



LEXARTS

LexArts and LFUCG Set to Unveil Lexington's Newest Murals

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Lexington, KY, September 10, 2008 --- LexArts, in partnership with the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, is pleased to announce the unveiling of two murals made possible through the Lexington Outdoor Mural Project.

Details will be announced at a press conference attended by Lexington Mayor, Jim Newberry, and the President and CEO of LexArts, Jim Clark, on Monday, September 15 at 10:00 am on the Vine Street side of the High Street YMCA (Quality Street at Vine Street, downtown Lexington), the site of one of the murals. We hope you can join us.

The goal of the project was to create community-inspired murals in 2008 which will launch a multi-year initiative that will transform blank walls into works of art. The murals will not only beautify our community, they will reflect our city's unique and colorful history while celebrating the character of our neighborhoods.

In early March, an advisory committee began the process and laid out how the Mural Project would unfold. First, they selected the sites for the murals by accepting applications from neighborhood associations around town. LexArts then issued a Call to Artists soliciting proposals.

Neighborhood associations were engaged in sharing cultural and historical information with the artists so the proposed murals would reflect the neighborhoods. Community members were engaged in the production of the murals which started in mid-August and will finish in mid-September. LexArts is in the process of documenting the process on video so that other neighborhood groups can learn from the experiences of this first year.

Whereas artists from all over the country responded to the LexArts call, the artists that were chosen by the neighborhood associations are located right here in Lexington. The two murals are located at Al's Bar on North Limestone Street and the Vine Street side of the High Street YMCA.

Artist, Waseem Touma, was selected to create the mural at the YMCA which reflects mind, body, spirit and the future of Lexington. "I have been a member of the YMCA High Street for a little while," said Touma. "When I discovered that it was one of the selected mural sites and that I live only a few blocks away, it made it that much more personal as I am part of the community the mural is for, so to be selected has been a great honor."

"It is really exciting to be part of a project that will have such a positive visual impact in downtown Lexington," Touma continues. "LexArts has done a wonderful job in connecting such neighborhood associations with artists to brighten up Lexington with some colorful, dynamic public art."

Michael Burrell was chosen by the North Limestone Neighborhood Association to create the mural at Al's Bar which reflects the history of jazz in Lexington. "Researching the material for this mural project

was a rewarding experience," recalled Burrell. "I got pulled into the rich history of the North Limestone area and of Lexington that I was not aware of. I felt a responsibility to those folks. They welcomed me into their homes, their memories and shared so much. I am honored to have been chosen for this commission."

The Lexington Outdoor Mural Project Advisory Committee includes: Marianne Blodgett, Administrative Aide to the Mayor, Community Relations; Deborah Borrowdale-Cox, Director of Education, UK Art Museum; Julie Decker, Chairperson, Georgetown College Art Department; Chuck Ellinger and Linda Gorton, Urban-County Council Members; Jim Gray, Vice-Mayor, Urban County Council; Ellen Gregory, Chief Operating Officer, Preston Osborne; Pam Seimer, Executive Vice President, United Way; Darren Taylor, Architect, GBBN; and Harold Tate, President/Executive Director, Lexington Downtown Development Authority.

PRESS CONFERENCE DETAILS

Date: Monday, September 15

Time: 10:00 am

Place: Vine Street side of the High Street YMCA (Quality Street at Vine Street, downtown Lexington)

In Attendance: Lexington Mayor Jim Newberry
LexArts President & CEO Jim Clark

About LexArts

LexArts is a nonprofit community organization that works for the development of a strong and vibrant arts community as a means of enhancing the quality of life in central Kentucky. Through its annual *Campaign for the Arts*, LexArts raises millions of dollars in support of local arts. In turn, LexArts underwrites the operating expenses for a variety of Beneficiary Groups, offers affordable exhibition and performance space for arts organizations, as well as competitive grants for community outreach projects. Visit LexArts website at www.lexarts.org. LexArts is supported in part by the Kentucky Arts Council, a state agency in the Commerce Cabinet, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts. Major support is provided by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government.

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