

**DEADLINE: MARCH 26, 2023, 11:59PM CST**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Chicago Departments of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) and Water Management (DWM) in partnership with the Mother Jones Heritage Project (MJHP) invite professional artists and artist teams with a demonstrated history of completing major permanent outdoor public art projects to submit their qualifications for a **\$250,000** commission remembering Mother Jones and her continuing legacy to be placed in Jane Byrne Park at the Historic Water Tower, 806 N. Michigan Avenue.

## **CITY OF CHICAGO PUBLIC ART COLLECTION**

In 1978, Chicago’s City Council established the Chicago Public Art Program by unanimously approving an ordinance that gave DCASE the authority to acquire new artworks for the City. DCASE through the Chicago Public Art Program administers the Chicago Public Art Collection and implements the City’s process for commissions and donations of public art. The Collection provides the residents of Chicago with an improved public environment and enhances city buildings and spaces with quality works of art by professional artists. The Chicago Public Art Collection includes more than 500 works of art exhibited in over 150 municipal facilities around the city, such as police stations, libraries, and CTA stations.

As part of the City’s ongoing efforts to promote meaningful relationships between communities and the public art in their neighborhoods and in response to the recent social unrest, DCASE administered the Chicago Monuments Project (CMP). The CMP was a multiyear look at Chicago’s existing collection of public monuments and the process by which new monuments should be created. An important result is the recommendation that all proposals for new monuments on public property must have significant community engagement and a project advisory panel (PAP) consisting of members of the group advocating for the monument, community representatives, professional art representatives and representatives from relevant City agencies in consultation with local elected officials. The typical process will follow a Request for Qualifications (RFQ)/Request for Proposals (RFP) design development and commission format.

For more information on the Chicago Public Art Program: <https://bit.ly/3AsZ92Y>

For more information on the Chicago Monuments Project: <https://chicagomonuments.org/>

## **SUMMARY OF THE OPPORTUNITY**

DCASE, DWM and MJHP seek to honor the important contributions to labor history of Mother Jones. An Irish immigrant who became a pivotal Chicago-based labor organizer, Mary Harris “Mother” Jones (1837-1930), advocated for global justice, rejected racism against African-

Americans, supported the Mexican Revolution, organized women as well as men, and worked for improved living conditions for working families. (See Appendix A.) Important goals of the project include fostering community driven monument projects, increasing the number of monuments to historic women and raising public awareness of Chicago’s important labor history. While acknowledging the deficit of representations of women and their societal contributions currently in the public art realm the panel also recognizes that the “great man” trope of monument making is not adequate to the duty of communicating fully the importance of Mother Jones, her enduring legacy and that she is part of the ongoing movement for labor rights. The task of the artist is to navigate the creative tension caused by these different needs.

The site for this monument will be Jane Byrne Park, the plaza and greenspace surrounding the Historic Water Tower, at 806 N. Michigan Avenue, named in honor of the first woman to be mayor of Chicago. The Historic Water Tower and the Chicago Avenue Pumping Station are survivors of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 and were familiar to Mother Jones who was a resident of the city at that time. Given the wide-ranging nature of her organizing work there is not a definitive singular historic site associated with Mother Jones.

Successful public art proposals will approach the artwork’s subject with a deep understanding of her personal story and her role in labor history and will address its site with a bold and creative vision that is sensitive to the historic setting while helping to shape the dialog of contemporary monument making. Designs will be informed by a robust community engagement process involving the artist and interacting with project area neighborhood residents, interested members of the public from across the city, and labor historians and organizers. Designs should include elements of an appropriate size, scale and orientation to engage viewing from multiple potential vantage points. The artwork must be engineered to withstand the demands of a permanent outdoor installation in a dense urban setting and require minimal to no annual maintenance; only durable and resilient media will be considered.

For more information on Mother Jones: <https://www.motherjonesmuseum.org/about-us>

## **SITE**

The Chicago Avenue Pumping Station and Water Tower were designed in 1866 by William Boyington and built of Joliet limestone. They are among the few buildings in the area that survived the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The Water Tower was built to house a standpipe to regulate the water pressure in the Pumping Station. Though the standpipe has long been removed the Historic Water Tower is a well-known landmark. The design of the green space, fountain and plaza surrounding the Historic Water Tower are of recent vintage and maintained by the Chicago Department of Water. Determining final placement of the monument in the grounds of the park may be part of the design process.

**Site Views**



Aerial view of Jane Byrne Park and the Historic Water Tower.



Looking north from Chicago Ave.



Water Tower and plaza, looking west.



Plaza, looking southwest.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

Following the RFQ application deadline, DCASE will convene a selection panel of community representatives, arts professionals, MJHP representatives and City representatives to review the applications. The committee will select a minimum of 3 finalists, who will be commissioned to develop public art proposals. Finalists will present their design proposals to the selection committee and a final artist or artist team will be selected.



**SCHEDULE\***

\* All dates are approximate and subject to change.

STAGE	START	END	WEEKS
CAFÉ RFQ (open call + short list)	1/20/23	3/26/23	10
Artist Information Session, Virtual, 6-7 PM CST Email for <a href="mailto:publicart@cityofchicago.org">publicart@cityofchicago.org</a> for link	2/1/23	2/1/23	
Review of qualifications	3/27/23	4/7/23	2
Committee selects 3-4 finalists	Week of 4/10/23		1
Notification of finalists	Week of 4/17/23		1
Finalists’ design development	4/24/23	6/25/23	8
Finalist’s midpoint review	Week of 5/29/23	6/2/23	1
Finalists’ presentations	Week of 6/26/23		1

**DESIGN HONORARIUM**

Finalists will be paid a **\$1,000** honorarium to develop proposals.

**COMMISSION BUDGET**

The artwork commission will be **\$250,000**, inclusive of all costs and fees for the artist to execute the project from design, structural engineering, fabrication, site preparation, and installation.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

Applicants will be shortlisted based on a competitive review of the following:

- **Artistic excellence:** demonstrated skill and quality craftsmanship in examples of past work; examples provided should be relevant to how the artist will approach this public art opportunity
- **Creative process:** examples of past work should illustrate how artist has used community engagement in their design process; examples provided should be relevant to how the artist will approach this public art opportunity
- **Ability:** demonstrated experience in public art project management and executing large scale outdoor artwork, coordinating engineering and fabricating teams, delivering contractual milestones and managing large budgets in a timely fashion
- **Meaningful relationship** of the creative and conceptual aspects of their artistic process with the purpose of the “We Shall Rise” The Mother Jones Monument project as expressed in the Letter of Interest (LOI)

**HOW TO APPLY**

Application is available via CaFÉ ([www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org)) at the following link:

[https://artist.callforentry.org/festivals\\_unique\\_info.php?ID=10983](https://artist.callforentry.org/festivals_unique_info.php?ID=10983)

Interested applicants should register with CaFÉ in order to view the application. Deadline for submissions is **3/26/23 11:59pm, CST**.

### **WHAT TO SUBMIT**

Each artist or artist team must submit an entirely digital application.

**Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

#### **Applications should include:**

- a) Six (6) to ten (10) total images of past large-scale public art and infrastructure projects by the artist or the artist team’s lead artist(s).
- b) Optional: One (1) video, edited to no more than two (2) minutes in length, may also be submitted but is not required.
- c) Annotated Image List: An annotated image list that includes the title, media, year completed, dimensions, location, project budget, timeline, and client or commissioning entity for each corresponding image.
  - i. The annotated image list may include thumbnails of submitted images but does not replace the need to upload individual image files in fulfillment of a) above.
  - ii. Image annotations may include very brief descriptions of how the image illustrates one or more of the selection criteria
  - iii. If a video is submitted, please include two to three (2-3) sentences to describe its context.
- d) A one (1) page Letter of Interest (LOI) stating why Mother Jones and her legacy is a meaningful and appropriate subject for the applicant’s work and that briefly describes artist’s standard community engagement strategies in design development.
- e) If applying as an artist team, a list of key team members and their roles/affiliations in one PDF.
- f) A two (2) page resume or curriculum vitae (CV).
  - i. If applying as an artist team, provide a resume or CV for each team member combined in one PDF.
- g) Three professional references

### **QUESTIONS**

No phone calls.

Contact: Nathan Mason, Curator of Collections and Public Art  
[publicart@cityofchicago.org](mailto:publicart@cityofchicago.org)

### **ARTIST INFORMATION SESSION – VIRTUAL**

Time: Feb 1, 2023 06:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Email for [publicart@cityofchicago.org](mailto:publicart@cityofchicago.org) for link

**Appendix A: Brief History of Mother Jones (provided by the Mother Jones Heritage Project)**

Mary Harris “Mother” Jones (1837-1930) is an iconic representation of Chicago’s immigrant and laboring population and their contributions to history. A mid-nineteenth century famine refugee, Mary Harris came with her family to Toronto from Cork, Ireland in her early teens. She studied to be a teacher, but also learned the art of sewing. In her twenties she moved to Chicago, then Memphis, where she married George Jones, an iron molder. They had four children together, but in 1867, a yellow fever epidemic in Memphis took her entire family.

Alone, Mary Jones moved back to Chicago, and started a small seamstress business. Then the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 took everything she had. She later linked her activism to the aftermath of the Great Fire. Devastated by famine, plague and fire, she turned her bereavement into compassion. For the next thirty years she studied the plight of American workers and fought for a labor movement that would empower workers and address inequality. Chicago was the crucible of her faith. She believed that in solidarity lay the power to resist exploitation. She organized men women and children, black and white, native born and immigrant. She exploded into the headlines with the 1903 “March of the Mill Children” against child labor and became the most famous woman organizer in the labor movement. From her base in Chicago, she moved across North America, organizing workers in many trades, including garment, steel, textile and many other industries. Her legend grew as she faced down thugs hired by coal companies from West Virginia to Colorado, and endured months of prison without formal charges.

Mary Jones was a hell-fire orator, decrying poverty and exploitation. “She is a wonder,” Chicago’s poet Carl Sandburg marveled; “The walking wrath of God,” novelist Upton Sinclair called her; “A born crusader...,” “a woman of action...,” “not awed by guns or jail...” wrote the renowned Chicago attorney Clarence Darrow. “A woman of the future . . .” “not needing feminine guilt or feeling frightened or embarrassed,” recalled feminist Meridel Le Seuer. Workers knew her simply as “Mother,” the beloved protector of her flock; in time, so did union leaders, captains of industry, even Presidents of the United States, all called Mary Jones, “Mother”.

<https://www.motherjonesmuseum.org/who-was-mother-jones>