

## RFQ – Franklin Avenue Library Public Art Project

Entry Deadline: March 10, 2025

### Opportunity:

The Franklin Avenue Library, Des Moines Public Library Foundation, Friends of the Franklin Avenue Library, and the Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation seek artists / artist teams living and working in Polk County, Iowa to create an engaged and/or suspended sculptural installation for an interior site at the **Franklin Avenue Library, located at 5000 Franklin Avenue, Des Moines, next to the Waveland Trail.**

[The Des Moines Public Library](#) began as the Des Moines Library Association in 1866. In 1882, it became part of the city, and in 1903, the former library building at 100 Locust Street was completed. In the 1920's, the library provided a home for the Cumming School of Art. It was the birthplace of the Library Bill of Rights in 1938 under director Forrest Spaulding. The Library Bill of Rights set forth a program to combat "growing intolerance, suppression of free speech and censorship affecting the rights of minorities and individuals." The bill is still in use today by the American Library Association to ensure diversity of viewpoints in all library materials. In the 1930s, Des Moines artist Harry Donald Jones began painting a mural on the 1,091 square feet of wall space on the ground floor as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. Entitled "The Social History of Des Moines," the mural traced the growth of Des Moines from prehistory to present day.

As Des Moines expanded, new branches were built, with the opening of the West Side Branch Library (now Franklin Avenue Library) in 1965, with several others to follow. The [Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation](#) and Des Moines Public Library first partnered in 2018 with the installation

of Tom Sachs's *Miffy Fountain* (2007) at the Central Library, which was a Gift in Memory of Melva Bucksbaum from her daughter Mary Bucksbaum Scanlan, and sons Gene Bucksbaum and Glenn Bucksbaum. The Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation and Des Moines Public Library are excited to bring the next installation in their partnership to the Franklin Avenue Library Branch's Teen Space.

The Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation is a non-profit organization that places art in increasing numbers of visible public spaces through public-private collaborations and partnerships. We educate and engage the community in an awareness and understanding of public art identity and culture.

The Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation is a catalyst for outstanding public art projects with the power to inspire people who reside in, work in, and visit Greater Des Moines, and to shape a fair and just community. The GDMPAF advances the best of public art in the community through public and private collaborations, enhancing community access and understanding, and adding to the cultural record through its installations.

### Eligibility:

Professional visual artists, or teams of artists, at least 18 years of age **who are living and working in Polk County, Iowa** are eligible. Emerging artists are encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to artists whose work is historically underrepresented and / or is not currently represented by public art in Central Iowa. Employees and Board Members of the Des Moines Public Library branches, Friends of the Franklin Avenue Library, Board Members of the DMPL Foundation, and the Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation are ineligible to apply.

**Commission Description:**

The location is depicted and described in the **attached Appendix**. The **all-inclusive project budget should not exceed \$15,000**.

The proposed artwork should be engaged with the wall and/or a suspended sculptural installation that is made of durable materials and fits within the area described in the **Appendix**. The installation should be fabricated to last 10 years. The proposed artwork should be inspired by themes explored in Rick Riordan's fantasy novel series based on Greek mythology, [\*Percy Jackson and the Olympians\*](#) (first published in 2005). The installation should be welcoming, youth-friendly, inclusive, and inspiring to the library's visitors, and particularly, its teen community.

The budget includes, but is not limited to, stipends, \$250 design fee, travel, fabrication, any proposed site alterations, including painting and additional lighting, supplies, material costs, delivery, approval by an Iowa-licensed engineer, installation, and a three-year workmanship warranty pertaining to any defects.

**Selection Process:** A selection panel consisting of representatives from the Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation, Franklin Avenue Library, Des Moines Public Library, Friends of the Franklin Avenue Library, and community stakeholders will select the final artist/artist team.

**Submission Materials and Instructions:**

- Artist contact information: email, phone number, address, website, social media if applicable.
- Written letter of interest describing your vision for the sculpture / sculptural installation. The letter of interest should not exceed 2 pages.
- A relevant body of work that demonstrates conceptual, aesthetic, and technical mastery in the artistic medium / media relevant to your

proposal. Include up to 5 images and / or up to 3 video links. Links to images are also acceptable.

- A list providing details of your selected body of artworks, including the title, year, materials, dimensions, and brief budget.
- Biographical information and resume/CV. If an artist team, please provide biographical information and resume/CV for all team members.
- The contact information of 3 professional references.
- Please submit all materials as **one PDF document** via email to [executive.director@dsmpublicartfoundation.org](mailto:executive.director@dsmpublicartfoundation.org).

The Selection Panel will use the following evaluation criteria to select an artist or artist team:

- Works of art in the artist's portfolio are original, innovative, of exceptional quality and enduring value.
- Works of art in the artist's portfolio indicate that the artist is sensitive to the social, economic, cultural, political, historical, and physical context of the site, the City of Des Moines, the Des Moines Public Library network, and the surrounding communities, and the State of Iowa. We are committed to sustaining a diverse and inclusive community. We recognize that multiple voices and perspectives enrich our work.
- Works of art in the artist's portfolio utilize materials and processes likely to contribute to the longevity of public works of art.

Up to 4 finalists will be chosen to create a proposal. Each finalist will be provided a \$250 design fee to generate a concept.

**Timeline:**

**January 21, 2025 – RFQ Announced.**

**March 10, 2025, 5pm CDT – RFQ deadline.** Email submissions to  
[executive.director@dsmpublicartfoundation.org](mailto:executive.director@dsmpublicartfoundation.org).

**May 2, 2025 – Finalists Notified**

**June 16, 5pm CDT – Final Proposal Deadline**

**August 1, 2025 – Selection Announced**

**Installation by January 1, 2026**

Selected artists / artist teams will be required to sign a contract outlining expectations, timelines and requirements.

Please direct any questions to:

Alexa McCarthy, PhD

Executive Director

Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation

[executive.director@dsmpublicartfoundation.org](mailto:executive.director@dsmpublicartfoundation.org)



**Franklin Avenue Library Public Art Project  
RFQ Appendix  
Winter 2025**



Images: Franklin Avenue Public Library

**About the Site:**

The site-specific installation will animate Franklin Avenue Library's Teen Space, shown in the following images. The space is visible from the east entry of the Library. The lamps and bulletin board will be removed. Preference will be given to durable sculptural installations that are engaged with the wall and/or suspended from the ceiling. Lighting installations or painted murals will also be considered.

**Dimensions**

- Floor to ceiling: approximately 133" h

**Wall space**

- Top of shelving to ceiling: approximately 100" h
- Wall expanse: approximately 81" w
- Header/wall space above windows: approximately 38" h





