

“Art Is Everywhere” awards \$70,000 to New Bedford arts and culture projects

On Friday June 10, 2022 New Bedford Creative introduced the “Art is Everywhere” grant recipients for arts and culture projects in the City of New Bedford this year.

Seven compelling applicants have been selected to share \$70,000 in funding to realize their vision and bring their projects to life in the city. This is the third year “Art is Everywhere,” administered by New Bedford Creative on behalf of MassDevelopment and the Barr Foundation, has supported projects that seek to define and enlarge the scope of creativity in the city.

Reflecting an expanding pool of talent and vision, this year four of the seven are first time recipients of New Bedford Creative funding, and six are new to Art is Everywhere. Five are receiving full funding for their projects. Additionally, five represent the impact the city’s Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities have made and are making today in the city.

“The recipients in this round of the ‘Art is Everywhere’ Grant Program showcase the breadth of what New Bedford’s creative community has to offer,” said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy, who serves as chair of MassDevelopment’s Board of Directors. “From a bilingual Yoga Series focused on serving underrepresented youth, to honoring the legacy of Frederick Douglass, these projects have the power to catalyze the local arts-based creative economy in a way that creates deep impact in the community.”

New to “Art is Everywhere” this year is Dil ba Dil Rah Dhara (From One Heart to Another): The Afghan Women’s Art Project

which will be presented in partnership with the South Coast Afghan Welcome Network (SAWN) and the New Bedford Free Public Library with the support of \$11,600.

Meanwhile, La Soul Renaissance will celebrate its 20th anniversary with special programming to celebrate the local Cape Verdean, Black, Indigenous, Caribbean, Immigrant and wider community about the value of the cultural memory at Verdean Veterans Memorial Hall with \$13,000.

The bilingual Yoga series, Ease into Summer Kids, will be launched by Tahais Real-Martins of Yoga Es Vida at New Bedford Parks with \$6,000. David Andrews and The Communal Space will host Kids Open Art Week with a \$3,400 award.

The heritage of New Bedford's Abolition movement is recognized by two projects. The Massachusetts Design Art, & Technology Institute (known as DATMA) project will use \$6,000 to place "Safe Station: New Bedford's Underground Railroad" at the New Bedford YMCA. And, the New Bedford Historical Society's Abolition Row Park will dedicate \$20,000 towards its Frederick Douglass Memorial at the park.

Finally, the appetizing pairing of food and creativity will be showcased by Coastal Foodshed at farmers markets throughout the city with \$10,000 in seed money.

"These projects add to the richness of our shared cultural experiences," comments Margo Saulnier, Creative Strategist for New Bedford Creative. "Collectively, these 'Art is Everywhere' projects propel New Bedford into a more equitable future by expressing the creativity of our entire community."

The importance of arts and culture in the City of New Bedford is reflected by the "Art is Everywhere" investment and other recent initiatives. In May 2022, Mayor Jon A. Mitchell announced that \$1.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was also being made available to support local artists and art-related organizations.

He remarked at the time, “The artists that comprise New Bedford’s thriving arts community are themselves small businesses. (This) represents a timely investment in our economy and will energize our cultural scene.”

The ARPA funds will be awarded later this year through New Bedford Creative’s grant programs – even as “Art is Everywhere” catalyzes the New Bedford cultural landscape. Updates, further information and monthly news about all programs can be found at newbedfordcreative.org.



New Bedford Creative photo.