



University City District

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PHILADELPHIA

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS TEMPORARY ART THE PORCH AT 30TH STREET STATION

Deadline for submissions: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at 4pm

Thanks to a generous grant from the Knight Arts Challenge, University City District will continue the evolution of The Porch at 30th Street - one of the most innovative, animated, and visible public spaces in Philadelphia - into A Permanent Place for Temporary Art. Accordingly, UCD is seeking qualifications from **emerging and/or established visual artists, designers, and architects** to develop lively, engaging, and resonant temporary art to be installed at The Porch during 2014.

Up to five artist/designer teams will be paid an honorarium of \$1000 to develop and present proposals. Either one or two commissions will result from this RFQ, depending on proposal quality and diversity. The total budget for each commission, which is to cover all artist fees, design, fabrication, installation and other costs is between \$50,000 and \$75,000.

Timeline

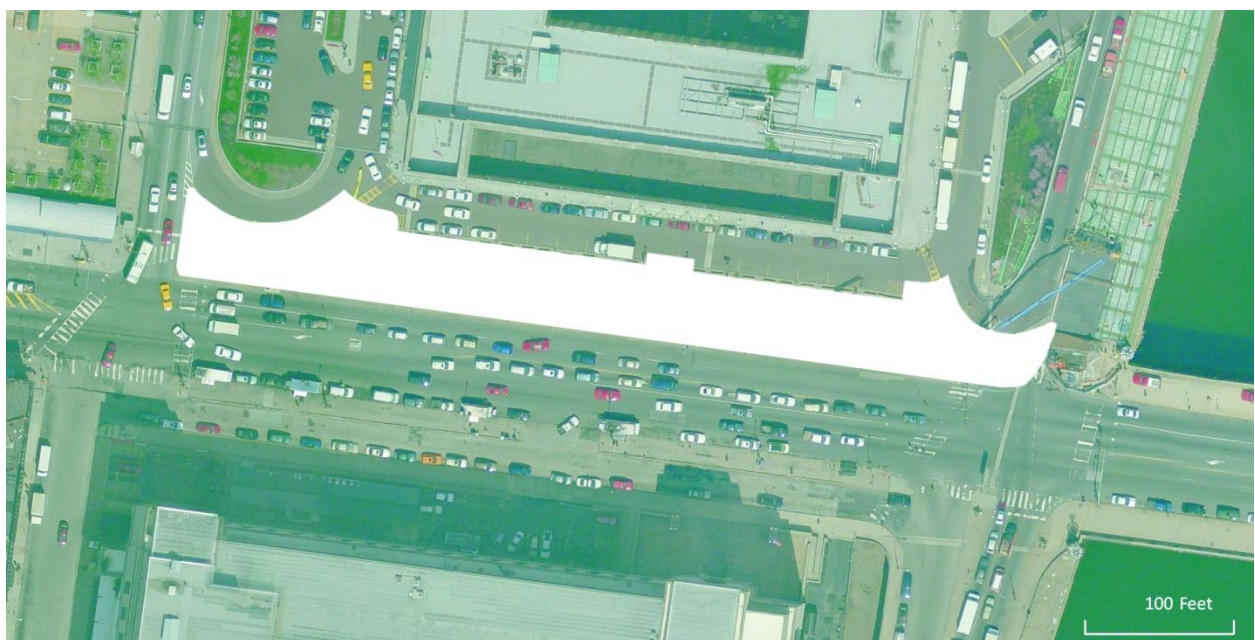
RFQ Released	Wednesday, January 15, 2014
Optional workshop	Friday, January 31, 2014 2:30pm at UCD's offices; virtual participation will be available
Questions due	Friday, February 7, 2014
Deadline for submission	Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at 4pm
Finalists notified	Week of February 24, 2014
Finalists' site visits	Week of March 10, 2014 (or thereabouts)
Contract(s) awarded	By April 30, 2014

A timeline for design, fabrication, and installation will be developed jointly by University City District and each artist or artist team.

Introduction

In November 2011, University City District unveiled The Porch at 30th Street Station. In doing so, UCD had seized upon an opportunity - a Pennsylvania Department of Transportation project had created a 55' x 500' stretch of sidewalk where there had previously been 33 parallel parking spaces - and made a bet - that there was adequate demand for a vibrant public space at the location. Acting quickly, UCD humanized the space with a relatively modest and fully removable set of furnishings. These furnishings were accompanied by a rigorous study of site usage patterns, intended to inform both short-term interventions and more capital-intensive, long-term vision. The complete report, *Realizing The Potential of The Porch*, can be found here:

<http://universitycity.org/sites/default/files/Realizing-Potential-Porch-web.pdf>



The Porch is a publicly-owned area bounded by Schuylkill Avenue, Market Street, 30th Street, and "Little Market Street," the privately-owned service road with parallel parking that runs adjacent to Amtrak's 30th Street Station.

Adjacent to the nation's second busiest train station with 37,000 daily passengers, The Porch is within a 5-minute walk of 17,000 employees. The combined development plans of Drexel University and private developers call for nearly eight million square feet of new construction over the next decade within a quarter-mile of the site. This area has long had few trees or other amenities for pedestrians; there are countless reasons to pass through this area, but few reasons to slow down, linger, socialize, or enjoy city life.

UCD's short term goals for The Porch were to efficiently and economically create a place for the thousands of pedestrians who pass through the site to sit, read, stroll, socialize, or otherwise enjoy the magnificent views of the Schuylkill River, bridges, and the Center City skyline. The process of developing The Porch was quick; UCD made the decision to layer on top of the PennDOT sidewalk in

April and The Porch opened seven months later, immediately following the completion of the PennDOT construction project. The space was divided into a series of outdoor rooms, punctuated by trees and umbrellas. High quality seasonal plantings were added, though, because large planters were cost prohibitive, agricultural feeding troughs were repurposed with green roof technology to create large, economical planters with trees to filter traffic noise and foster a hospitable pedestrian environment. Movable tables and chairs were added to allow users maximum flexibility in choosing where to sit in relation to the space, other people, and the sun.

UCD has made a sizable investment in programming the site - farmers markets; yoga and other fitness classes; musical performances and concerts of different scales including an XPN Free at Noon concert; food truck rallies; and a beer garden, to name a few - in order to drive users to the site. In 2012, UCD introduced the Programming Partnerships Fund, to work with Philadelphia arts and culture organizations to showcase innovative "al fresco" cultural programming. The Porch has emerged as a national model for the economical, efficient, and tactical creation of public space, and has been featured in publications such as *The Atlantic Cities*, *Dwell*, [Streetfilms](#), and *Salon*.

Public Art at The Porch

All emerging and/or established visual artists, designers, and architects are eligible to apply to this open call. By submitting qualifications, all respondents confirm their ability to collaborate with University City District for design, fabrication, and installation in 2014. University City District will select one or two commissions will result from this RFQ, depending on proposal quality and diversity.

In addition to carefully considering patterns of user behavior at The Porch, as described in detail in *Realizing The Potential of The Porch*, artists are urged to consider the following:

- Art at The Porch must be suitable for and **accessible** to a range of audiences; they should be resonant with people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Art should favor **active pedestrian involvement, engagement, and interaction** rather than an impression on passing automobiles.
- Art should **activate and animate** The Porch, encouraging **active participation** from the large and diverse population that traverses the site. Reviewers will additionally look favorably upon art that encourages **discovery** and **play**.
- The Porch is on a bridge structure and is directly above Amtrak intercity rail platforms. Weight limits may not exceed 300 lbs/square foot.
- Installations must consider durability, vandalism, and theft. UCD maintains a daytime security presence at The Porch. Additional security coverage is possible, but will have to be included in the overall project budget. Similarly, art should not introduce hazards for pedestrians or Porch users.
- Artists will be encouraged to use local fabricators.
- Art must leave no residual damage to The Porch after de-installation.

Submission and Selection

Submissions (entirely contained within one PDF document, ideally) must include the following:

1. Applicant name(s) and all relevant contact information.
2. A brief synopsis of your experience as an artist, why you want to undertake this commission, and your approach to art in the public realm.
3. Details of similar past projects that demonstrate your ability to successfully deliver this project, including up to ten images.

An **optional workshop** will be held at 2:30pm on Friday, January 31, 2014 at University City District's offices at 3940 Chestnut Street to discuss UCD's goals for placemaking and public art at The Porch. Please RSVP by Thursday, January 30, 2014 to prema@universitycity.org if you plan to attend in person or virtually. Minutes from the workshop will be posted on UCD's website shortly thereafter.

All **questions** or requests for information should be submitted via e-mail to Prema Katari Gupta at prema@universitycity.org on or before Friday, February 7, 2014. Questions and responses will be posted to UCD's website shortly thereafter.

Qualifications must be received by 4pm on Tuesday, February 18, 2014.

Hard copies (which must also include a PDF submission) can be sent to:

Prema Katari Gupta, Director of Planning and Economic Development
University City District
3940 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Electronic submissions (via Dropbox, Hightail, etc.) can be directed to prema@universitycity.org

Artist selection will be conducted by a small panel of creative placemaking professionals and area stakeholders and will be based on various criteria, including:

1. Artistic quality.
2. Accessibility to Porch users of all ages and backgrounds.
3. Potential for interactivity, engagement, and active participation.
4. Demonstrated proficiency in design and the ability to deliver projects in the public realm.
5. Overall responsiveness and proposal quality.

Images of The Porch

