

Archived The City of Philadelphia Celebrates 60 Years of Percent for Art

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PHILADELPHIA – The City of Philadelphia’s Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (OACCE) and the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (PRA) are celebrating the **60th Anniversary of the nation’s first Percent for Art Programs**.

In 1959, Philadelphia pioneered the Percent for Art model requiring the inclusion of site-specific public art in new construction or major renovation projects in the amount of one percent of the total budget. The charge of the Percent for Art Programs is to commission outstanding and enduring artworks, which respond specifically to public spaces and communities. This groundbreaking model has been replicated in cities across the country, reflecting our collective desire to experience visual art as a component of the built environment.

“As the first city in the nation to establish the Percent for Art model, Philadelphia is proud to recognize this important milestone,” said Mayor Jim Kenney. “The public art commissioned through the Percent for Art Programs connect our citizens to these public spaces.”

Both the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority’s and the City’s Percent for Art Programs were established in 1959 – the PRA’s began in March and the City’s in December. The **PRA’s Percent for Art** requirement mandated that at least one percent of the building construction costs be allocated to the commissioning of original site-specific public art. Similarly, the **City’s Percent for Art** ordinance required that one percent of the total dollar amount of any City-funded construction project be devoted to original site-specific public art.

Philadelphia is home to an unparalleled collection of public art in every medium including sculptures, paintings, memorials, photographs, glass art, kinetic works and murals throughout all areas of the city. Over 650 of these artworks were commissioned through the City's Percent for Art Programs. Committed to the principle that art should be available to all of Philadelphia's communities, the Percent for Art Programs have brought professional visual artists' work to residential buildings, educational campuses, libraries, recreation centers and other civic spaces in every neighborhood. Believed to be the oldest and largest collection of public art in the United States, our extraordinary collection tells the story of Philadelphia's rich history and diversity and reflects Philadelphia's long-standing commitment to arts and culture.

"Philadelphia's unrivaled public art collection is the result of the collective efforts of local arts organizations, civic groups, and visionary individuals and illustrates our enduring belief in the value of art in everyday life," said Margot Berg, Public Art Director. "Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Percent for Art Programs is an opportunity to recognize our city's remarkable collection and to celebrate our reputation as the greatest public art city in the nation."

The activities celebrating the 60th Anniversary begin with the **Percent for Art 60**, a selection of 60 public artworks commissioned through OACCE and PRA's Percent for Art Programs. "The Percent for Art 60 represent the diversity in the types of public art in neighborhoods throughout the city and showcases a progression of public art since 1959," said Julia Guerrero, Director of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority's Percent for Art Program. The Percent for Art 60 will be highlighted through anniversary activities happening this year.

60th Anniversary activities include:

- **Percent for Art 60 Interactive Map** – The Percent for Art 60 will be highlighted in a new online map. Visit the interactive map to learn more about the artist, location, and details about each artwork. The map can be used for self-guided tours and to find the Percent for Art 60 in your neighborhood. Map launch-date to be announced.
- **#PercentForArt60 Photo Contest** – Philadelphians and visitors alike are invited to snap and share their images of the #PercentForArt60 to join in the 60th Anniversary celebration. Participants can use the online map to find the #PercentForArt60 throughout the city. Share

your images on social media using #PercentForArt60 to be part of the fun!

- **New Percent for Art Dedications** – The public artworks commissioned through OACCE's and PRA's Percent for Art Programs that are unveiled and dedicated this year will be highlighted as part of the 60th Anniversary.
- **60th Anniversary Exhibition** – Planned for this fall, an exhibition will feature a visual timeline of Philadelphia's Percent for Art program over the past 60 years. The multi-media exhibit will include video, past proposal documents and models for visitors to learn more about the history of this groundbreaking program.
- **60th Anniversary Reception & Panel Discussion** – The closing reception of the 60th Anniversary exhibition will feature a panel discussion and serve as the key event of the Percent for Art 60th Anniversary. The panel discussion will celebrate the role of public art, discuss how it has changed in the past 60 years and imagine how it can continue to evolve in the future.

To stay up-to-date about Percent for Art 60th Anniversary announcements or additional events, visit [**creativephl.org/percentforart60**](http://creativephl.org/percentforart60) or [**philadelphiaredevelopmentauthority.org/percent-for-art**](http://philadelphiaredevelopmentauthority.org/percent-for-art).

About the Percent for Art Programs

The City's Percent for Art ordinance requires that one percent of the total dollar amount of any construction project that includes City funds be devoted to the commissioning of site-specific public art. The intent of the Percent for Art Ordinance is to enhance the City's public environment by incorporating exceptional site-specific works of art.

The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority's Percent for Art Program works with developers building on land purchased from or acquired by the PRA to commission original works of public art across the city. The PRA's Public art can be found in such diverse developments as high-rise commercial and residential towers, universities, parks and hotels.

About City of Philadelphia's Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy

*The **Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy** (OACCE) supports and promotes arts, culture and the creative industries; develops partnerships that ensure culture and creativity are essential components of Philadelphia's community revitalization, education, and economic*

development strategies; and links Philadelphians to cultural resources and opportunities. For more information about the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, visit CreativePHL.org and follow @CreativePHL on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

About the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority

The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (PRA) is the City's implementation arm for community development, and partner agency with the Department of Planning & Development. Established in 1945, PRA has a rich history and involvement with many of the city's major redevelopment projects. Today, PRA focuses on investing in equitable communities and building public-private partnerships to promote social impact.

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