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Public Art Commissions Selected for 11th Street Bridge Park

Four local DC-area, all-women artist teams to create art pieces tied to park's design principles and values

Washington, D.C. – Four commissioned [public art pieces](#) were announced today by [the 11th Street Bridge Park](#) – a partnership between the local non-profit Building Bridges Across the River and the District government – reflecting the [park's design principles and values](#). In response to over 200 community meetings where public art was prioritized, a lighted sculpture inspired by plants growing along the Anacostia River; a mural depicting the African American and Native American experiences tied to caring for the land, hammocks created to honor DC culture reflective of the community; and design of a mobile, small business kiosk aimed at supporting East of the River Black entrepreneurs were selected from over 60 entries by the park's curatorial committee comprised of local residents, experts, and artists.

"We're thrilled that the curatorial committee selected artists whose designs help realize the vision for the 11th Street Bridge Park supporting the community's cultural, environmental, and economic health," said Scott Kratz, Senior Vice President, Building Bridges Across the River & Director, 11th Street Bridge Park. "These stunning public artworks share the rich history of the region, the river, and the city's residents. The Bridge Park would like to thank the public art team at Forecast and independent consultant Irfana Jetha Noorani for coordinating these signature art commissions."

[Biophilia](#) by Baltimore artist Becky Borlan is a sculpture planned to be installed under the Bridge Park span adjacent to the Anacostia River inspired by the native and non-native plant life that grows along the river's edge. The 10-foot diameter disc will comprise overlapping mirrored plant cutouts to echo the way in which plants crowd for space at the edges of the Anacostia. The mirrored surface will engage pedestrians during the day, picking up their movements beneath the sculpture. At nightfall, a colored lighting program will illuminate the piece and cast shimmering reflections on the ground. "Despite hundreds of years of human intervention, this wild flora continues to populate the banks of the Anacostia," Borlan said. "I am fascinated by its resilience and the multitude of forms that these plants embody."

The [Our Land mural](#) by Mickey Demas and Nicole Bourgea planned for the Navy Yard entrance wall is a reflection of the experience and heritage of those living on and caring for DC's land. This mural features members of the native Piscataway Tribe among a field of tobacco plants, which hold historical and spiritual significance for the Tribe, and Ward 8 farmer, JJ Boone, propagating a native Paw Paw tree. "Our Land is a recognition of the people who have cared and are still caring for the land where the Bridge Park will be constructed," Bourgea said. "It is also a welcome to all communities to enjoy and protect our precious natural resources," Demas added.

Located in the park's Hammock Grove, [hammocks](#) designed by Aliana Grace Bailey, Rhea Beckett, and Syreeta C will reflect the experiences of the community through direct engagement. Each hammock and its posts will boast a unique collage design honoring a theme, story, or place relevant to the city's culture. As a team with DC roots, their passion is for this space of rest to be created in collaboration with and directly inspired by community through workshops and digital spaces. "Current residents already understand the value here. They need not be effaced," said Syreeta C. "Our goal is for DC natives to feel seen. While community engagement enriches our process, we want to ensure that priority is also felt through the end product long-term," said Bailey. "Our approach would preserve and reflect the District's vibrancy and Black culture as mass development efforts persist," Beckett added.

The [Small Business Kiosk](#) by The River East Design Center (REDC) supports the park's [equitable development plan](#) as a multi-functional mobile unit featuring local businesses that can be moved to different locations on the 11th Street Bridge Park and nearby events. REDC's selected concept will engage local entrepreneurs and residents incorporating the design principles of accessibility, flexibility, connectivity and reflecting east of the river neighborhoods. With support from their local partner, the Neighborhood Design Center, REDC aims to highlight the robust small business landscape surrounding the park. The kiosk will launch in 2023 to help build a pipeline of Black entrepreneurs in the creative economy ready to engage when the park opens in early 2025.

"The River East Design Center has a mission to empower underserved communities to shape their own environments," said Anna McCorvey, Executive Collaborator at River East Design Center. "The kiosk will give local entrepreneurs the opportunity to participate in and shape the growing business environment that will result from the park. I love that my community can be integral to this process and have a continued presence as our neighborhoods grow."

These public art pieces join ["Anacostia's Sunrise/Sunset Portals"](#) by DC-based artists Martha Jackson Jarvis and Njena Surae Jarvis of Jackson Jarvis Studio [announced earlier this year](#) as the park's major art commission. Design for the 11th Street Bridge Park began in October 2014 after a seven-month competition to create the vision for the project, from which the design team of OMA+OLIN was selected. The Bridge Park draws on extensive community outreach and a consultative process, anchored by more than 1,000 stakeholder meetings for design, development, and impact. Pre-construction began in 2016 and the Park is expected to open by early 2025.

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About the 11th Street Bridge Park

11th Street Bridge Park, a partnership between the District Department of Transportation and the Ward 8 non-profit Building Bridges Across the River, will be Washington, D.C.'s first elevated public park. Located on the piers of the old 11th Street Bridge, this venue will be a space for healthy recreation, environmental education, and the arts and has been implementing community-driven equitable development strategies since 2016. The project works with community and local partners to invest in the residents and neighborhoods surrounding the Park with various initiatives and support programs. To learn more about 11th Street Bridge Park and receive updates on its design, please visit [here](#).