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Request for Proposals

**Walk to the Water Initiative Phase II: Hudson Square Data Portraits
Tree Pit Sphere Murals along Key Pedestrian Corridors,
Featuring Data Visualization Art Based on Community Engagement Activity**

Hudson Square, Manhattan, New York

February 24, 2025

Hudson Square Business Improvement District

Jeffrey Sussman, Chair
Samara Karasyk, President

Deadline for proposals: March 21, 2025

Summary

The Hudson Square Business Improvement District (HSBID) is seeking a visionary artist/designer specialized in data visualization to create a public art installation that transforms data collected from the community into compelling visual storytelling. This project will be the second phase of HSBID's Walk to the Water (WTTW) initiative. Installed in May 2024, the inaugural WTTW exhibit was an artistic and experiential wayfinding installation that guided pedestrians from Hudson Square to the Hudson River waterfront through a series of 20 fiberglass sphere sculptures placed in sidewalk tree pits, with artwork that depicted the neighborhood's history (images attached in Appendix). As the second phase of WTTW, "Hudson Square Data Portraits" will be a new exhibit of spheres with artwork that aims to bring the community together to reflect on the creative and vibrant energy that they bring to the neighborhood.

The project consists of two main phases:

1. Data Collection through Interactive Installations: Designing an engaging, accessible, and public-facing data collection activity through an interactive pop-up installation that invites community participation and captures the stories of Hudson Square.
2. Artistic Data Portrait Development: Transforming the collected data into visually compelling artwork that represent the creative community of Hudson Square through data and applying it to the spheres.

This initiative is both a celebration of the creative ecosystem of Hudson Square and a platform for collective reflection and storytelling, reinforcing the neighborhood's identity as a place of innovation, artistry, and connectivity.

RFP Schedule

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| ○ February 24 | RFP issued |
| ○ March 7 | Deadline for questions |
| ○ March 21 | Proposals due |
| ○ Week of March 31 | Tentative dates for finalist interviews |
| ○ Early April | Artist/designer selected |

Submission Process

For more information on how to apply, and background on the project, see below. The deadline for proposals is **March 21, 2025**.

Questions regarding the RFP must be submitted in writing to PublicArt@HudsonSquareBID.org no later than March 7, 2025. Answers will be posted to the following webpage on or around March 12th.

<https://www.hudsonsquarebid.org/neighborhood/news/call-for-artists-hudson-square-data-portraits/>

About Hudson Square

Since 2009, the Hudson Square BID (HSBID) has overseen the transformation of Manhattan's former Printing District into a creative and forward-thinking community. Once defined by its industrial past, Hudson Square is now home to a diverse mix of innovative businesses—from global giants like Google and Disney to creative companies like New York Public Radio, Wieden + Kennedy, Squarespace, Edelman, Glossier, Horizon Media. This dynamic ecosystem of talent fuels a neighborhood where creativity thrives, ideas push us forward, and the energy of the workforce spills out into the public realm. HSBID is dedicated to placemaking initiatives that enhance the pedestrian experience, activate the streetscape, and foster meaningful connections. As Hudson Square continues to evolve, it remains a place where industry and artistry intersect, shaping a district that is as inventive, collaborative, and vibrant as the people who work here.

Further information regarding HSBID's programs can be found on our website:

www.hudsonsquarebid.org

About Walk to the Water

WTTW is a wayfinding and streetscape beautification initiative spearheaded by HSBID to establish a strong and visible connection to the waterfront from the heart of the neighborhood. With the recent redevelopment of Google's new headquarters building at 550 Washington Street, Hudson Square gained a new, much needed crossing to Hudson River Park across West Street. HSBID has set out to create a series of "breadcrumbs" guiding pedestrians to the crossing using artwork (i.e. art spheres placed in tree pits), directional signage, and greenery.

For more information on HSBID's inaugural WTTW sphere exhibit, installed in spring 2024 and to be removed in spring 2025, visit our digital guide at: <https://www.hudsonsquarebid.org/wttw/>

Project Objectives

At its core, WTTW Phase II – "Hudson Square Data Portraits" – explores creativity, identity, and connection. By gathering stories, insights, and perspectives from Hudson Square's workers and visitors—about their creative processes, relationships to the neighborhood, and shared experiences—the project will translate data into a vibrant, visual language that reflects the neighborhood's collective spirit. **The result will be a series of unique yet interconnected artistic "portraits" that celebrate Hudson Square's diversity, innovation, and energy.**

The project will consist of up to 20 (total number flexible based on artist/designer's concept) individual fiberglass spheres/portraits that are 18" in diameter and will be procured by HSBID. The spheres will help define the pedestrian route to the waterfront through a creative vision that will be recognizable and cohesive across the corridor. The aesthetic will build a sense of place and provide opportunities for connection.

Scope of Work

1. Data Collection Design

The selected artist/designer will be responsible for designing an engaging data collection process in collaboration with HSBID. The artist/designer shall develop a final concept, work plan, and detailed budget to be presented to the HSBID team for approval. This shall include:

- Data collection process that is **interactive and immersive**, sparking curiosity and participation while encouraging reflection on creativity and community connections; **accessible and inclusive**, ensuring effortless engagement from a diverse audience.

- Data collection station/installation that is **flexible and cost-effective**, allowing for an adaptable, movable installation that can pop up in different spaces (e.g. parks, street corners, building lobbies) across the neighborhood.

Specific responsibilities include:

- **Refining the Theme & Questions:** Collaborating with HSBID to refine a set of questions that elicit meaningful responses, capturing both personal creativity and shared community narratives.
- **Interactive Installation Design:** Conceptualizing physical and/or digital installations that engage pedestrians in a simple yet thought-provoking way and can be managed by 1-2 HSBID staff members. This could include analog methods (chalkboards, postcards, object-based interactions) or digital elements (QR codes, projection mapping, audio recording, etc.).
- **User Experience & Engagement Strategy:** Ensuring the installations **effectively draw in diverse participants** and make responding to questions seamless and intuitive. The artist will propose ways to organically integrate data collection into daily pedestrian movement and public events.
- **Community Engagement Brainstorming:** While the BID will manage installation and facilitation of data collection, the artist/designer will collaborate with the BID in **ideating potential community tie-ins**, such as activations at local events and potential takeaway/commemorative items.

2. Artistic Data Portraits Development

Following data collection, the artist/designer will translate the gathered responses into **visual, narrative-driven data portraits** that bring the community's answers to life on the fiberglass spheres. Artist/designer shall communicate closely with the HSBID project team throughout the design development and execution process. This project phase will involve:

- **Data Visualization & Concept Development:** Creating a cohesive artistic framework for representing the collected data through color, pattern, text, abstraction, or illustrative elements. The artist will define how individual contributions come together to form a **larger visual tapestry of Hudson Square's creative identity**.
- **Sphere Artwork Design:** Developing artwork for each fiberglass sphere that maintains a **balance between uniqueness and cohesion**, ensuring the entire installation feels unified while allowing for distinct visual interpretations. Artist/designer shall develop the design through up to three (3) rounds of HSBID review and comments, culminating in final approval from the HSBID project team.
- **Medium & Material Selection:** Proposing the most effective artistic applications for the spheres, including paint, adhesive wraps, digital prints, or mixed-media layering. The selected materials should be durable for outdoor public display and have the ability to be replicated at a fairly reasonable cost in case of damage.
- **Art Production:** Acquiring all necessary materials and completing the application of the artwork on the spheres within the allotted schedule. HSBID can provide a limited amount of indoor and/or outdoor space for production (e.g. painting) within certain hours (mainly weekday business hours).
- **Community Connection Through Art:** Ensuring that the final artworks **encourage contemplation, storytelling, and recognition of shared experiences**.

3. Project Unveiling

- **Promotion** – Attending an art installation reveal event and collaborating in the promotion of the completed art project within HSBID’s guidelines.

HSBID will:

- Secure any necessary permissions and permits related to the installation of the artwork.
- Develop and distribute marketing and communication materials and work with the artist/designer on promotion.
- Take the lead in documentation of the data collection installations.

Tentative Project Schedule

- **RFP Process**
 - February 24 RFP released
 - March 7 Deadline for questions
 - March 21 Proposals due
 - Week of March 31 Tentative dates for finalist interviews
 - Early April Artist/designer selected and contracted
- **Design Phase:** April – May (concept development and refinement)
- **Data Collection:** late May – July (interactive installations in public spaces)
 - Note: HSBID will have its annual Freeman Plaza opening party on May 21st (weather dependent), which is typically attended by hundreds of community members and will present an opportunity to kick-start the data collection
- **Art Application:** July – August (painting or other application of art on the spheres)
- **Installation:** August (spheres placed in tree pits along the sidewalk to the waterfront)

Submission Requirements

Interested artists/designers should submit:

- A project brief page including the names and contact information (e.g. name, address, phone, email) for the artist(s)/designer(s)
- A CV or resume for each artist/designer (max of two pages per person)
- List of previous public art installations, data visualization projects, community engagement/interactive art projects, or other relevant projects, including the following information: title, year, location, medium, brief description, dimensions
- Brief written narrative of your proposed concept for this project (up to 500 words), incorporating the data collection, design visualization development, and artwork production phases; include any sample visuals and proposed themes, and any suggestions for materials/mediums for both the interactive installations and final sphere artwork
- Up to ten (10) images of past work relevant to this project and/or any other images that convey the proposed concept
- An itemized budget proposal breaking down the costs for each project phase, including design, data collection elements, and artistic production. This shall include all design fees, materials, labor, equipment, and overhead.
- Name and contact information for 2-3 references
- Optional: provide a link to any embedded media (e.g. Vimeo, Youtube) of past work, online portfolio, webpage, or social media account

Please note: we are not requesting a fully-developed artwork design at this time.

Submission deadline: March 21, 2025

All submissions must be emailed to PublicArt@HudsonSquareBID.org with “WTTW RFP” in the subject line.

Please send any questions you may have to PublicArt@HudsonSquareBID.org with “WTTW RFP” in the subject line. March 7th is the deadline for questions to be submitted in order to receive a response before the application deadline. The answers to all questions received by the question deadline will be posted to the following webpage on or around March 12th:

<https://www.hudsonsquarebid.org/neighborhood/news/call-for-artists-hudson-square-data-portraits/>

HSBID reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to: (1) reject any or all submittals when, in its opinion, it is determined to be in the public interest to do so, (2) cancel, revise, or extend this RFP, and (3) request additional information which may be deemed necessary. HSBID assumes no responsibilities no liability for costs incurred by respondents prior to the issuance of a contract.

Selection Process and Criteria

The HSBID project team will review applications and select up to three finalists for a virtual interview. The final artist/designer will be chosen based on their proposal, interview, and references.

We will evaluate proposals using the following criteria:

- Quality of the proposal and project understanding
- Artist/designer’s expertise to accomplish the Scope of Work and past experience in providing similar services.
 - Artistic merit: the artist/designer’s work must demonstrate a high standard of design quality, originality, and proficiency in creating data visualizations and public art.
 - Public art experience: the artist/designer must demonstrate experience and ability in executing a project of this scale and in this type of urban environment.
 - Site suitability: the artist/designer’s work must demonstrate that their work would complement the local environment and streetscape, have a strong visual quality, and be suitable for the public realm.
 - Durability: the artwork must both be suitable for outdoor installation in the local environment and be able to stay in good visual condition for at least a one-year term.
- Project concept: the artist/designer must articulate a clear artistic vision and aesthetic that connects with HSBID’s streetscape improvement and community engagement goals.
- Cost of services

Appendix (see below)

- HSBID Artwork Criteria
- Photos of Walk to the Water Phase I spheres
- Our Inspiration board

Appendix:

HSBID's Artwork Criteria

- Visual impact/visibility: colorful, vibrant, and noticeable from a distance
- Context sensitive: Inspired and relatable to the context of the neighborhood
- Mood: cheerful, welcoming, and attractive
- Subject matter: family-friendly, positive, and hopeful; relatable and accessible to the target audience

Target Audiences

The primary audience is defined as youthful, diverse, creative, and educated. The project aims to inspire our creative workforce, improve the daily quality of life for our nearby residents, and instill neighborhood pride in all.

Walk to the Water Phase I



Note: The Phase I spheres will be relocated in advance of the Phase II installation

Inspiration for data collection design



Credits: Stephan Sagmeister



Credits: Dorota Grabkowska

Inspiration for Data Portraits

Which TED letter are you?

- A. Technology
- B. Entertainment
- C. Design

When do you get your best ideas?

- A. Right before I fall asleep/wake-up
- B. While I'm getting ready
- C. During my commute
- D. At the office
- E. After an adult beverage
- F. I never know when brilliance might strike

When I have a chance to read, I prefer:

- A. A novel
- B. Non-fiction
- C. Newspaper
- D. Magazine
- E. Does Twitter count?

When it comes to the rules, do you:

- A. Follow them
- B. Fudge them
- C. Ignore them

How many unread e-mails in the inbox before you start to feel anxious?

- A. 1
- B. 20
- C. Over 100
- D. I don't get anxious until I hit the 1000s.

My workspace is:

- A. Minimalist
- B. Covered in photos/mementos
- C. Covered in papers/work stuff
- D. Preferably a hammock

The future is

- A. bright
- B. Grim

Credits: Giorgia Lupi

What kind of athlete are you?

Which city brings back the most memories?

What kind of athlete are you?

Faced with failure, I feel...

Throughout life, you're more of a...

What is your most developed sense?

What is your element?

Where are you heading?

What kind of athlete are you?

- Talented
- Conscientious
- Audacious

Faced with failure, I feel...

- Crushed
- Angry
- More motivated

Portraits Paris Olympics 2024

My areas of expertise are:

- A. Technology
- B. Design
- C. Data & AI
- D. Strategy & Culture
- E. Sales & Marketing

My core talent at work is:

- A. Words
- B. Innovation
- C. Building
- D. Care
- E. Beauty
- F. Coordination
- G. Analysis

My best ideas hit me when I'm:

- A. Falling asleep/waking up
- B. Getting ready
- C. Commuting
- D. At the office
- E. Enjoying an adult beverage
- F. I never know when

I prefer communicating via:

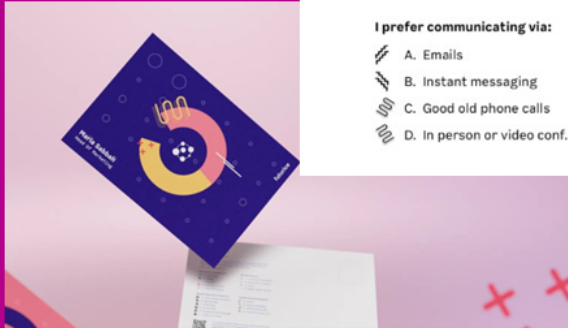
- A. Emails
- B. Instant messaging
- C. Good old phone calls
- D. In person or video conf.

My way to Fika is:

- A. Classy with a kanelbulle
- B. Fancy with a croissant
- C. Fruity
- D. Simple, coffee/tea only

When space travel becomes a common thing to do, I would:

- A. Stay on Earth
- B. Go to the Moon
- C. Go to Mars



Futurice post cards 2023