



## Model Cities Reading Room at BROWNstone Call for Art and Artists

**Submission Due Date:** August 24, 2017, 12:00 midnight

Seeking relevant existing art and/or artists to create commissioned artwork for a community space in the BROWNstone development along the north side of University Avenue between Victoria and Grotto Streets in St. Paul, MN. Submission applications are being accepted until August 24, 2017, 12:00 midnight.

## Background

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Model Cities is a 501(c)3 private nonprofit organization created in 1967 to address health disparities and increase health access among residents of St. Paul's Summit-University community. In addition to providing human services, since 1986 Model Cities has been active in community development, functioning as the developer, owner, and property manager of residential and commercial properties. In 1998, Model Cities established a private nonprofit community development corporation (CDC) to link its human services with its development activity.

Model Cities' vision for its work is to be actively engaged in the development of urban communities through family support services, affordable housing development, homeownership counseling, commercial revitalization and economic development, principally for persons of low and moderate income.

As part of a sustainable spaces initiative, Model Cities is in the process of creating a Reading Room within the new BROWNstone development along the north side of University Avenue in St. Paul to strengthen the cultural vibrancy of the community while creating a locally-rooted home for railroad workers' assets and stories. More information about the new development is available here:

<http://www.modelcities.org/redevelopment-project/>

## Project Goals

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- Use art to help support the goal of the Reading Room at BROWNstone to make black dignity visible through stories of Pullman Porters, their families, and their communities.
- Connect local labor history with modern civil rights issues.
- Illustrate the African American tradition of facing challenging times with strength, courage, and artistic problem-solving.
- Link artwork to the branding of the Reading Room. Branding visuals available here: <http://bit.ly/2uX9naB>

## Project Description

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The purpose of the Reading Room is to create an inspiring and educational community space that tells a compelling story and honors the history of the Pullman Porters. The Reading Room is inspired by rooms visited by Black railroad workers at destinations along their routes. They acted as hubs for gathering, reading, playing cards, and catching up on news. The Reading Room intends to be a place that uses stories as a catalyst for change. Stories of labor, family, education, and racial justice will be told through artifacts, art, textures, documents, books, and more.

We believe that by reflecting on our past, together, we can influence our future.

The visual and verbal attributes for the room are: Locally Rooted, Fresh, Artistic, Reflective, Participatory, Inciting, and Catalyst.



We are seeking art to be a visual and cultural representation of the stories tied to the room. Artistic themes reflected in the art may be narrowly or broadly related to subjects including: railroads, railroad history, railroad workers, reading, education, books, racial justice, family, labor, labor rights, unions, black freedom, economic justice, dignity, solidarity, and strength through struggles. Items will come into contact with the public. Materials must be durable, safe to the touch, and appropriate for all ages.

## Specifications and Budget

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**Total artist budgets must cover all costs related to the planning, design, consultation, materials, construction, and installation of the final art.**

### *Donation Box (new commissioned art):*

- An artistic interpretation of a vintage suitcase or steamer trunk that can tell the story of tipping and its importance and relevance to Porters as well as encourage visitors to make a donation to the Reading Room. The donation box needs to allow for money to be inserted by patrons and removed by Model Cities with secure access. One side will include an interpretive panel of copy, to be provided by Model Cities.
- Approximate size/space considerations/relevant specifications: 30w" x 16d" x 42h", suitcase must be securely attached to stand or base with donation slot at accessible height (42" or less), width not to exceed 30"
- Total artist budget: \$1,500

### *Porter Wall Art (new commissioned art):*

- Artwork to honor the porters and their own personal identities. Copy on the wall above the artwork will include "My name is not George" and a description about the practice of every porter being called George, rather than being allowed to use their own names and identities. The artwork needs to create a visual connection to the themes within the room of Labor, Family, Education, and Racial Justice. Additional information about the historical context of the room and the connection to the themes will be available to the selected artist.
- Approximate size/space considerations/relevant specifications: 4 wall-hanging art panels at 34"w x 22h" each, or a single panel to cover the same amount of total space.
- Total artist budget: \$3,000

### *Bookshelf Artwork (existing art or newly commissioned art):*

- Artwork that is appropriate for use on bookshelves within the public space. Artwork may be from artist's existing collection or newly created for this project. Items may include bookends, pottery, sculpture, photography, or other media and materials that are appropriate for bookshelf display and are tied to the themes of the room.
- Approximate size/space considerations/relevant specifications: A total of 6 items at various sizes and shapes are needed.
- Total artist budget: \$250 per item, seeking 6 total items ideally from 6 different artists

### *Wall Art (existing art or newly commissioned art):*

- A wall-hanging piece of art that has a visual and/or conceptual tie to the themes of the room.
- Approximate size/space considerations/relevant specifications: 1 wall-hanging item to fit the space of 27w" x 40"h
- Total artist budget: \$750



At this time, we are asking for artists who are interested in this project to submit an application including examples of their work with our goals and specific needs in mind, and with the flexibility to be creative with us for the final design and implementation of any newly created art.

## Selection Criteria

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- Description of proposed approach.
- Ability to illustrate ideas that tie to the themes of the room.
- Strength of work samples.
- A differential will be given to local artists of color and/or artists with a personal connection to the project.
- Ability to meet the deadlines required for the room opening.

## Selection Process

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Model Cities and its branding and interior design partners for the Reading Room project will review applications and make final selections based upon the identified goals, specifications, criteria, and a desire for a diverse representation of artworks within the room.

## Application Process

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Artists interested in providing existing artwork or creating newly commissioned art for the Reading Room must submit the following to be considered:

1. Artist contact information (name, address, email, phone).
2. Any relevant personal connection to the project (e.g.; artist of color, neighborhood connection, family history, experience with themes, etc.).
3. Which specific opportunity (or opportunities) are you interested in pursuing from this call?
4. What are you proposing—approach, materials, medium, themes, etc., (drawings may be helpful, but not required)? Artist may submit multiple project responses if pursuing multiple opportunities within the call. (2-page max for each response)
5. Work samples (10 max) of specific existing artwork purposed for use in the room or relevant examples for the project opportunity. Please include descriptions for each sample to provide context.

Submit all applications as a single PDF to Kizzy Downie at [kdownie@modelcities.org](mailto:kdownie@modelcities.org) no later than August 18, 2017, 12:00 midnight. Any questions may be directed to the same address.

## Timeline

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Submission Deadline	August 24, 2017, 12:00 midnight
Notify Final Artists	September 1, 2017
Meetings with Selected Artists	September 4 – September 8, 2017
Design/Concept Deadline	September 14, 2017
Final Art Due	October 13, 2017
Installation	October 23 – October 27, 2017