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CHARLOTTE STREET FOUNDATION SUPPORT FOR ARTISTS EXPANDS

More studio space and grants, including \$40,000 cash awards from the Warhol Foundation, will be available.

By ALICE THORSON.

Money, shows and space.

For artists, these are the essentials, and the Charlotte Street Foundation is helping Kansas City's artists get all three. In the last 11 years, the local nonprofit has put \$447,500 in artists' pockets and provided more than 24,000 square feet of studio and exhibition space.

This fall, both those figures are going up with help from the Andy Warhol Foundation, Time Equities Corp., Missouri Bank and BKS Realty.

By now, many people are familiar with the foundation's annual five-figure grants to individual artists, its artist studios program, and the many exhibitions and events sponsored by its Urban Culture Project.

Next spring, the foundation will hand out more money to artists through a new Rocket Grants program, funded by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and administered in partnership with the Spencer Museum of Art in Lawrence.

"It's recognizing their efforts as arts leaders in the community," said James Bewley, program officer at the Warhol Foundation in New York, "and this is an opportunity to sustain the arts ecology in Kansas City and Lawrence."

Artists, curators, artist groups and artist-run spaces within an 80-mile radius of Kansas City will be eligible for \$40,000 in cash awards. The grants of as much as \$4,000 each will support artist-driven projects such as exhibitions, public programs, performances and publications. The Warhol Foundation funds similar re-granting programs in Houston and the Bay Area. "The (grants) are meant to encourage innovative, experimental, on-the-ground projects," said Kate Hackman, associate director of the Charlotte Street Foundation. "We want the artists to stretch, to collaborate with other artists and challenge themselves to work in new ways."

"This funding is meant to support projects existing outside of established institutions and traditional modes of presentation. These might include the activities of an artists' collective, interventions in the public realm, an exhibition in an ad hoc venue, a multidisciplinary production in a public park."

The Rocket Grants build on Charlotte Street's previous relationship with the Warhol Foundation, which has provided funds for Urban Culture Project programs and long-term strengthening of the organization. Information about how to apply for the Rocket Grants will be posted on the Charlotte Street Web site, www.charlottestreet.org, in coming weeks.

This fall, Charlotte Street also will expand its UCP Studio Residency Program, which provides free downtown studio space to artists for a year. The lease of 8,000 square feet of space at City Center Square, 1100 Main St., will add 14 private studios for individual artists and a 5,000-square-foot rehearsal space for performing artists and groups.

"I am super, super excited," said Jane Gotch of the Jane Gotch Dancers contemporary dance company.



This fall, the Charlotte Street Foundation's Urban Culture Project is expanding its Studio Residency Program, which provides free studio space to artists like Lori Yonley, here in her City Center Square studio, for a year.

“As a choreographer in the city, I can say we are in desperate need of rehearsal space,” she said. “It’s invaluable to have a free rehearsal space where we can go to rehearse and have an ongoing dialogue, not just with dancers but with artists in other genres.”

The studio residency program — like UCP’s exhibitions program — relies on the generosity of downtown building owners, including UMB Bank, Copaken White & Blitt and Time Equities Corp.

“We are extremely grateful to these real estate owners who provide free or low-cost space for us to make available to artists,” Hackman said.

Joining established studio spaces at Bonfils, 125 E. 12th St., and Partnership Place, 906 Grand Blvd., the City Center Square studios bring the number of individual artists’ studios to 26.

Eight performing artists and groups, including the Jane Gotch Dancers, Maura Garcia’s Mixed Blood Woman dancers and Quixotic, will have shared access to the large rehearsal studio.

David Hughes, founder and director of the Charlotte Street Foundation, said the City Center Square addition “has nearly tripled the number of artists given free studios for one-year terms.”

This year also marks a major increase in the amount of money going to artists, he said.

“For the first 13 years, the average was \$34,000 through the awards,” Hughes said. “This year, we gave \$40,000 in awards and generated approximately \$90,000 through Art through Architecture (AtA).”

AtA, a new program administered by the Charlotte Street Foundation and the American Institute of Architects Kansas City, encourages architects and clients to buy and commission works by Kansas City artists. Through AtA, Kansas City artist Barry Anderson received a \$10,000 commission to create a video artwork for Drug Free Sport.

The program’s most active participant to date is Missouri Bank, which commissioned a \$25,000 piece from sculptor Jesse Small for its new Crossroads Branch and regularly commissions artists to create works for its specially created “Artboard” billboards for art, also at the Crossroads Branch. Funds for the art projects were allocated from the construction budget.



Archie Scott Gobber has been commissioned to create a mural for the drive-through of Missouri Bank’s new Brookside branch (seen here in an artist’s rendering) through the Charlotte Street Foundation’s Art through Architecture program.



The Jane Gotch Dancers is among the groups that will have free access to a large rehearsal space in City Center Square through the Urban Culture Project’s expanded Studio Residency Program.

Now it’s headed south.

The bank’s latest AtA project is a commission to Kansas City artist Archie Scott Gobber. Gobber will create a mural along the wall of the drive-through at the bank’s new branch in the old Star Motors Building, 7 W. 62nd Terrace. Helix Architecture + Design is renovating the building; Gobber will complete the mural by spring.

“It is by far my largest public work to date,” Gobber said. “It’s 90 feet long and has a striped multicolored background with dimensional letters that say ‘Dream.’”

“The letters are large. The ‘D’ is approximately 7 by 7 feet”

Each letter will be surrounded by a halo of LED light, Gobber said, and his design specifies warm light on the front of the work to enhance the retro feel of the letters.