

Open Call for Artists: Hudson Square Walk to the Water Wayfinding Spheres Project

Summary:

Hudson Square Business Improvement District is seeking to commission an NYC-based artist or artist team to create original artwork to be installed on 20 fiberglass spheres in tree pits in the Hudson Square neighborhood. We are seeking to hire one artist or artist team to complete work for all the spheres across the corridor, with the intent to create a cohesive aesthetic identity along the walk to the water. These spheres will contribute to a multipronged wayfinding program spearheaded by HSBID to connect our neighborhood with the waterfront. This project will be executed in the service of promoting Hudson Square as a vibrant and connected neighborhood.

Successful proposals will:

- Articulate a clear artistic narrative and aesthetic that connects to the waterfront and neighborhood history/character
- Build upon the existing art aesthetic in the neighborhood established by previous public art projects
- Incorporate wayfinding and directional elements in a creative and legible way that clearly mark the path to the waterfront crossing

Artist Stipend: \$5,000 for design, materials, and labor (production of spheres will be covered separately by the BID).

Submission and Selection Process:

Artists interested in submitting proposals should follow the instructions within the creative brief. Artists are asked to submit sample images of past work along with a narrative outlining the concept for this specific site. Submissions will be open from November 29 – December 23, 2022. The selected artist will be notified in late January 2023, with installation to begin in May 2023. Selection will be made by members of the HSBID staff in consultation with members of our Board of Directors and Streetscape Task Force.

Digital PDF versions of proposals should be submitted via email to HSBID's Planning Associate, Carson Menkes at cmenkes@hudsonsquarebid.org

Questions can also be directed to cmenkes@hudsonsquarebid.org

Submission Deadline: December 23, 2022 at 5:00 EST

Walk to the Water Wayfinding Spheres

Creative Brief

Hudson Square Neighborhood

Over the last decade, Hudson Square has become one of the most energizing locations in New York City. Surrounded by SoHo, Tribeca, and the West Village, the neighborhood is defined by its creative industries, unique and cohesive architecture and vibrant streets. The area is primarily commercial with a growing residential community. Although the pandemic resulted in many people redefining their lifestyles and relationships with the workplace, Hudson Square has remained a desirable neighborhood to work, live, and visit. The Hudson Square Business Improvement District (HSBID) is doing its part to build a community that is connected, welcoming, and inspiring.

HSBID has prioritized public art and people-focused streetscapes since its inception a dozen years ago. Hudson Square Canvas, our public art program, was designed to create an inviting pedestrian environment along Varick Street between Clarkson and Canal Streets. Along this corridor is a large-scale urban art gallery featuring original artworks from contemporary artists whose styles compliment Hudson Square's values and identity. In Freeman Plaza East, HSBID created a colorful, fun, and enticing art park, which is home to a Noguchi sculpture, eye-catching fence art installation, art-covered piano, and pedestrian mural.

In spring 2023, the BID plans for new public art projects that will build upon the success of these previous projects and cement the importance of public art in improving the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Walk to the Water

Walk to the Water is a new wayfinding program spearheaded by HSBID to establish a strong and visible connection to the waterfront from the heart of the neighborhood through directional signage, streetscape improvements, and public art. With the redevelopment of Google's new building at 550 Washington Street, Hudson Square will have a new, much needed crossing to Hudson River Park across West Street that extends west of Charlton Street (approximately – Charlton Street terminates at Greenwich Street, one block east of the crossing). Because the new crossing is mid-block and between two large commercial buildings, it is not intuitive to people walking through the neighborhood. As a result, HSBID envisions in creating a series of "breadcrumbs" guiding pedestrians to the crossing through a public-access garden alleyway, using artwork, directional signage, and greenery.

Project Objectives

Hudson Square BID's wayfinding spheres will provide an artful approach to wayfinding by guiding pedestrians along Spring and Washington Streets to the waterfront. The project will consist of up to 20 individual fiberglass spheres (18" in diameter) to be painted by one artist or artist team and embedded in tree pits along Spring Street and Washington Street (see attachments for example).

The spheres will help define the pedestrian route to the waterfront through a creative vision and theme that will be recognizable and cohesive across the corridor. The aesthetic will build a sense of place and provide visual information and opportunities for connection. The sphere artwork will creatively incorporate wayfinding and directional elements in a fun and legible way.

The spheres should share an aesthetic sensibility with the existing public art pieces found along Varick Street and in Freeman Plaza East, while creating a unique visual identity along the pedestrian route. The existing art in Hudson Square draws upon themes that reflect the neighborhood's history and character as New York's printing district as well as its current identity as a creative hub.

Artwork Criteria

The wayfinding spheres will meet the following criteria:

- Colorful, vibrant, noticeable; the mood is cheerful, welcoming, attractive.
- The aesthetic is cohesive and dynamic and has a vision that will be continued across all spheres.
- The art incorporates creative wayfinding and directional elements and clearly marks a directional path.
 - At each end of the corridor, text and imagery on the spheres should direct pedestrians towards the destinations of Hudson River Park and the heart of Hudson Square.
- The subject matter draws upon and connects to themes of the waterfront and neighborhood history/character.
- The subject matter is family-friendly; positive, hopeful, welcoming; relatable to the target audience, accessible.

Target Audience

This project will reach people who are in Hudson Square for a variety of reasons including residents and visitors. However, the majority of the daytime population in Hudson Square is comprised of office workers who are youthful, diverse, creative, and educated. The artwork should help define the character of the neighborhood and be engaging and appealing.

Project Schedule

December 2022	Open Call
Late-January 2023	Artist Selection
Feb – March 2023	Artwork Development and Sphere Fabrication
April/May 2023	Painting and Installation

Application

Interested artist/artist team should submit:

- A project brief page including the names and contact information for the artist/artist team.
- A CV or resume for each artist (1 page per artist).
- Up to 3 images of past work relevant to this project and/or any other images that convey the proposed concept.
 - Digital images must be JPEG files and must be no more than 300dpi and no larger than 1024x768 pixel resolution. Each image must be unlocked and downloadable for viewing
 - Each JPEG image must be titled with the artist's name_projectname_image number. Example: SaraSmith_ProjectA_001, SaraSmith_ProjectB_002.
- A project proposal (300-500 words) explaining the artist's narrative and outlining the concept for the project.

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All submissions must be emailed to Carson Menkes at cmenkes@hudsonsquarebid.org

Attachments

- I. Example of Painted Spheres in Tree Pits



Photo courtesy of LIC Partnership

II. Map of Tree Pits and Corridor

Map of Walk to the Water Corridor and Tree Pits for Art Sphere Installation



III. Existing Art in Hudson Square



Hudson Square Canvas 1, 161 Varick Street



Hudson Square Canvas 2, 200 Varick Street (W Houston Side)



Hudson Square Canvas 3, 131 Varick Street



Freeman Plaza East Fence Art and Noguchi Sculpture, 101 Varick Street



More Art in the Neighborhood, 388 Hudson Street