

CALL FOR ARTISTS

REQUEST FOR ARTIST QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

New work of public art at
Allentown's Arts Walk
and Arts Alley



September 20, 2021

The Allentown Arts Commission, in partnership with Materials Conservation of Philadelphia, seeks artist responses via this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to commission an original, site-specific work of public art. The work of art will be located in Allentown's Arts Walk and/or Arts Alley, which run alongside of Miller Symphony Hall and connect popular 6th Street to the city's Arts Park, a central downtown green space close to the city's arts and cultural institutions. The artist for the project will work in collaboration with Chris Rogerson, the Allentown Symphony Orchestra's Composer-in-Residence to develop a work of art that is musical in some way. This could be as art that is played – either physically or as musical notation – or that creates a visual experience that is enhanced by music, or that is musical in some other way. Creative collaboration between the selected artist and Chris Rogerson will be key to the project. Sculptors, light artists, and artists working in metal are encouraged to apply.

ABOUT CHRIS ROGERSON: Chris Rogerson is the composer-in-residence for the Allentown Symphony Orchestra. Hailed as a "confident new musical voice" ([The New York Times](#)), a "big discovery" ([The Philadelphia Inquirer](#)), and a "fully-grown composing talent" ([The Washington Post](#)), Chris Rogerson's music has been praised for its "virtuosic exuberance" and "haunting beauty" (The New York Times). His work has been performed by orchestras across the United States, including the San Francisco Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Houston Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, and Orchestra of St. Luke's, as well as esteemed artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Anthony McGill, Ida Kavafian, Anne-Marie McDermott, and David Shifrin. Rogerson has also collaborated with the Attacca, Brentano, Dover, Escher, JACK, and Jasper Quartets, as well as with distinguished members of the Guarneri and Orion Quartets. His music has been heard at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the Library of Congress, the Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall in London, Chicago's Symphony Hall, the Rudolfinum in Prague, and Radio France. More can be learned here: <https://www.chrisrogerson.com/>

ABOUT THE ALLENTOWN SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION: The Allentown Symphony Association (ASA) operates the Allentown Symphony Orchestra, El Sistema Lehigh Valley, and is the owner/operator of Miller Symphony Hall, a historic theater in downtown Allentown dating back to 1899. The mission of the ASA is to provide a first-class symphony orchestra and Hall, quality performing arts, and cultural education in partnership with the community. Each year, the ASO performs more than 20 classical, pops, educational, and family concerts. In 2014 and again in 2017, the orchestra received the national American Prize for "orchestral excellence." With passion and finesse, the Allentown Symphony, led by Music Director & Conductor Diane Wittry, plays time-honored masterworks, newly commissioned world premieres, and intriguing repertoire, including works by prominent new composers. In addition to the Orchestra, Miller Symphony Hall also hosts a variety of other events and concerts including a monthly jazz series, Met Opera Live in HD Broadcasts, and touring artists and performers.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Miller Symphony Hall is flanked by the Arts Alley – also called Court Street – to the south, and the Arts Walk to the north, both spanning from 6th Street to North Law Street. These connective walkways have a high level of material finish and connect the Miller Symphony Hall to Allentown's core arts institutions, as well as to the City's governmental and business center. The artist will create a work that will be located in the Arts Walk and/or Arts Alley. The work of art will be the result of a collaborative effort and must be musical in some way. If the work of art makes or plays sound it must be mutable or subtle enough that it doesn't interfere with the adjacent residents or transmit sound into the adjacent Miller Symphony Hall. The work of art may be sculptural, light-based, sculptural relief, or similar. The work of art must be of a material quality that is commensurate with the high level of finish quality of the Arts Walk and Arts Alley. Three project sites

have been identified within these areas. Artists may propose a work of art at one or multiple locations. They are:

Location 1: Arts Alley/Court Street, Overhead installation

An overhead installation may be placed in Location 1. Considerations for this location would include:

- While an installation here can span the length of the Arts Alley, it is most important that the installation be concentrated towards 6th Street so that it forms an invitation to walk down this street.
- This street is used for vehicles, so any installation that spans the street must be placed high enough to not impede traffic.
- This location would be ideal for a light-based installation or suspended sculptural installation.
- There are several exhaust ducts on the Arts Alley so there is already a fairly high level of background noise. Additionally, the side of Miller Symphony Hall that is along the Arts Alley is against the theater, so any intervention that includes sound must carefully consider its impact on the theater.



View from the Arts Alley/Court Street, looking West towards 6th Street. Miller Symphony Hall is to the right.



View from 6th Street, looking east towards the Arts Alley/Court Street. Miller Symphony Hall is to the left.

Location 2: Arts Alley/Court Street, Facade installation

A façade-mounted installation may be placed in Location 2. Considerations for this location would include:

- This location would include a façade-mounted installation on the brick façade of Miller Symphony Hall.
- This location would be ideal for a light-based installation or low-relief sculptural installation.
- There are several exhaust ducts on the Arts Alley so there is already a fairly high level of background noise. Additionally, the side of Miller Symphony Hall that is along the Arts Alley is against the theater, so any intervention that includes sound must carefully consider its impact on the theater, as well as the neighboring building residents.



View from the Arts Alley/Court Street, looking Northwest towards 6th Street and the Miller Symphony Hall.

Location 3: Arts Walk, Sculptural installation

A free-standing, sculptural installation may be placed in Location 3. Considerations for this location would include:

- This location would include a free-standing sculptural installation located in the linear landscaped area.
- Given the depth of this space it would be an ideal location for a work of art that invites physical interaction.
- This space runs between the theater and an adjacent residential building, so artists should be mindful of any sound that the art creates to ensure it doesn't present a disturbance to neighbors.
- Generally, the Arts Walk has significantly less ambient noise than Arts Alley.



View from the Arts Walk, looking Northeast towards 6th Street and the Miller Symphony Hall. The landscaped area runs along the ramp from Miller Symphony Hall.



Aerial view, with project locations indicated

Please note that during the site visit the artist finalists will see all the potential sites, and may wish to propose one or multiple of those listed here. Other locations within the Arts Walk or Arts Alley may be proposed as well.

PROJECT GOALS

The goals for the work of art include:

- Creatively collaborate between visual and performing art forms.
- Create an experience that engages the public in an experience that is musical in some way.
- Be visually impactful to draw visitors to see and experience the installation.

BUDGET

The budget for the project is \$18,000 and is inclusive of all fees, including artist fees, supplies and materials, delivery, equipment, insurance, studio costs, assistant fees/production support, technical, travel and lodging, lift rental, time for municipal review and approval, community engagement activities, and all other costs related to the design, production, and installation of the work of art.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Artists who are interested in being considered for this project must submit their response to this RFQ by 1pm on October 15, 2021. Up to 3 artist applicants will be selected as finalists, notified, and invited to attend an in-person site visit. They will also have a collaboration session with Chris Rogerson to discuss potential collaborative ideas. These artist finalists will be offered a \$300 honorarium in return for creating a proposal that they will present to Allentown stakeholders in late 2021. Full proposal details and requirements will be released to artist finalists at the time that they are selected.

Artist responses to this RFQ must include:

1. Artist statement of interest in project, specifically about how you might collaborate on the project, or any pertinent experience with interdisciplinary collaboration in the past (up to 250 words). Please identify which site(s) you'd likely select if awarded the project.
2. Artist statement about your work (up to 250 words)
3. Current resume (up to one page), including email and phone contact information.
4. Images of four past projects, with an identification sheet that lists the project location, client, date and budget.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The anticipated project schedule is as follows:

RFQ Issued	September 20, 2021
RFQ responses due	October 22, 2021
Finalist artist site visit (finalists will be notified in advance of meeting)	Early November, 2021
Finalist artist collaboration session with Chris Rogerson (1 hr max)	Early November, 2021
Artist proposals due, Artist selection	Late November, 2021
Project development and collaboration period	Through end of 2021
Installation	Late winter/early spring 2022

****The Project schedule is entirely dependent on the ability of all parties to safely work due to COVID-19. The project schedule may be changed at any point in the interest of public safety. ****

ELIGIBILITY

The opportunity is open to artists or artist teams working in a variety of media in the United States. Artists must have successfully completed a work of public art in comparable scale or budget to be considered for the project. **Allentown and Lehigh Valley-based artists, female artists and artists of color are encouraged to apply.** Artists finalists must be able to attend an in-person site visit in late October. The public art program is committed to reflecting the diversity of the City of Allentown in our selection process. Complete applications that meet threshold eligibility will be considered.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Artists applying to this RFQ must send in their materials by 1pm October 22, 2021. Materials can be submitted via email as a single PDF document not to exceed 4MB in size. Applications should be emailed to jguerrero@mccollab.com. All emailed applications will receive an emailed receipt.

OTHER INFORMATION

The selected artist will execute a contract with Materials Conservation, and the work of art will be owned by the City of Allentown and will be a part of their collection of permanent public works of art. By submitting materials in response to this RFQ the Applicant acknowledges that Materials Conservation and/or the City of Allentown may at any time supplement, modify, or re-issue the RFQ. This may include rejecting all applications, cancelling RFQ, extending the time period of this RFQ, adjusting the schedule, soliciting new responses, or requesting additional information from applicants. Materials Conservation and the City of Allentown are not responsible for any cost or expense incurred by the Applicant in connection with this RFQ. All costs incurred in connection with this RFQ are the responsibility of the Applicant.

Questions may be directed to Julia Guerrero at Materials Conservation, at jguerrero@mccollab.com

