



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Artist Sheena Rose Announced for 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Bus Shelter Art Project**

**Des Moines, Iowa** (February 4, 2020) – The 6th Avenue Corridor Urban Neighborhood Main Street Program and the Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation have selected contemporary artist Sheena Rose for the 6th Avenue Corridor Bus Shelter public art project. This project is being implemented in collaboration with the Des Moines Regional Transit Authority (DART) as part of a larger streetscape project. The 6th Avenue Corridor (6AC) is the longest and most environmentally-sustainable streetscape project undertaken to date in the City of Des Moines.

The 6AC Bus Shelter Art Project will realize a series of seven designs digitally embedded into the glass panels of each bus shelter. The objective of this series is to create a collection with a common theme and inspiration to establish a distinct visual identity for transit in the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor district. Each shelter structure features five glass panels and the designs will expand across the surface of each panel. In total, twelve bus shelters will be installed in three phases along this 1.2- mile district stretching from the Des Moines River Bridge south to Interstate 235.

“Public art, when most successful, is about taking risk,” remarked M. Jessica Rowe, Director of the Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation (GDMPAF), who led the art selection process. “GDMPAF has a track record of infusing innovative practices, new methods, perspectives, technologies, and fresh ideas into public art processes.”

To achieve the 6AC's unique vision, a 12-member art selection committee was formed. It consisted of art, architecture, design and music professionals, artists, community & business leaders, neighborhood stakeholders, and commissioning agency representatives. Through a rigorous review process, the committee evaluated a large pool of eligible local, national and international artists. The committee prioritized artists whose work elevated creativity and enhanced urban identity by using criteria that included:

- Artistic excellence as evidenced by images of past projects.
- Professional qualifications and experience.
- Demonstrated ability to successfully complete public art projects of similar scale, scope, and budget.

Three accomplished artists were chosen as finalists and commissioned to create and present their design concepts. In December 2019, the artist Sheena Rose was awarded the art commission for her concept. In the first quarter of 2020, the artist will develop her design concept for fabrication and integration into the walls of the bus shelters.

Breann Bye, Executive Director of the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Urban Neighborhood Main Street Program, remarked: "We're thrilled with the outcome of this engaging and participatory selection process. Sheena Rose's concepts embrace the vibrancy and diversity of our district in a visually dynamic and powerful way. Sheena has captured the energy and resiliency of this community. These bus shelters will be an enduring celebration of all that makes this part of our city so special. We have very intentionally expanded our fundraising efforts to bring this type of compelling public art to our district as one part of the broader streetscape project."

Rowe said, "Our partnership with the 6AC and DART champions the community's desire for this streetscape to become an icon and aesthetically indicate the positive developments throughout this neighborhood. I am most proud that this public art project nurtures the city's wider strategies for economic, social, and cultural development."

Matthew Harris, DART Business & Community Partnerships Manager, commented, "Bus shelters are our most requested service enhancement and improve the overall accessibility and comfort of using transit. We're excited to collaborate with our partners along 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to provide a canvas for community expression and expand access to public art in this unique way."

The 6AC Bus Shelter Art Project is funded primarily by the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Urban Neighborhood Main Street Program as one part of its fundraising for the overall 6AC Streetscape Project. To date, the 6AC has raised nearly \$1.5 Million in project match funds from Polk County, Prairie Meadows, Wells Fargo, MercyOne, the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, Bankers Trust, the Wellmark Foundation, and the Iowa Great Places Program.

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Sheena Rose is a contemporary artist who lives and works in Barbados. Rose is a Fulbright Scholar and earned a BFA Honors degree, in addition to a MFA from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Rose has a multi-disciplinary practice. A large body of her work includes drawings, paintings, and performance art. Rose was awarded a number of international artist residencies, and has exhibited her work throughout the United States, as well as internationally in South America, Canada, Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Prestigious art institutions, for example the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (aka "MoCADA"), Queens Museum in New York; and Turner Contemporary in Kent, England have exhibited her work.

In 2017, Sheena performed her work "Island and Monster" at the prestigious Royal Academy of Arts, London. In 2019, she created a two-story mural at the Inter-American Development Bank Headquarters located in Washington, DC. She also created a large-scale mural for an exhibition called "The Other Side of Now" at the Pérez Art Museum in Miami (aka PAMM), Florida. For more information, visit <https://www.sheenaroseart.com>

### **ABOUT THE 6TH AVENUE CORRIDOR**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Urban Neighborhood Main Street Program is a nationally accredited Iowa Main Street Program through the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The guiding mission of the nonprofit is to coordinate and facilitate the revitalization of historic 6th Avenue from Interstate 235 north to the Des Moines River.

The neighborhoods surrounding the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor are the most diverse, both ethnically and culturally, in the state of Iowa. Diversity has played a strong role in the history of the area as it was an early home of the Jewish community in Des Moines and has welcomed many new immigrants over the decades. Currently, the demographics are approximately 30% African American, 30% Latino, 30% White, and 10% Asian-Pacific. For more information about the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor visit the website at <https://www.6thavedsm.org>

## **ABOUT GREATER DES MOINES PUBLIC ART FOUNDATION**

The Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation, established in 2004, recognizes that art belongs not just in galleries and museums, but also in streetscapes, parks, buildings and infrastructures of a thriving community. Dedicated to developing, advancing and promoting public art projects, the Public Art Foundation collaborates with local entities and artists to inspire and enrich the lives of residents and visitors to the community. In June 2019, a major project commissioned by the Public Art Foundation, “A Monumental Journey” by one of the most celebrated American artist’s Kerry James Marshall, was recognized as one of the 50 Best Public Art Projects in North America by The Americans for the Arts. For more information, visit [www.dsmpublicartfoundation.org](http://www.dsmpublicartfoundation.org).

## **ABOUT DART**

The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) is Iowa’s only regional and largest transit agency and operates a family of transportation services that enriches lives, connects communities and expands opportunities, providing more than 15,000 weekday rides and nearly 4.5 million rides annually to jobs, healthcare, education and a variety of essential destinations throughout 12 member communities in and around Polk County.

***Artist Sheena Rose in her studio.*** Photo credit: Amy Butcher

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