



PUBLIC ART VIRGINIA BEACH FOUNDATION

# PUBLIC ART

# QUARTERLY

*Letter from the Chairman*

FIRST EDITION | SEPTEMBER 2019

Dear Public Art Supporters,

As you know, public art has the ability to transform the spaces we live in. It's eye-catching, it makes a statement and it helps a formerly non-descript space stand out and get noticed. But more than that, it draws people in and gives them a sense of visiting a place that's memorable, meaningful. And, for those of us lucky enough to live here, it evokes feelings of pride in our community.

In 2012 the Public Art Virginia Beach Foundation was created by a group of private citizens who were passionate about showcasing Virginia Beach as a welcoming, creative destination and a community that takes great pride in its public spaces.

In seven short years and through the support of generous donors like you, the Foundation has independently raised more than \$700,000 to devote to public art in Virginia Beach. These resources allowed the creation of two popular landmarks in our City – *The Wave* by artist Jeff Laramore, unveiled in 2013 in the Laskin Road Roundabout, and *The Canoes* by acclaimed artist Donald Lipski unveiled in 2018 on the newly reconstructed Lesner Bridge on Shore Drive. These iconic gateways create a sense of arrival, and provide a warm welcome to out-of-town visitors and residents alike.

Without your generosity, as well as the enthusiasm of the Virginia Beach community, public art of this scale would not be possible. But, as you know, public art doesn't just happen. Each project requires a significant investment of time, talent and resources. It necessitates true collaboration between artists, architects, design professionals, residents, civic leaders, politicians, approval agencies, funding agencies and construction teams.

We suspect you agree that the investment in public art is worth it. It is a reflection of how we see the world, express our values, transform our landscape and embrace our home!

We thank you in advance for your continued help and support of Public Art in Virginia Beach and we invite you to be a part of our next exciting project!

Contact [pavb@vbgov.com](mailto:pavb@vbgov.com) to explore ways you can help get involved in championing Public Art in our community.

Andrew Fine  
Chairman,  
Public Art Virginia Beach Foundation



**The Canoes Ribbon Cutting: On July 28, 2018 over 200 citizens met on the Lesner Bridge overlook to celebrate the dedication of *The Canoes* by Donald Lipski.**

# THE CANOES

*Sculpture Links Past with Present*



*"My hope is that this sculpture speaks to your history, to what you are today and to what you will be tomorrow." -Donald Lipski*



One exciting public art project unveiled in July 2018 on the Lesner Bridge pedestrian overlook has quickly become a fan favorite along the Shore Drive Corridor while at the same time giving a nod to Virginia Beach's past.

The sculpture, simply called *The Canoes*, features 10 aluminum canoes arranged in a star pattern and mounted 36 feet in the air atop an 8,000 lb. steel arch strong enough to withstand hurricane force winds.

Hand carved in a delicate filigree pattern, what began as a solid aluminum canoe has been hand cut and transformed to look like lace. When lit against the night sky it provides a stunning backdrop that begs for a selfie or two (or twenty).

Created by award-winning NYC-based artist Donald Lipski, the three-year journey to create the sculpture began with a national search that netted 60+ artist submissions. Lipski was selected in part because of his notable 30 large-scale art projects around the country.

To fund the effort, Public Art Virginia Beach Foundation Board members hosted a number of fundraising receptions, gaining 77 donors for the project, and raising a total of \$411,000.

Lipski, whose mother-in-law grew up in Virginia Beach, was

pleased to be chosen for the project. "Virginia Beach has special civic-minded, art-loving people who understand the importance of art and have raised the money to do this," he said. "I'm excited. It's such a beautiful spot, and I think it will really greet people as they're coming into town."

In July of 2018, *The Canoes* made their landing on the new Lesner Bridge. More than 250 citizens of Virginia Beach joined in a celebration of the city's beautiful new icon.

Lipski told the crowd, "The sculpture speaks to your history, but also to who you are today, to recreation and to the water. People will see what they bring to the piece, and that is its strength."

The artist came up with the canoe design after learning that Adam Keeling, who owned a plantation nearby in the 1600s, and a group of others, dug a trench wide enough for a canoe to cross a sandbar between the Lynnhaven River and the Chesapeake Bay. A storm with high tides widened the ditch and that became the Lynnhaven Inlet as we know it today.

Lipski quoted, "Albert Camus said: 'Every authentic work of art is a gift offered to the future.' This sculpture will be here for the people of Virginia Beach long after we have gone. That gives me great satisfaction."



*Engaging the Community*

Donald Lipski, artist of *The Canoes*, and Chris Wojtowicz, Project Manager in the Department of Public Works, visited with an 8th grade art class at Virginia Beach Middle School in February 2018. Students had the unique opportunity to learn about the STE(A)M aspects of art and engineering.



With each public art success, new and unique opportunities present themselves to continue to position Virginia Beach as a public art leader in the Mid-Atlantic region.

The Foundation has set ambitious goals for the next five years. They will be working to foster strong partnerships with both the private and public sectors throughout our communities. The focus is getting the community and local businesses enthusiastically involved in art!

#### Specific activities to meet these goals may include:

- Sponsoring onsite guided Public Art Tours and social events
- Partnering with local institutions (MOCA, universities) to present public art and symposiums discussing the importance of deliberately integrating arts into community life much the same way we do other aspects such as education, housing, transportation and public safety.
- Educational outreach by bringing artists to the classroom and the classroom to the art.

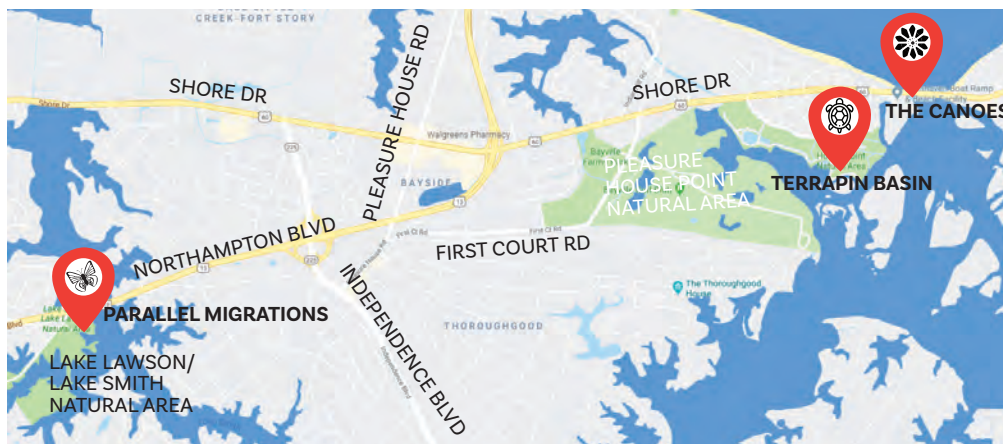
The Foundation is also an advocate for other new gateway projects for Virginia Beach such as the Greenwich Flyover Project on I-64 which serves as yet another gateway for both visitors and daily commuters. Stay tuned to see what inspirational piece of art will rise up on that overpass! Or better yet, get involved and help select and celebrate it!

We invite you to help us create the future of public art in our community. Start by staying informed and engaged: subscribe to our newsletter for exclusive updates, stay in the know by following us on Facebook and checking out [www.vbpublicart.org](http://www.vbpublicart.org)

We need your involvement, vision and support as much as the Virginia Beach community needs art!

*"There is a connection, hard to explain logically but easy to feel, between achievement in public life and progress in the arts." - John F. Kennedy*

## Discover ECO ART AROUND TOWN



**Our environmental public art installations are designed to inform and highlight Virginia Beach's natural spaces; from our beaches, to the bay, to our nature reserves, and our extensive parks and trail systems.**

**Terrapin Basin** by Benjamin Heller is an immersive sculpture at the Pleasure House Point Natural Area, comprised of 41 interconnected stones assembled together as one to form the human-scaled and basin-like interior carapace of the Diamondback Terrapin.

**Parallel Migrations XXV** is the City's newest eco art installation. New Jersey artist, Anne Dushanko Dobek installed the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of her *Parallel Migrations* series at Lake Lawson/Lake Smith Natural Area during an artist residency created by Virginia Beach Cultural Affairs Department in partnership with Virginia Beach Parks & Recreation in August 2019.



Public Art Virginia Beach Foundation  
P.O. Box 61427  
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*Please provide your support and help us showcase Virginia Beach as a welcoming, creative city that takes great pride in our public spaces.*

*Donate today!*



[www.vbpublicart.org/foundation](http://www.vbpublicart.org/foundation)

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