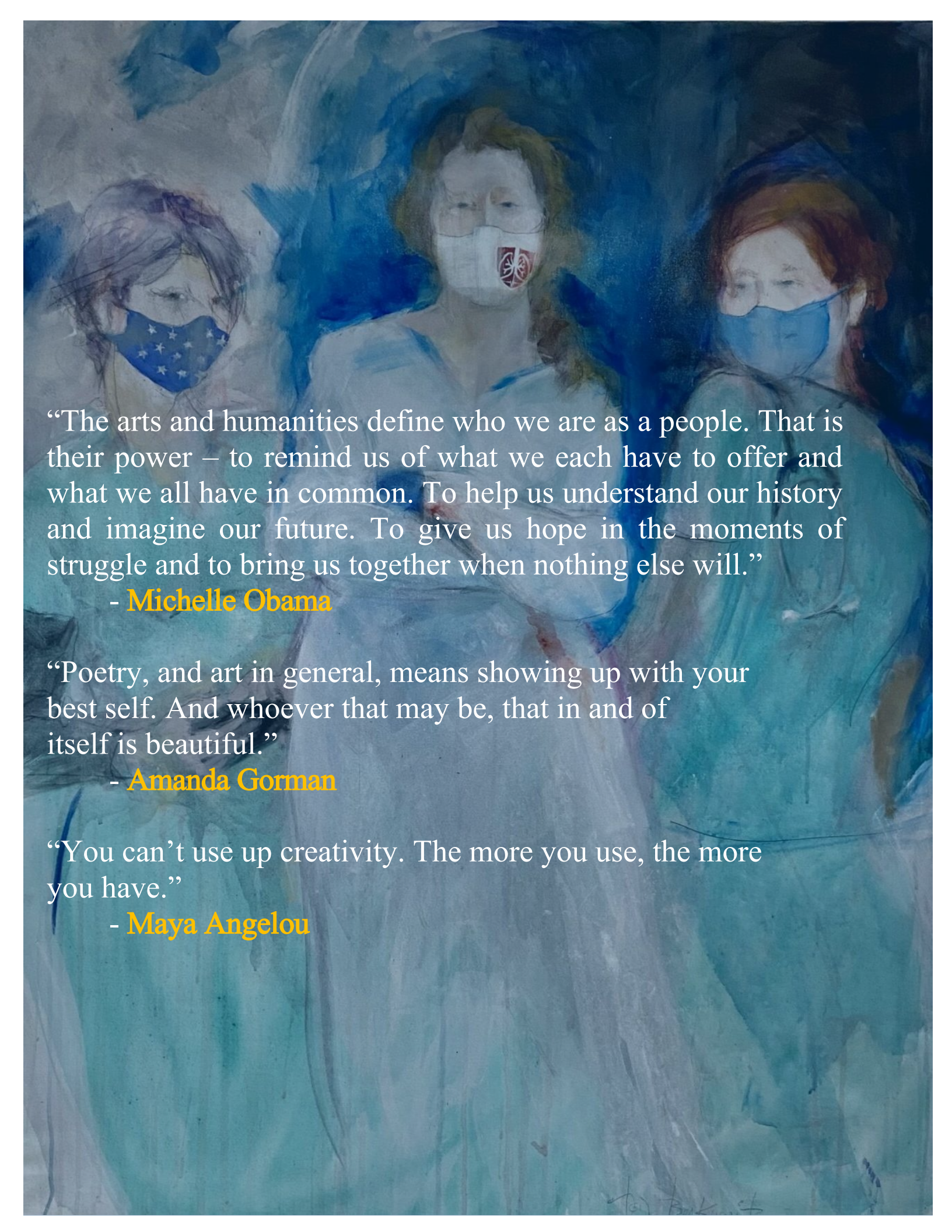




City of Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Committee



2021-2022 Annual Report



“The arts and humanities define who we are as a people. That is their power – to remind us of what we each have to offer and what we all have in common. To help us understand our history and imagine our future. To give us hope in the moments of struggle and to bring us together when nothing else will.”

- **Michelle Obama**

“Poetry, and art in general, means showing up with your best self. And whoever that may be, that in and of itself is beautiful.”

- **Amanda Gorman**

“You can’t use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.”

- **Maya Angelou**

TAKOMA PARK ARTS AND HUMANITIES COMMITTEE

2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

The Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Committee and the City's Arts and Humanities Division have shown remarkable resilience in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which curtailed in-person arts events over the past two years. In our [Takoma Park Arts cultural series](#), we shifted poetry readings, film screenings, and other programs online to reach a wider audience. We are now bringing more events back to the Takoma Park Community Center.

Our arts and humanities programs continue to raise hope and inspiration and reflect the diversity and vibrant heritage of our residents and arts community. More than 2,500 people have subscribed to the [Takoma Park Arts e-newsletter](#) with visitors from across the D.C. area attending our programs and generating economic activity for local restaurants and businesses. Recordings of our *Takoma Park Arts* events have been viewed more than 30,000 times on our [YouTube channel](#), highlighting Takoma Park's international reputation as a city that actively supports the arts.

These vital programs require sufficient City funding and support from the City Council. City-funded honorariums for *Takoma Park Arts* events have helped sustain the livelihoods of local artists, musicians, poets, and lecturers. Grants have supported the Takoma ARTery artist collective, installations celebrating gender and racial diversity, a sidewalk poetry project, and a portrait series celebrating underappreciated city employees.

The arts and humanities aren't a luxury and are a significant driver of the economy. Statewide, despite the pandemic, the arts generated more than \$828 million in economic activity and \$20.6 million in local and state tax revenue during the 2020 fiscal year.

As the City's advisory board on all matters relating to the arts and humanities, we recommend that the City Council approve the Arts and Humanities Division's FY 23 budget and public art funding without any budget cuts. The funding represents a tiny fraction of the City budget, but it carries enormous significance for our arts community, economic development, and the quality of life for Takoma Park residents who consistently support the arts. The arts and humanities define who we are and represent an intrinsic part of ourselves - our capacity for creativity, our resolve in difficult times, and our appreciation of beauty and wonder. The arts deserve our support.

- Arts and Humanities Committee Chair John Warren

Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Committee

John Warren (Chair)	Bethany Karn
Leslie Sapp (Vice Chair)	Thomas Parlon
Melanie Modlin (Secretary)	Dayrelis Rios
Lottie Doughty	Ramon Sola
Dale Ingram	

Arts and Humanities Division Staff

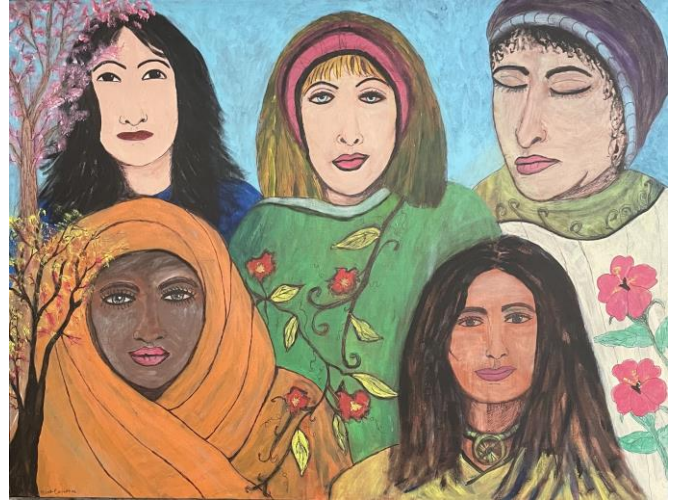
Arts and Humanities Coordinator Brendan Smith
Arts and Humanities Intern Paula Barrios

Artwork on preceding page: *Three Sisters* by Ted Berkowitz

ART EXHIBITIONS

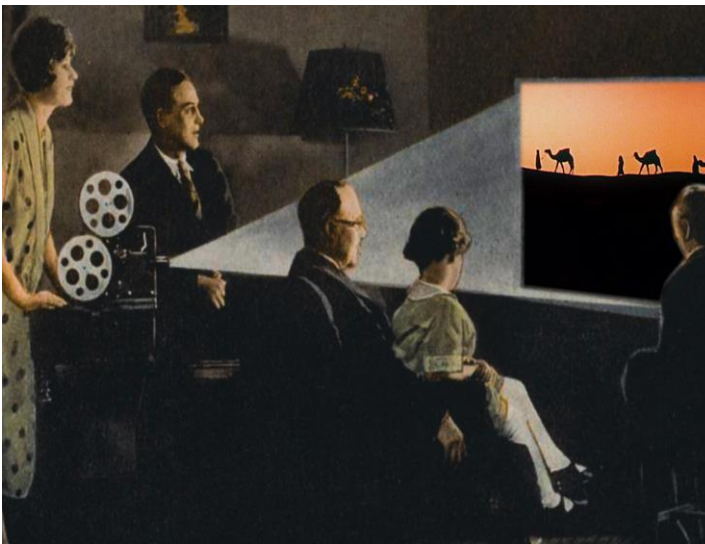
The Uniting US art exhibition at the Takoma Park Community Center featured a wide range of artwork by veterans from across the country. The Uniting US nonprofit helps veterans and their families create art as a means of healing from past traumas and financial support. In the *Realm of the Real* exhibition, three local artists shared their figurative artwork exploring the human form.

Artwork image: Sisters United by Maria Carrion



FILM SCREENINGS

Our film screening series showcased the talents of local filmmakers, including a shorts night, a documentary about musician inmates in Louisiana prisons, films about Civil War history, and a film exploring the power of dance by Takoma Park residents. Local filmmaker Richard Hall continued his popular *Vintage Movie Night* series with vintage film collections about immigrants and refugees, Cold War propaganda, and ongoing efforts to whitewash U.S. history.



POETRY READINGS

The *Takoma Park Arts* series provides a rare venue for readings where local poets can share their work. Takoma Park Poet Laureate Kathleen O'Toole and Arts and Humanities Coordinator Brendan Smith organized several poetry readings exploring different themes. Three immigrant poets shared their experiences as strangers in a new land in one reading. Former inmates from the D.C. jail and federal prisons read their powerful poetry in another event hosted with the Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop.

PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

The Arts and Humanities Division has organized public art projects across Takoma Park to share art in its many forms with local residents and visitors. Public art takes art out of museums and galleries and directly to people where they live and work. Our projects have explored environmental themes, racial and gender diversity, and poems by local residents which have been stamped into concrete sidewalks. A partnership with the Takoma ARtery is supporting local artists, and a new portrait series will celebrate the work of unrecognized city employees.

PAPER OR PLASTIC? ART INSTALLATION



Crafted from plastic newspaper delivery bags and reused straws, artist Jessica Beels' installation titled *Paper or Plastic?* was purchased with public art funds and suspended from the ceiling of the atrium in the Takoma Park Community Center. The artwork critiques our careless consumption of disposable products which cause serious environmental harms. "Newspaper bags and straws often aren't recycled, and they can become microplastics in our oceans where they disrupt entire ecosystems," Beels said.

CELEBRATING POWER OF WOMEN

Local artist Liliane Blom was commissioned to create a banner of her painting *Late Summer* from her *Four Seasons* series. The banner was installed in Memorial Park across the street from the Takoma Park Community Center. The series highlights the beauty and power of women of different ages, races, and ethnicities in settings representing the four seasons. The featured women are champions of the environment who "embody nature, the seasons, and the great circle of existence," Blom said.





SIDEWALK POETRY PROJECT

More than 125 local residents ranging from 6 years old to seniors entered their original poems in our sidewalk poetry contest. A committee of local poets chose 10 children and 10 adults as winners, who received a \$100 prize and a chance to have their poem imprinted in a local sidewalk. Seven of the 20 poems have been stamped in concrete sidewalks so far, and an [online map](#) connects the poems to encourage walking and biking. More poems will be imprinted with new sidewalk construction and repairs.



TAKOMA ARTERY PARTNERSHIP

The Arts and Humanities Division has partnered with the Takoma ARtery, a new artist collective which is connecting local artists through artwork displays in underused storefronts, pop-up exhibitions, and art fairs. City grants have supported the ARtery's start-up costs and the creation of an online artist directory that will help local artists sell their work. "The financial and staff support from the City have helped transform the ARtery from an innovative pandemic-related arts project into a vibrant artist community which is boosting the creative economy," said ARtery co-founder Eleanor Landstreet.

UNSUNG HEROES PORTRAIT SERIES

Local artist Renee Lachman has been commissioned to create a new series of paintings that celebrate the underappreciated contributions of City employees, including trash collectors, librarians, and crossing guards. Many of these workers risked their own health and safety to provide critical services throughout the pandemic. An exhibition of the *Unsung Heroes* series will be held in the Takoma Park Community Center, and some of the paintings will be added to the City's permanent art collection. "I want to spotlight, honor, and thank our unsung heroes of Takoma Park through this new series of artwork, and I would like to thank the City's Arts and Humanities Division for supporting it," Lachman said.

15th ANNUAL TAKOMA PARK HOLIDAY ART SALE

The Takoma Park Holiday Art Sale returned for its 15th year at the Takoma Park Community Center on Dec. 4, 2021. The sale featured 25 local artists selling a diverse range of original art, photography, jewelry, clothing, and handcrafted items. The art sale provides an important boost to the local creative economy by giving artists a public venue to sell their work. Visitors also get the opportunity to support local artists by buying unique gifts for everyone on their holiday list.





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