



North Carolina Museum of Art

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North Carolina Museum of Art Launches Artist Innovation Mentorship Program

Raleigh, N.C.—The North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA), with funding from the Anonymous Trust and the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, has launched its Artist Innovation Mentorship (NCMA AIM) program, a regional outreach initiative designed to connect artists in rural Eastern North Carolina with middle-school students in their communities. In structured six-week programs, artist mentors and youths will explore new materials and art forms, the basics of exhibition curation, and innovative thinking strategies.



“It is the responsibility and privilege of the North Carolina Museum of Art to foster creativity and artistic expression beyond the walls of the Museum,” said Valerie Hillings, Museum director. “NCMA AIM supports local artists and offers middle-school students opportunities to use their voices and share their ideas across visual media.”

Each NCMA AIM partnership offers a six-week artist residency in a local afterschool program to bring artists, art materials, and arts-integrated lesson plans together, highlighting a creative mentorship model, community building, and awareness of the arts as a driver of career opportunities. With the first three years funded by the Anonymous Trust, NCMA AIM will be a long-term program that connects Eastern North Carolina middle-school age youth and artists to the larger arts community across the state. These connections will be made through the creation of public art, community and museum exhibitions, and student-directed projects. The program

has launched in Sampson, Washington, and Wayne counties, and additional programs are slated for Robeson, Chowan, Jones, Wilson, and Edgecombe counties in 2022. As the artists share the creative thinking and processes they employ in their practices, they will foster the innovative thinking that generates excitement, pushes familiar boundaries, and explores creative problem solving both on and off the canvas. This creative mentorship empowers

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students to exercise innovative thinking capacities and to begin to understand how they can use art as a tool for personal expression and change.

To help create NCMA AIM, the Museum partnered with Boys and Girls Clubs, including the Goldsboro Club of Wayne County, the Edenton Club of Albemarle, and the Pembroke Boys and Girls Club; the Washington County Board of Education and Washington County Middle School; the Washington County African American Museum and Cultural Arts Center; the Sampson County Arts Council; and the Roseboro-Salemburg Middle School to work with established and trusted area connections to the students.



“I’m most excited by the potential for the NCMA to amplify the creative potential of students, all of whom have been directly impacted by the loss of resources to create art during the pandemic,” said Director of Outreach and Audience Engagement Angela Lombardi. “We know that smaller rural communities are full of talent and creativity, and this program is one way for the Museum to fulfill its mission of reaching beyond the Triangle to support and encourage creative expression statewide.”

To select the participating artists—who include Maria Geary of Durham, Megan Oteri of Wilson, Jimmie Sutton of Roper, and Shawn Hobbs of Roseboro—the Museum worked with the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, local arts councils, and community members at host site locations to identify North Carolina artists who share a background of working with middle-school students. NCMA AIM seeks to enable young people to see themselves reflected in positive and successful mentors from their own counties. At the same time, the program supports diverse, community-based artists who practice in different media and are at varying stages of their careers. This paid opportunity to interact with their local communities offers the artists a reciprocal empowerment opportunity to grow and impact change.

Art kits reflecting the work of the teaching artists and their students will be made and distributed to all participating locations, as well as be available on site at the NCMA in June. Families will be welcomed back for a celebration of the program on campus in summer 2022, with transportation assistance provided by the Museum. The NCMA has plans to extend the program statewide by 2025.

For more information visit ncartmuseum.org/statewide.

Image Captions (top to bottom):

NCMA AIM student Mikayla Lamb, Goldsboro, NC, practicing photography. Photo by Megan Oteri.

NCMA AIM student Markera Golden, Roseboro, NC, at work. Photo by Angela Lombardi.

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About the North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art’s collection spans more than 5,000 years, from antiquity to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum’s collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing special exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh and is home to the People’s Collection. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, under the auspices of Governor Roy Cooper; an agency of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, guided by the direction of Secretary D. Reid Wilson; and led by Director Valerie Hillings.