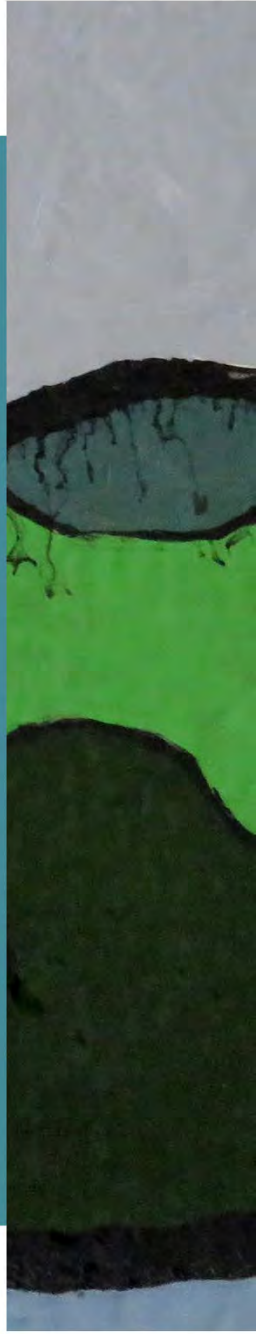


Conservation Assessment of City-Owned Public Artworks

City of Alexandria, Virginia

2023



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INTRODUCTION

On October 13, 2023, the Office of the Arts, a division of the Department of Recreation and Cultural Activities with the City of Alexandria, Virginia retained Past Matters, LLC to assess its collection of City-owned public artworks. Every five years, the Office of the Arts commissions a professional conservation assessment of the collection. The goal is to implement the recommendations of the assessment through an annual maintenance and conservation plan. The last assessment was conducted in 2018.

According to the Public Art Implementation Plan, the collection of public artworks promotes the City's cultural heritage, strengthens community pride, and fosters tourism. The collection features both City- and privately-owned works of art, as well as permanent and temporary works. The assessment contained within this report is limited to the City-owned works and includes twenty-one pieces, as follows:

- *Alexandria War Dead Memorial* by David E. Bayliss, Jr.
- *All Things Come in Threes* by Marlin Lord; *Brio* by Jimilu Mason
- *Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Alexandria Vietnam Veterans Memorial* by Antonio "Toby" Mendez
- *King Street Gardens Park* by Buster Simpson, Laura Sindell, Becca Hanson, and Mark Spitzer
- *Sacandaga Totem* by John Van Alstine
- *Shipbuilder* by Michael Curtis
- *The Path of Thorns and Roses* by Mario Chiodo
- *Torpedo Factory Art Center Staircase* by artists from the Torpedo Factory Art Center
- *Wildlife of the Dora Kelley Nature Park* by Mary Anne Warner
- *World War II Memorial* (artist unknown)
- *Del Ray Play* by May + Watkins Design
- *Sound Stream* by David Hess
- *Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies* by Olalekan Jeyifous
- *Mount Vernon Recreation Center Mural* by Leisa Collins
- *Del Ray Blocks* by Kirk Seese
- *Confluent Threads* by Project One Studio
- *Courage to Live Big* by Matt Corrado
- *Coloring Outside the Lines* by Rachel Kerwin

- *Earl Lloyd* by Brian Hanlon
- *Charles Houston Ceramics* (artist unknown)

The City-owned public artworks consist of sculptures, memorials, murals, installations, and a painting. Materials include but are not limited to granite, ceramic, stainless steel, mild steel, aluminum, painted metal, limestone, bronze, concrete, paint finishes, fiberglass, wood, textile, lead, terra cotta, and stained glass. Five of the public artworks are displayed indoors, while the remaining sixteen are installed outdoors. The locations of installation include the Alexandria Union Station, the Contrabands and Freemen Cemetery, the Jerome “Buddie” Ford Nature Center, Market Square, Waterfront Park, the Charles Houston Recreation Center, and the Torpedo Factory Art Center, among other public properties and parks. See Appendix A for a map of the City of Alexandria with locations of the artworks.

METHODOLOGY

The work for this project was performed in November and December of 2023. It included conducting an on-site examination of the twenty-one public artworks; describing the condition of each artwork and providing treatment recommendations; prioritizing the work based on condition and treatment needs; producing budgetary cost estimates based on work undertaken by a Professional Associate or Fellow of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC); and submitting photographic documentation of the collection. To facilitate the assessment process, Past Matters developed an Excel spreadsheet to document each public artwork with the following information: artwork title, artist name, date of fabrication or installation, materials, dimensions, classification, address, condition, comments on location, condition rating, recommendations, priority rating, cost estimate, date of inspection, and name of accessor. The Excel spreadsheet is submitted as a separate document in addition to this report. Photographic documentation of each artwork is provided in individual file folders made available to the Office of the Arts within Google Drive, with select photographs included in this report to illustrate existing conditions.

The assessment was undertaken entirely as an on-site inspection of the collection. An examination of the City’s archives and records was not conducted, and individual artists were not contacted. The Office of the Arts provided some basic information for each piece, including previous assessments that were made available for review.

CONDITION RATING

The assessment indicates that all twenty-one public artworks need some form of treatment, which includes repairs as well as basic maintenance. To facilitate prioritizing the work, the public artworks were each given a condition rating of good, fair, poor, and serious, as described in the table below.

The public artworks were rated as follows for condition:

CONDITION RATING	DEFINITION
Excellent	The public artwork is in excellent aesthetic condition and material and structural integrity, and no treatment is currently required.
Good	The public artwork is in stable condition and exhibits only minor cosmetic damage, which may require maintenance or minor treatment.
Fair	The public artwork exhibits damage and/or deterioration, which requires treatment within the next 1-5 years, the level of urgency depending on the extent of damage and/or deterioration.
Poor	Although the public artwork is in structurally stable condition and poses no immediate hazard, it shows material failure and/or excessive damage and deterioration. Treatment is required within the next 1-2 years to prevent worsening of conditions.
Serious	The public artwork is in unstable/hazardous condition and requires immediate action. This piece poses the highest risk of harm and personal injury due to the extent of damage and deterioration.

According to the rating system above, most of the collection is in good to excellent condition. More specifically, of the twenty-one surveyed artworks, three are in excellent condition, eleven are in good condition, six are in fair condition, and one is in poor condition. There are no artworks in serious condition.

TREATMENT PRIORITY

Each public artwork has been assigned a treatment priority based on its condition assessment. The priority rating is designed to help the Office of the Arts fund maintenance and conservation work within the limits of budgets and capacity of staff. In prioritizing the work, the Office of the Arts also needs to consider the intended permanence of the artwork. A high priority rating indicates those artworks in most need of treatment, while a low priority rating indicates artworks requiring basic maintenance or minimal treatment. It should be kept in mind that even a low priority rating requires careful consideration because the recommended work helps to maintain existing conditions and keeps the artwork from needing more extensive treatments down the road.

The public artworks were rated as follows for treatment priority:

PRIORITY RATING	DEFINITION
Low	The public artwork is in good to excellent condition and does not require immediate attention. Regular maintenance or minor treatment is usually required.
Medium	The public artwork displays some material deterioration and/or aesthetic issues that require treatment to return it to a more stable and visually acceptable condition. There is no immediate danger of significant deterioration and/or loss.
High	The public artwork presents imminent danger of accelerated deterioration and/or significant loss. This piece may also present structural instability and/or life-safety issues that require more immediate attention.

According to the rating system as defined above, seven artworks are low priority, eight artworks are medium priority, and six artworks are high priority.

CLASSIFICATION

The classification of the public art collection was updated during the previous assessment to standardize the distinct categories within the City's collection. The following terms were adopted to classify the artworks: fountain, installation, memorial, mural, painting, and sculpture. Of the twenty-one surveyed public artworks, there are

two installations, three murals, one painting, and eleven sculptures. Additionally, four public artworks are classified as both sculptures and memorials. There were no fountains within this survey. Additional classifications can be added to this list as the collection grows.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Treatment recommendations for each of the twenty-one public artworks are provided in the Excel spreadsheet. It is important to note that for any work that is undertaken, the Office of the Arts should request site visits to inspect the most current conditions followed by treatment proposals that include detailed methods and materials. Scopes of work for individual pieces should not rely on this assessment alone. They should be updated as conditions change over time.

General recommendations for the collection are as follows:

- Undertake treatment on high priority artworks as soon as possible. Of the six high-priority artworks, *King Street Gardens Park* should be at the top of the list. Although all artworks in this category have the potential for continued deterioration and material loss, *King Street Gardens Park* presents the greatest risk.
- Establish a regular yearly maintenance program for the collection, which should include removing dust from indoor artworks, washing outdoor artworks, and renewing protective coatings. Regular maintenance and inspection also provide a good opportunity to monitor existing conditions. Although the high priority items represent the most urgent needs, it is important to provide funding for routine maintenance to be undertaken on a yearly basis.
- Implement regular maintenance to include yearly washings. Several of the artworks are in areas that have a moderate to high amount of vehicular traffic, which causes deposits of carbon-based particulates on their surfaces.
- Continue to maintain detailed documentation on the artworks to help inform future maintenance and conservation work.

- Ensure thorough documentation of all maintenance and treatment work in a consistent and permanent manner. Any work undertaken by a conservator must include a treatment report that clearly documents methods and materials and shows conditions before and after treatment. Images contained within the report should also be submitted as high-resolution JPEGs. This level of documentation will help to distinguish between original and repair and offer valuable information for future stewards of the artwork.
- Use repair methods and materials that are not only physically compatible with the original methods and materials of the artwork, but also proven not to produce adverse effects over time. In certain cases, this may not be the ideal solution because the choice of original methods and materials is problematic for the longevity of the artwork. An example of this is the *King Street Gardens Park*. Although it is not clear what type of paint was used on the metal, it seems that a primer coat was not provided. It is important to note that galvanized steel has a zinc coating that can prevent paint from adhering properly. Certain procedures are usually required to prevent the paint from peeling. It is possible that this is the cause of the excessive peeling of the paint from surfaces. A careful review of the materials and methods for this piece will help to confirm the cause of damage. More importantly, it will also help to implement the most appropriate treatment options.

COST ESTIMATES

The lists below provide cost estimates for maintenance or conservation treatment undertaken by a Professional Associate or Fellow of the American Institute for Conservation. Not included in these estimates is the maintenance of surrounding landscapes, which is often recommended in cases where conditions may affect the public artwork. The estimates assume that the City of Alexandria will provide power, water, street closures, permitting, and restroom facilities during all on-site work. It should also be kept in mind that the treatment of multiple artworks during one mobilization may save on costs. The estimates include administrative costs and documentation, with the submission of a treatment report.

Low Priority Artworks

Name	Artist	Cost
<i>Charles Houston Ceramics</i>	Unknown	\$1,400
<i>Confluent Threads</i>	Project One Studio	\$2,550
<i>Del Ray Play</i>	May + Watkins Design	\$7,450
<i>Sacandaga Totem</i>	John Van Alstine	\$2,600
<i>Sound Stream</i>	David Hess	\$1,500
<i>Wildlife of the Dora Kelley Nature Park</i>	Mary Anne Warner	\$1,200
<i>World War II Memorial</i>	Unknown	\$2,250
TOTAL		\$18,950

Medium Priority Artworks

Name	Artist	Cost
<i>Alexandria War Dead Memorial</i>	David E. Bayliss, Jr.	\$7,300 + access
<i>All Things Come in Threes</i>	Marlin Lord	\$2,550
<i>Brio</i>	Jimilu Mason	\$5,050
<i>Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Alexandria Vietnam Veterans Memorial</i>	Antonio Tobias "Toby" Mendez	\$17,700
<i>Courage to Live Big</i>	Matt Corrado	\$14,250 + access
<i>Earl Lloyd</i>	Brian Hanlon	\$2,900

<i>Shipbuilder</i>	Michael Curtis	\$5,000
<i>The Path of Thorns and Roses</i>	Mario Chiodo	\$16,000 + access
TOTAL		\$70,750 + access

High Priority Artworks

Name	Artist	Cost
<i>Coloring Outside the Lines</i>	Rachel Kerwin	\$11,700
<i>Del Ray Blocks</i>	Kirk Seese	\$3,900 + access
<i>King Street Gardens Park</i>	Buster Simpson, Laura Sindell, Becca Hanson, Mark Spitzer	\$93,000 + access for structural assessment
<i>Mount Vernon Recreation Center Mural</i>	Leisa Collins	\$14,300 + access
<i>Torpedo Factory Art Center Staircase</i>	Artists from the Torpedo Factory Art Center; the metal and Plexiglas installation is by Dirk Martin	\$18,300 + access
<i>Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies</i>	Olalekan Jeyifous	\$7,200
TOTAL		\$148,400 + access

PHOTO-DOCUMENTATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Alexandria War Dead Memorial

David E. Bayliss, Jr.

1940



(Left) The memorial is in front of the Alexandria Union Station. (Right) The east and west sides exhibit heavier deposits of biological growth, especially on the limestone steps.



(Left) The protective wax coating on the bronze plaque is weathered and requires replenishing. (Right) Cupric staining on the top step of the limestone base, in the area directly underneath the plaque.

All Things Come in Threes

Marlin Lord

1967



(Left) Siting of the public artwork in shade for a portion of the day and surrounded by vegetation, located north of the Duncan Branch Library. (Right) Biological growth on the surface of the concrete, seen in a streaking pattern from the tops of the pillars.



(Left) The installation of a rigid and inflexible plastic to seal the joints at the base of the pillars, with breaks and material losses. (Left) The associated bronze plaque, inset in the concrete pavement, containing scratches and abrasions on the painted enamel finish. Note the concentrated soiling around the perimeter of the plaque.

Brio
Jimilu Mason
1983

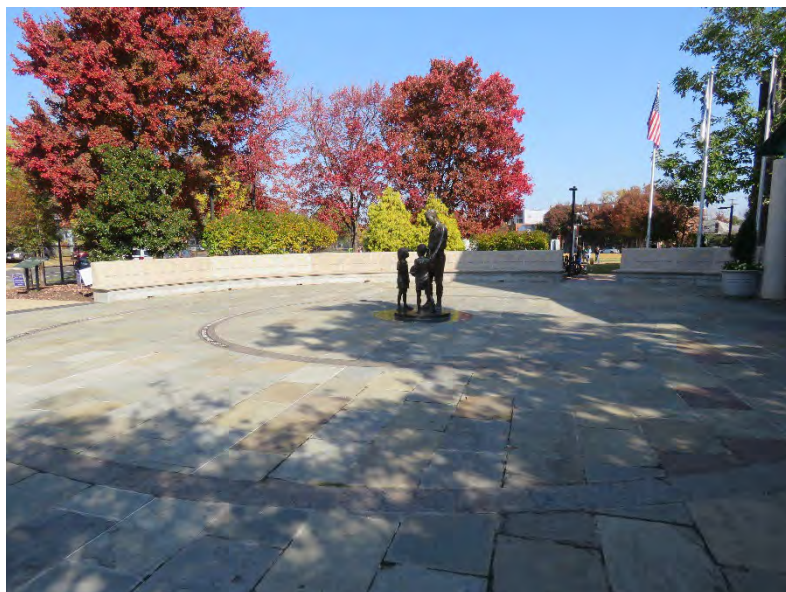


(Left) Siting of the public artwork in front of a group of trees within Market Square, with City Hall located directly north. (Right) Cupric staining on the limestone cladding, with cracking limited to the vertical mortar joints on the southeast side of the plinth.

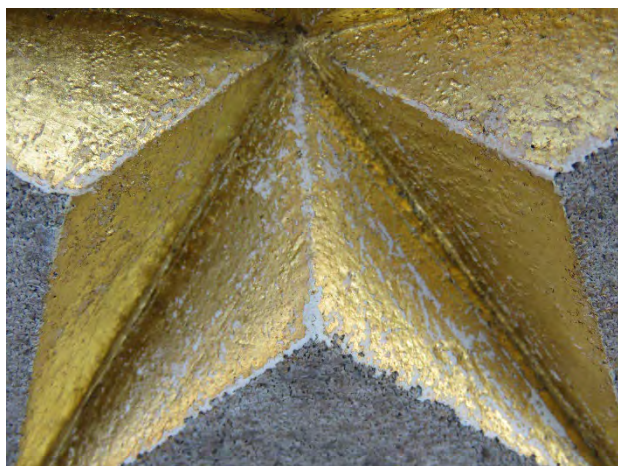


(Left) The protective wax coating on the bronze remains intact, except for localized sky-facing surfaces and other areas where water tends to pool. (Right) Soiling, streaking, and localized bright green corrosion products on the plaque.

Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Alexandria Vietnam Veterans Memorial
 Antonio Tobias "Tobby" Martin
 1983



(Left) The bronze statue of Captain Rocky Versace in the middle of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Plaza, surrounded by limestone and granite benches. (Right) The wax coating on the statue has begun to weather, with greater losses noted on skyward surfaces.



(Left and right) Losses of the finishes on the stars in the limestone benches and the incised lettering in the granite pavers.

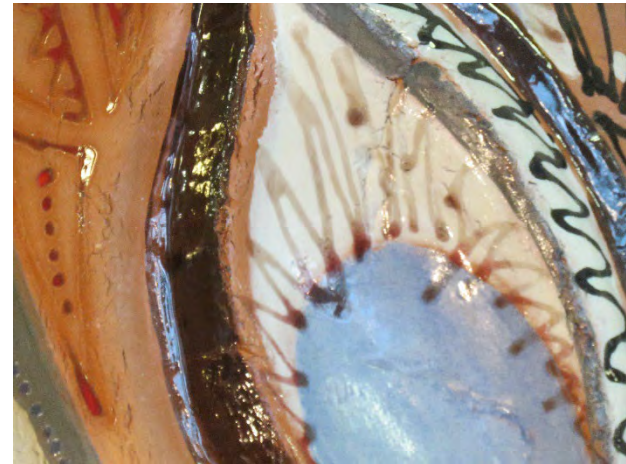
Charles Houston Ceramics

Unknown

1983



(Left and right) The seventeen glazed ceramic and tile pieces are hung inside the Charles Houston Recreation Center, behind the reception desk.



(Left) Trophies are displayed on the top of the cabinets underneath the artwork. (Right) Close-up views of the artwork show it to be in good condition, with no apparent damage noted.

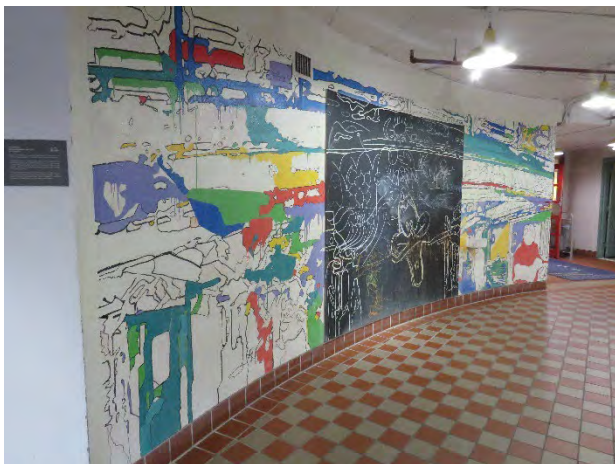
Coloring Outside the Lines

Rachel Kerwin

2014



(Left) The mural covers several walls on the ground floor of the Torpedo Factory Art Center. (Right) The area around one of the painted doors shows greater damage due to constant handling, with heavier soiling, abrasions, and finish loss.

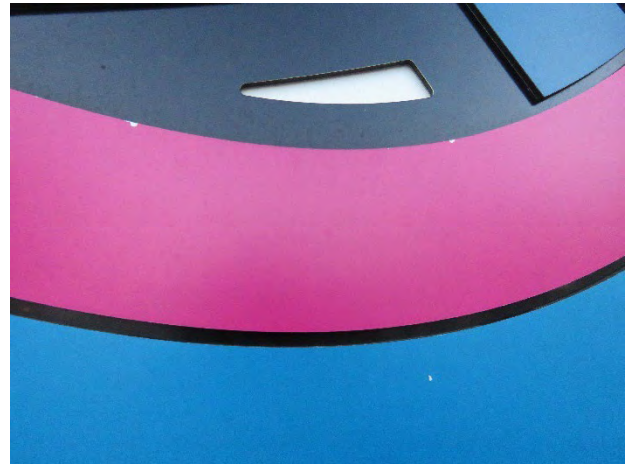
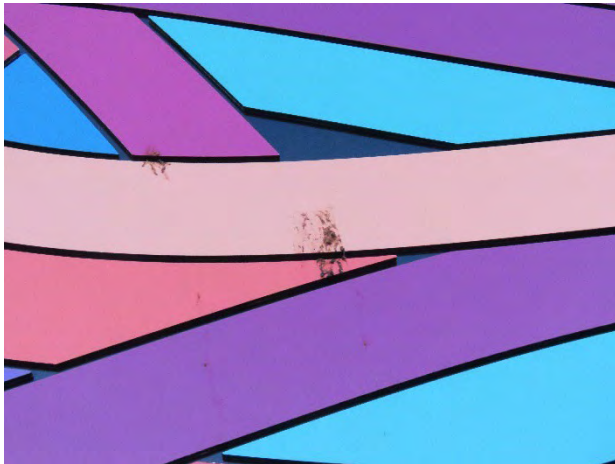


(Left) A chalk board in the middle of one of the walls. This area has a dusty and hazy appearance due to considerable chalk dust on surfaces. (Right) There is also more graffiti, using both chalk and pencil.

Confluent Threads
Project One Studio
2021



(Left and right) The public artwork is installed on three walls of the Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library.



(Left) The painted aluminum composite panels are in excellent condition, exhibiting some localized soiling on surfaces. (Right) Losses in the paint finishes are minor.

Courage to Live Big

Matt Corrado

2016



(Left and right) The colorful mural is painted on the north and west walls of the utilities building of the Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center.



(Left) Loss of paint finishes on the doorway, with corrosion of exposed metal around the frame. (Right) Open and weathered joints above the mural, with cracking along the joints.

Del Ray Blocks

Kirk Seese

2021



(Left) The public artwork is located at the corner of a busy pedestrian street in the Del Ray neighborhood. (Right) Loss of paint finishes on the mild steel plate, with corrosion of the metal.



(Left) White discoloration on the painted metal frames in the form of brush strokes. (Right) Slight warping of the MDO printed ink panels.

Del Ray Play
 May + Watkins Design
 2019



(Left) The public artwork consists of three main components, including a large climb-on structure, two mosaic sculptures, and an entrance gate. (Right) Cracking at the base of the mosaic sculpture.

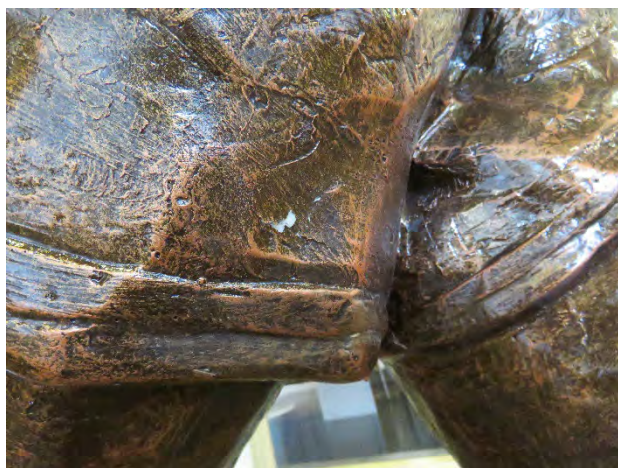


(Left) Numerous stickers and remnants of stickers are present on the underside of the large climb-on structure. (Right) Scuff marks and abrasions are seen at the base of the gate.

Earl Lloyd
Brian Hanlon
2014



(Left) The public artwork is located inside the Charles Houston Recreation Center, protected on all sides by stanchions with retractable belt barriers. (Right) Heavy accumulations of dust and dirt in protected areas of the sculpture.



(Left and right) Losses in the finish are both small and large.

King Street Gardens Park

Buster Simpson, Laura Sindell, Becca Hanson, Mark Spitzer
1997



(Left) King Street Gardens Park occupies a triangular-shaped city block. (Right) There is at least one loose stainless-steel cable on the vine-covered topiary structure.



(Left) The named bricks are part of the park's design. There is displacement of several units in localized areas. (Right) Significant losses in the paint coating accompanied by heavy soiling on the galvanized steel surfaces, a condition that is observed throughout.

Mount Vernon Recreation Center Mural

Leisa Collins

2010



(Left) The mural is installed on the north wall of the Mount Vernon Recreation Center, with the Nicholas A. Colasanto Park Baseball Field directly in front. (Right) Failure of the sealant with the expansion joint, accompanied by losses in the paint layer.



(Left) One of several graffiti markings on the surface of the mural. (Right) Soiling and biological growth at the top of the mural, directly below the flashing.

Sacandaga Totem
 John Van Alstine
 2010



(Left) The sculpture is sited in Triangle Park, at a three-way intersection on a street with moderate to heavy vehicular and pedestrian traffic. (Right) The associated bronze plaque is inset into brick pavers adjacent to the sculpture.

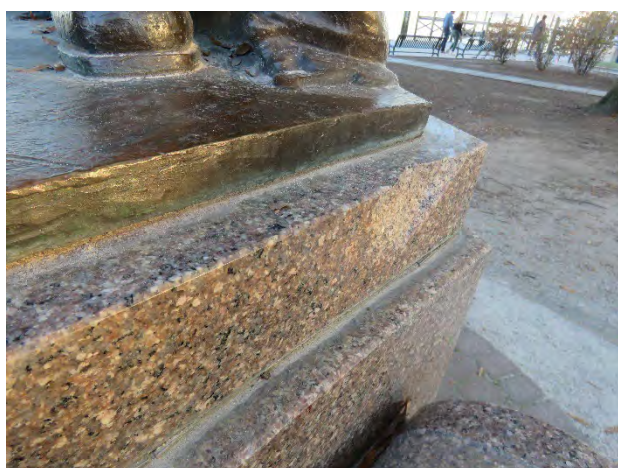


(Left) Minor localized ferrous staining on the granite, in areas where the metal has contact with the masonry. (Right) Deterioration of the mortar within the joints on the base.

Shipbuilder
Michael Curtis
2004



(Left) *Shipbuilder* is in Waterfront Park, with the Potomac River located directly east of the artwork. (Right) Corrosion streaking, possibly caused by bird guano.



(Left) A spall in the stone, located at the top of the granite base. (Right) One of three plaques installed on the base, showing localized corrosion products.

Sound Stream
David Hess
2017



(Left) *Sound Stream* is installed on the grounds of Lake Cook. A paved walkway bisects the sculpture. (Right) The park is one of the few urban fishing locations in Northern Virginia.



(Left) Soiling and bird guano on the stainless steel. (Right) A scratch accompanied by corrosion.

The Path of Thorns and Roses

Mario Chiodo

2013



(Left) The public artwork is on the grounds of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery, which served as a burial place for about 1,800 African Americans who fled to Alexandria to escape from bondage during the Civil War. (Right) Biological growth on the sandstone. The iron staining is an inherent condition.



(Left) The bronze plaques display a mottled appearance, a condition that has been present since the time of fabrication. (Right) Weathering of the protective wax coating and light corrosion of bronze surfaces.

Torpedo Factory Art Center Staircase
 Artists from the Torpedo Factory
 1984



(Left) The spiral staircase includes twelve artworks by resident artists at the time of fabrication. (Right) Soiling and finish loss on surfaces.



(Left) A crack on the proper left side of the stained wood torso. (Right) Close-up showing excessive dust and dirt and localized corrosion of the iron.

Wildlife of the Dora Kelley Nature Park
 Mary Anne Warner
 1980



(Left) *Wildlife of the Dora Kelley Nature Park* consists of four panels, each one representing a different season of the park. (Right) The artwork is installed behind a protective metal railing inside the Jerome “Buddie” Ford Nature Center.



(Left) All panels look to be fully secure. (Right) Both the artwork and associated plaque are in excellent condition.

World War II Memorial

Unknown

Unknown



(Left) The commemorative memorial is installed on the lawn in front of the George Washington Middle School. (Right) The granite obelisk is in relatively good condition.



(Left) Heavy accumulation of bird guano noted at the top. (Right) Moderate overall soiling on surfaces and minor spalling of stone present within select letters.

Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies
 Olalekan Jeyifous
 2020



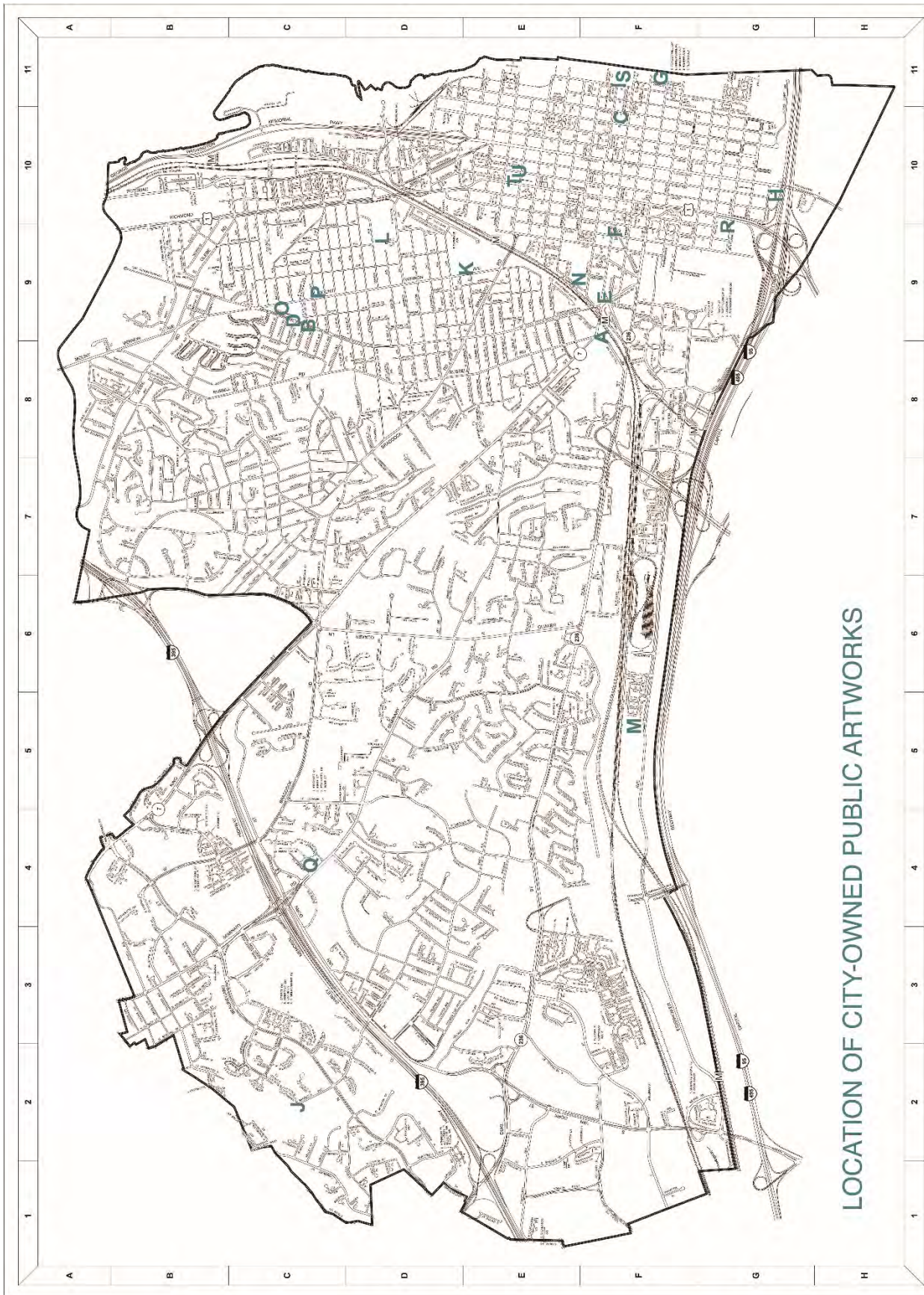
(Left) The public artwork was relocated from Waterfront Park, where it was originally installed, to the Old Town Pool Park, where it will remain on temporary loan from the artist. (Right) The painted aluminum profiles are soiled but in excellent condition.



(Left) The painted mild steel platforms on which the sculptural profiles are installed exhibit heavy soiling, footprints, loss of paint finishes, and corrosion of exposed metal. (Right) Linear abrasions at the edge of one platform.

APPENDIX A

LOCATION OF CITY-OWNED PUBLIC ARTWORKS



LOCATION OF CITY-OWNED PUBLIC ARTWORKS

City of Alexandria 2022 Street Map

- Legend**
- Public Street
 - Private Street
 - Future Street
 - City Boundary
 - Metro Station
 - Metro Line
 - Railroad

Notes:
 The 2022 Alexandria Street Map includes all public and private streets as well as public and private named alleys. Alleys without names are not shown.
 Map Produced: Apr. 2022



This map was prepared by the GIS Division of the Department of Information Technology Services, City of Alexandria, Virginia.
 It is based on the City of Alexandria's GIS data as of 4/1/2022. It is not intended to be used for legal or engineering purposes.
 The City of Alexandria is not responsible for any errors or omissions in this map. It is provided as a reference only.
 The City of Alexandria is not responsible for any damages, including consequential damages, arising from the use of this map.



A	<i>Alexandria War Dead Memorial</i>
B	<i>All Things Come in Threes</i>
C	<i>Brio</i>
D	<i>Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Alexandria Vietnam Veterans Memorial</i>
E	<i>King Street Gardens Park</i>
F	<i>Sacandaga Totem</i>
G	<i>Shipbuilder</i>
H	<i>The Path of Thorns and Roses</i>
I	<i>Torpedo Factory Art Center Staircase</i>
J	<i>Wildlife of the Dora Kelley Nature Park</i>
K	<i>World War II Memorial</i>
L	<i>Del Ray Play</i>
M	<i>Sound Stream</i>
N	<i>Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies</i>
O	<i>Mount Vernon Recreation Center Mural</i>
P	<i>Del Ray Blocks</i>
Q	<i>Confluent Threads</i>
R	<i>Courage to Live Big</i>
S	<i>Coloring Outside the Lines</i>
T	<i>Earl Lloyd</i>
U	<i>Charles Houston Ceramics</i>