



City of Beverly, Massachusetts

PRESS RELEASE

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RE: BEVERLY ESTABLISHES ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

BEVERLY, MA – The Beverly Arts District (BAD) is excited to announce the City’s first Artist in Residence initiative kicks off this month with a Grand Opening on September 10th. The 2021 Beverly Artist in Residence Pilot Program will help the City recover from COVID-19 related shutdowns by increasing pedestrian traffic downtown while also supporting the creative workforce. “We believe establishing this annual Artist in Residence Program will heighten community appreciation and love of arts and culture and help strengthen our downtown economy.” said Beverly’s Mayor Michael Cahill.

Through this initiative the City of Beverly and partners will support local artisans and highlight an industry that has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Artist in Residence will use arts and culture to highlight the City’s COVID-19 recovery through handmade art pieces, community engagement, and creative economic development engagement activities that will support other Downtown businesses. Darlene Wynne, Planning Director and the Project Manager said, “The Beverly Arts District, and the arts and culture industry as whole, has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Zooguu, as the Artist in Residence, will be an essential component in helping to bring people back to enjoy downtown Beverly in a safe way.”

The residency will take place through October 31, 2021 at 285 Cabot Street, the restaurant portion of Chianti, which is temporarily closed. Operating hours will be 11:00am – 7:00pm Friday and Saturday and 11:00am – 4:00pm on Sunday. Find more info at: <https://www.beverlyma.gov/792/Arts-Culture-in-Beverly>.

Artist pair Jennifer Gubicza and Brian Gubicza, together Zooguu, were selected through a competitive Call-for-Artists issued in June 2021. The pair specialize in imaginative fiber arts, soft sculpture, illustration, and paper cut art. One of 30 exceptional artist applications, Zooguu stood out for a compelling and accessible proposal and for their experience completing projects with other communities and businesses, which will be a significant advantage during the City’s first artist residency.

Jen Gubicza recalls "our artwork is cute, vibrant and full of fun, and we’re thrilled to be able to bring that energy and spark to Beverly’s first Artist in Residence Program." Zooguu’s residency will consist of three parts: Beverly Creature Quest - an art-based scavenger hunt tracking down Jen’s unique fiber art sculptures, which will be placed in local businesses; a pop-up storefront showcasing the artists’ work and providing a space for community art making; and a community art quilt celebrating Beverly designed by Brian and sewn by Jen using fabric art made by the community. Exclaims Jen, “We can’t wait to see the art we’ll make together!”

Project partners include: the City of Beverly, Beverly Main Streets, Montserrat College of Art, who jointly manage the Beverly Arts District, as well as Creative Collective, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Beverly Cultural Council, and Richard Marino/Florian Realty LLC. Through this pilot program, the Artist in Residence is provided with studio space in the Beverly Arts District at no cost to the artist as well as a monthly stipend to support their work. The stipend is funded with a Cultural District Incentive Grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Creative Collective, an organization of economic development strategists, has been brought on by the City of Beverly to consult on all aspects of this project and to support Zooguu; they bring extensive knowledge of Downtown creative activations from all over Essex County to Beverly, providing business support, marketing strategies, and consultations. Creative Collective is committed to maximizing the impact and sustainability of this Artist in Residence Pilot Program and creating a system that Beverly and other communities can benefit from for years to come.

“The Collective is excited to be working with the City of Beverly on this project. Creating and fostering sustainable systems that live at the intersection of economic development and the creative workforce has been one of our main focuses since the COVID pandemic hit, and we are excited that Mayor Cahill and his team are putting arts and culture at the forefront of recovery efforts.” states John Andrews, founder of North Shore based Creative Collective.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is the regional planning agency serving the 101 cities and towns of Greater Boston. The MAPC Arts and Culture department supported the City through its artist selection process, will continue to provide assistance during this pilot phase, and will help the City identify funding sources and strategies to continue the program.

“This program demonstrates how artists can boost the work of economic recovery and community-building through joy and creativity,” said Annis Sengupta, MAPC Arts and Culture Director. “At MAPC, we hope Beverly’s artist residency inspires more communities to put artists to work as part of COVID-19 recovery.”

The Beverly Arts District, one of the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s officially designated cultural districts, was launched in 2015 by a partnership of Beverly Main Streets, the City of Beverly, and Montserrat College of Art. The District and its activities demonstrate the community’s collective commitment to supporting arts and culture.



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