

# Request for Qualifications: The Pursuit of Happiness

A collaboration of the Friends of Independence National Historical Park,  
Independence National Historical Park and Mural Arts Philadelphia

**Deadline: December 16, 2016, 5 p.m.**

## Summary

The Friends of Independence National Historic Park and Mural Arts Philadelphia (MAP) are collaborating on *The Pursuit of Happiness*, a public art residency program that will build a bridge between the historic significance of Independence National Historical Park (INHP) and the complex identity of our contemporary city and nation. The residency will include public engagement, in part through collaboration with youth in Mural Arts' Art Education Program, the production of public art, and robust public programs that explore the project's core theme and specific topics pursued by the artist.

The project is expected to run through October, 2017. Artist selection will take place in early 2017, with the expectation that artists will be under contract by the beginning of February, 2017. Artists will have a five-month research and development period followed by a two-month period for engaging with youth, and the subsequent installation of a public art project. The project would be completed by October, 2017.

Interested artists should submit their qualifications, following the requirements below, by December 16, 2016.

## Project Background

*The Pursuit of Happiness* is inspired and funded by the National Endowment for the Arts "[Imagine Your Parks](#)" initiative, which seeks to embed artists in National Park resources in hopes of enhancing park user experience and building audience. "Imagine Your Parks" is part of the centennial celebration of the National Park Service.

Because INHP is an urban park and most significant for its history, the relationship between artist, audience and the park environment will be unique. *The Pursuit of Happiness* seeks to examine the historical and cultural resources of the park. The goal is to inspire dialogue about the modern meanings of our nation, and to stimulate artist-led cross-engagement between National Park visitors and Philadelphia community members who might not otherwise engage with INHP as a local historical resource.

Artists will be asked to develop their ideas around language found in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." We would like artists to explore what "the pursuit of happiness" means to people in our nation today.

The artist will work under the direction of Mural Arts Philadelphia's Art Education Program, and integrally with its summer session. Artists will also benefit from the rare opportunity to access the rich resources of INHP and to mount an artwork within a prominent, historic area.

## **Project Goals**

- Create new meaning for INHP as a place, by making it a common ground where people can connect with others and explore contemporary issues related to the nation's founding principles.
- Create new audiences for INHP and attract more visitors, particularly by creating new connections to communities in Philadelphia,
- Deepen audience experience of INHP, by placing the visitor's experience in the broader context of the contemporary city and society, not just the times when the nation was founded,
- Cross-pollinate ideas voiced by Philadelphia youth, adult community members, and INHP visitors of all backgrounds, and
- Expand the practice of audience co-created content in the context of interpreting historical sites.

## **Intended Audiences**

The *Pursuit of Happiness* will engage INHP's international audience in activities that deepen their experience of the park and in turn, raise the profile of INHP as a place for innovation as well as historic singularity.

The *Pursuit of Happiness* will also engage people and communities whose voices have been historically underrepresented in the interpretation and memorialization of history – immigrants, people of color, economically disadvantaged individuals – and will specifically target youth ages 10 to 21. *The Pursuit of Happiness* will give voice to the hopes and needs that future generations see for our country, equip young people with historical context to leverage their contemporary views, and expand the perspectives of onlookers who might not otherwise interface with urban youth.

## **Description of Residency Activities**

*The Pursuit of Happiness* will involve a multi-faceted artistic process consisting of:

- In-depth research utilizing the historical resources of INHP and the community resources of Philadelphia;
- A curriculum developed in collaboration with MAP's Art Education teaching staff, and involvement with a six-week summer program for youth aged 10 to 21;
- Public engagement processes and programs at INHP and sites elsewhere in Philadelphia that invite park visitors and Philadelphians to contextualize our nation's founding principles within contemporary life; and

- A work of public art (permanent or temporary) that is created collaboratively with youth, sited at INHP, and reflective of learning and findings from the artist’s research and related public programs.

### **Research, Discovery, Planning Phase**

The residency will launch with a research phase, in which the project partners will provide orientation meetings and activities designed to introduce an artist to the neighborhood, the programs and staff of INHP, other local resources and community members, and the MAP Art Education program.

Research and dialogue will continue during the spring the artist works with MAP staff to develop a project concept in preparation for teaching, producing work and public programming. MAP teaching artists, project managers and production staff will work closely with the artist, thoughtfully facilitating connections with individuals, communities and historic resources that will inform project development.

### **Project Implementation Phase**

The project implementation phase will begin in July and be completed by October. This phase will include a six-week course session with students in the Art Education program, on-site and scheduled public engagement and programming, and the development of a public artwork.

### **Public Programs Phase**

The artist-in-residence will be encouraged to collaborate with Mural Arts and Friends to develop the following types of public programming and communication:

- Activities that directly engage the intended audiences with the projects, preferably a combination of on site and/or scheduled events. The activities should include youth or somehow incorporate their ideas relating to the project.
- Project updates through platforms such as a blog, photo sharing and/or social media.
- Speaking about the project at “muraLAB live” in October, 2017.

## **Budget**

The budget for the project is \$35,000, inclusive of artist fee, artist travel, materials, fabrication, any necessary design approvals and installation. The budget breakdown will be subject to approval by Mural Arts Philadelphia and the Friends of Independence National Historical Park. The project sponsors have reserved a small amount of additional funding for public programming.

## **Schedule**

### 2016

November 30, deadline for questions  
December 16, deadline for submissions  
December, finalists notified for interviews  
January 12, interviews, final selection, contracting

### 2017

February, Orientation  
March-June, Planning and predevelopment  
July-August, Residency and Art Education class  
September, Production of final work  
October, Participation in muraLAB Live!

## **About Friends of Independence National Historical Park**

Friends of Independence National Historical Park is a 501(c)3 non-profit that supports Independence National Historical Park, the national park that protects preserves and interprets Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell and the 54 plus historical acres located in the City of Philadelphia. The organization was created in 1972 and is the first “friends” group in the National Park Service. Over its long history, it has purchased or acquired more than 1,000 artifacts for the park’s permanent collections, fund-raised for large public spaces in the park, and provided educational tours and programs to visitors and locals alike.

## **About Mural Arts Philadelphia**

Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation’s largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change.

For more than 30 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative process, rooted in the traditions of mural-making, to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives. Mural Arts engages communities in 50 to 100 public art projects each year, and maintains its growing collection through a restoration initiative. Core Mural Arts programs such as Art Education, Restorative Justice, and Porch Light yield unique, project-based learning opportunities for thousands of youth and adults.

Each year, 12,000 residents and visitors tour Mural Arts’ outdoor art gallery, which has become part of the city’s civic landscape and a source of pride and inspiration, earning Philadelphia international recognition as the “City of Murals.”

The Art Education program provides a special combination of in-school and after-school arts-based programming for over 2,000 students at 25 sites across Philadelphia. Students participate in a wide variety of activities, studying everything from entrepreneurship to environmental stewardship through an artistic lens. Art becomes a platform for discovery, launching the types of personal and communal experiences that can shape a student’s path for years to come. Art Education murals and projects can be found on surfaces across Philadelphia, giving students a tangible reminder of how they have made an impact on our city.

## Artist Application Process

### Artist Eligibility

This is an open call, managed by the Mural Arts Program on behalf of the Friends of Independence National Historical Park.

The artist must be present in Philadelphia for a residency in July and August, for project orientation and development as needed in from January through June, 2017. *Please note that there is no additional funding for artist travel or lodging expenses.*

Artist must be a U.S. citizen or have current authorization to work in the U.S.

Artist will be required to provide standard background clearances required for working with youth prior to entering into a contract.

### Artist Qualifications

The ideal candidate should have the following qualifications:

- Experience working with and mentoring youth, especially high school youth and young adults,
- Interest or experience working on public art projects that are related to history or politics, and the ability to make them fun,
- Experience creating and leading public art projects that bring disparate communities into dialogue,
- Knowledge of Philadelphia neighborhoods and communities,
- Personal experience with INHP,
- Willingness to work collaboratively with Mural Arts teaching artists to integrate the final project into a six week, summer 2017 curriculum for involved youth.
- Willingness to apply, all expenses paid, for PA Criminal Background Clearance, FBI Criminal Background Clearance, and PA Child Abuse Clearance in effort to insure the safety of youth involved in the project.

### Selection Process

Mural Arts and the Friends are assembling an Advisory Committee, which will review the submissions that are received and recommend a short list of three artists.

Finalists will have welcome to visit Philadelphia and to talk with project stakeholders, should they wish.

Finalists must be available for an interview in the afternoon of January 12, 2017, in person or by videoconference. Artists will be asked to discuss the aspects of the project that interest them and how they would envision engaging audiences in their work. The committee's recommendations will be reviewed by the Executive Director of the Mural Arts Program and the Superintendent of Independence National Historical Park, who will make the final decision.

The contract will be awarded by Mural Arts Advocates, a non-profit arm of the Mural Arts Program.

## How to Apply

Please submit the following materials by **5 p.m., December 16, 2016**.

1. A brief letter describing your interest in the project. Please comment specifically on the unique aspects of the project, including:
  - a. How this project fits into your current artistic practice and plans,
  - b. Your ability to meet the project timeline given current commitments, and
  - c. Your experience producing work of the type sought by Mural Arts and INHP, particularly any experience working with youth.
2. A CV/resume.
3. List of three references for whom the artist has completed comparable projects.
4. Up to 15 images of previous artwork.
5. A corresponding image list with title, medium, dimensions, brief description, location and date of work, commissioning entity and budget.
6. Any publications that provide critical insight into your work.

## Submission Format and Delivery

**Only digital materials will be accepted.**

Please format text files as .pdf documents and image files as .jpps.

We prefer that applicants transmit files via email, Drop Box or Wetransfer to:

[todd.bressi@muralarts.org](mailto:todd.bressi@muralarts.org)

Alternatively, send all materials on a thumb drive or a CD to:

*The Pursuit of Happiness*  
c/o City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program  
The Lincoln Financial Mural Arts Center at the Thomas Eakins House  
1727-29 Mount Vernon Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19130

## For More Information Contact

[todd.bressi@muralarts.org](mailto:todd.bressi@muralarts.org)

Questions must be received by November 30.

Questions and answers will be posted shortly after that.

Visit: <https://www.muralarts.org/artist-resources/calls-to-artists/>

## References

Mural Arts Philadelphia

<https://www.muralarts.org/>

Friends of Independence

<http://friendsofindependence.org/>

Independence National Historical Park

<https://www.nps.gov/inde/index.htm>

NEA Imagine Your Parks

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/centennial/nea-imagine-your-parks.htm>