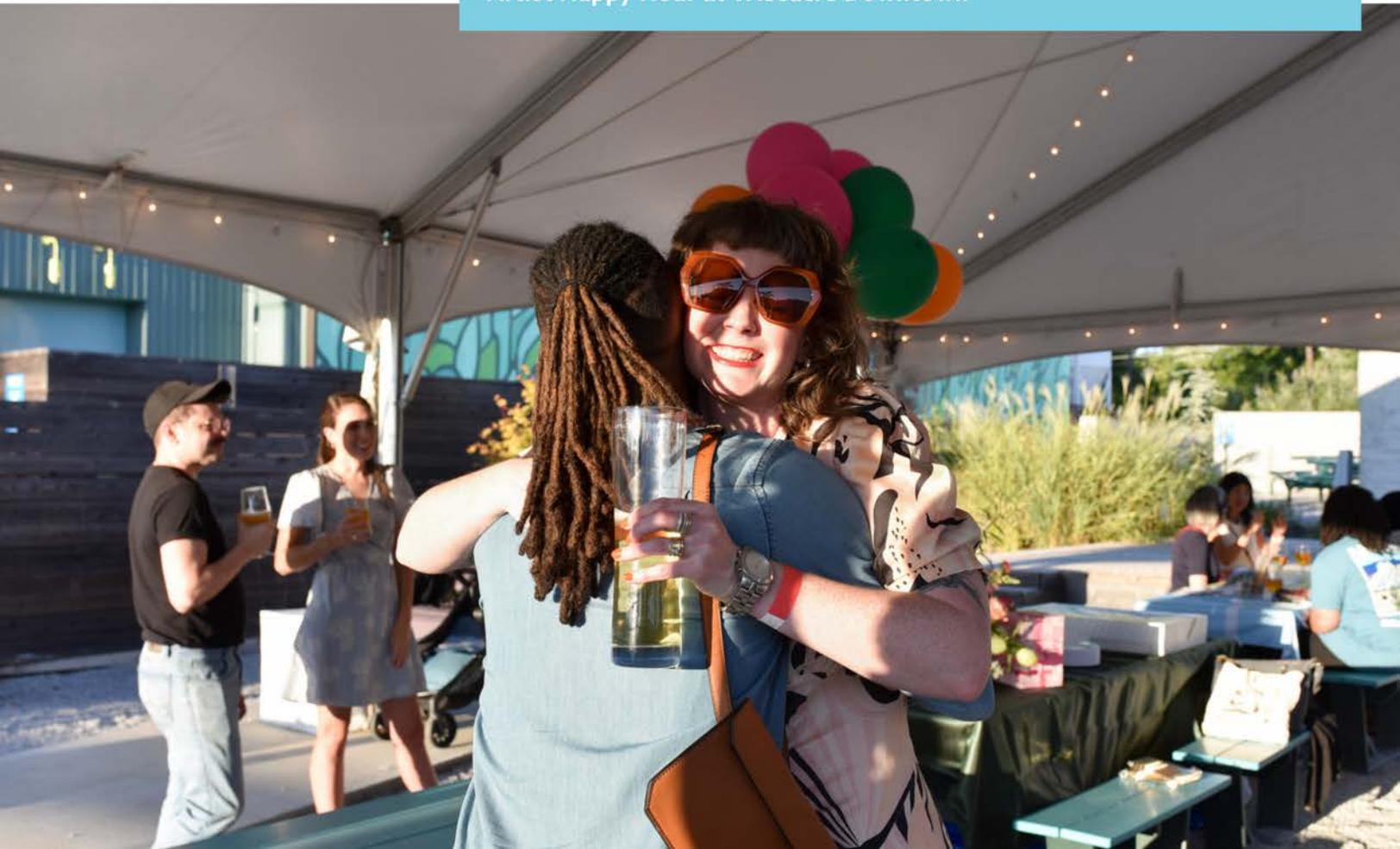
UAC partnered with Memphis River Parks to engage the public in programming centered around Theaster Gates' 'A Monument to Listening' sculpture in Tom Lee Park.



# ENGAGING ARTISTS



Friends of UAC toasting former executive director, Lauren Kennedy, at the Artist Happy Hour at Wiseacre Downtown



# ENGAGING ARTISTS



New executive director, Lakeisha Edwards, and program manager, Richard Echols, addressing artists at the year-end Artist Happy Hour at Cossitt Library



# ARTIST WORKSHOPS

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UAC hosted a series of artist workshops throughout the year in an effort to develop local artists interested in pursuing public art projects. Curriculum covered a range of topics from the definition of public art to the details of the application process. UAC partnered with Forecast Public Art and local artists Joel Parsons, Tony Hawkins, and Brandon Gaia Marshall as guest speakers and Brittney Boyd Bullock, Felicia Wheeler, and Chuck Wilson for portfolio photography and review. A special thank you to ARTSmemphis for sponsoring these opportunities!



# 2023 MOVABLE COLLECTION

Ahmad George

Alex Warble

Anna Bodnar

Cesar Bolaños

Cheeto Ryan

Claudia Tullos-Leonard

Elizabeth Edwards

Emily Thomas

Eric Echols

Erica Vanhaute

Frank D. Robinson, Jr.

Jacob Brown

Jimpsie Ayres

Johana Moscoso

Justin Bowles

Kaylyn Webster

Khara Woods

Leanna Hicks Carey

Lisa Williamson

Madame Frankie

Meng Chang Collective

Neena Wang

Phyllis Boger

Reanna Ruddick

Rose Marr Scott

Sean Winfrey

Sophia Mason

Stacy Kiehl

Supvain Pritchard

Tayla Barnett

Whitney Rhodes

Zack Orsborn



Movable Collection exhibition opening  
UAC office

# MOVABLE COLLECTION

Through the Movable Collection direct purchase program, UAC and the City of Memphis support local talent and showcase an array of multidisciplinary art for the public to enjoy. The Movable Collection is displayed on a rotating basis in municipal buildings including City Hall, libraries, and community centers. These art works serve as an archive for future generations of Memphians, representing the diversity of local visual arts, craft, and design.

This year, UAC continued to partner with the Memphis Public Libraries to create pop-up galleries in branch libraries. In 2023, works totaling \$62,000 from 33 Memphis-based artists were selected for display in various library branches so that all Memphis libraries will now feature works from the Movable Collection. UAC hosted an exhibition of these purchases for the public to view before installation.



Movable Collection exhibition opening  
UAC office



Movable Collection exhibition opening  
UAC office

# MOVABLE COLLECTION



Movable Collection exhibition opening  
UAC office

# UAC TEAM

## STAFF



**Lakeisha Edwards**

Executive  
Director



**Mallory Key**

Operations  
Manager



**Gabrielle Brooks**

Communications  
& Development  
Manager



**Mary Kathryn Davis**

Development  
Officer



**Kayla J. Smith-Hardy**

Senior Program Manager



**Richard Echols**

Program Manager



**Travis Washington**

Program Manager

## BOARD

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**Chantal Drake**

**Mary Haizlip**

**Ashlee Hendry**

**Laura Gray McCann**

**Joel Parsons**

**Nefertiti Orrin (Chair)**

**Kristen Rambo**

**Dr. David Schwartz**

**Amelia Thompson**

# SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kenneth Wayne Alexander  
Marcha Allen  
Amanzi Arnett  
Sam Ballard  
Angela Barksdale  
Patrice Bates Thompson  
Toonky Berry  
Susan Berry  
Jarad Bingham  
Dr. J.B. Blocker  
Charles Blockett  
Jamal Bodie  
Trey Box  
Annar Brown

Albert Brown  
Tamara Brown  
Brittney Boyd Bullock  
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Therrious Davis

Regenia Dowell  
Melissa Dunn  
Tonya Dyson  
Roger Ekstrom  
Coronda Ewing  
Telise Ezell-Turner  
Megan Farrell  
Lester Ferdinand  
Mike Flowers  
Marlon Foster  
Scott Fox  
Lurlynn Franklin  
Hussein Ghelichkhani  
Ural Grant  
Tim Green  
Adriane Hall  
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Artists: Lawrence Matthews, Ahmad George, & Lorenzo Scuggs  
Cherokee Heights neighborhood signage dedication



# SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Jana Wilson  
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Artist: Kiersten Williams | BRIDGES mural dedication

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A R T S  
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2021-2024 UAC projects are supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number SLFRP5534 awarded to the State of Tennessee by the U.S. Department of Treasury.

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## **our mission**

**UAC creates opportunities for artists and neighborhoods to connect and shape spaces through public art.**

**Your support makes this work possible.  
Become a public art collector today.**

**[uacmem.org/support](https://uacmem.org/support)**



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