



City of  
**OAKLAND**  
California

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## News from: **The City of Oakland**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 13, 2013

### **Oakland's First Outdoor Sculpture Park to Open in Booming Uptown District**

*Oakland, CA* — On the heels of Oakland's designation among America's Top 12 ArtPlaces,\* visitors flocking to the thriving Uptown arts & entertainment district will have a new destination to add to their must-see list – **Uptown ArtPark** – the city's first outdoor sculpture park. Funded through a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Uptown ArtPark has transformed a vacant space that was formerly a Sears parking lot into a showplace for large-scale local art for the entire community to enjoy. The Uptown ArtPark is located on Telegraph Avenue and 19th Street, across from the renovated Fox Oakland Theater.

On Friday, April 5, from 6:30 – 8:30pm, the City of Oakland will host the **Uptown ArtPark Celebration** featuring a bike ride to the event from West Oakland, live performance by students from the adjacent Oakland School for the Arts, dedication ceremony honoring both the sculpture artists and the community members who advocated for the park, up-close viewing of the sculptures and food trucks.

The City is partnering with arts organizations and funders, including the Black Rock Arts Foundation, to display rotating, temporary exhibitions of existing large-scale sculptural works by Bay Area artists, newly commissioned public art projects and live performances presented by local arts and community organizations.

“The new Uptown ArtPark further solidifies Oakland's national reputation as a visual art mecca,” said Mayor Jean Quan. “It provides a platform for showcasing the spectacular work of local artists – many of whom are known all over the world – right here in the heart of their hometown.”

The NEA's grant of \$200,000 was matched by funds secured through the former Oakland Redevelopment Agency prior to the dissolution of redevelopment agencies statewide. Oakland was one of 21 cities in the nation to receive this prestigious grant through the Mayors' Institute on City Design 25th Anniversary Initiative. MICD25 supports “creative placemaking projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform sites into lively, beautiful and sustainable places with the arts at their core.”

Currently funded as a three-year pilot project, Uptown ArtPark emanated from a convergence of community advocacy for use of the site as cultural space and the City's ongoing downtown redevelopment efforts. The City has invested in public art and façade, tenant and streetscape improvements that are fueling the private investment behind Uptown's renaissance as a regional center for dining, arts and entertainment. The art park is the first of two major public art projects opening in Uptown. A cutting-edge light-based installment by artist Dan Corson, slated for completion in winter 2013 at the BART 17th Street Gateway, is the largest public art commission in Oakland's history. Both projects are coordinated by the City's Public Art Program in association with the Office of Neighborhood Investment.

(more)

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“I am so proud of the community advocacy that led to use of this key site as a cultural amenity for all of Oakland – and the region,” said Oakland resident and blogger Rebecca Saltzman, who played a key role in the community effort and has since been elected to the BART Board of Directors. “Right across the street from the 19<sup>th</sup> Street BART station, the art park makes Uptown even more walkable, bikable, accessible and vibrant.”

“Oakland is a major force in the industrial arts scene – both nationally and internationally,” said Steven Huss, the City’s public art coordinator. “Many of the works displayed at Burning Man, for example, are made by Oakland artists. The art park is an opportunity to lift the veil on the vast artistry that makes Oakland and the Bay Area unique. Looking ahead, we aim to take this model on the road to other neighborhoods, using the power of public art to enhance quality of life throughout Oakland.”

The theme of the opening exhibition is “Repurposed,” with “The Bike Bridge” – a 20 x 20 foot sculpture made of recycled bike parts and other reclaimed materials – serving as a centerpiece.

Sponsored by Black Rock Arts Foundation and developed with the Uptown ArtPark site in mind, “The Bike Bridge” is the result of a unique collaboration between Oakland youth and Berkeley artist Michael Christian. Twelve young women from different high schools in East and West Oakland first learned the skills needed to construct a large-scale sculpture by taking classes in welding and bicycle creation at The Crucible in West Oakland. Christian worked with The Crucible’s instructors and youth participants to design and complete the sculpture.

The remaining eight pieces that comprise the opening exhibition are: Oakland artist Randy Colosky’s “Barbican,” 2011, made of engineered ceramic honeycomb and adhesive, and “The Pressure to Hold Together That Which Held Things Back Part 2,” 2011/13, made from salvaged retaining wall timbers, hardware and adhesive, and redesigned specially for this exhibit; Oakland artist Karen Cusolito’s “Dandelion” and “Trumpet Flowers,” both made in 2011 from recycled steel; Bruce Johnson’s redwood-and-copper “Offering” and “Uprising,” both 2009; and Berkeley artist Eric Powell’s steel-and-patina “Skiff,” 2010 and “Vinaya,” 2013, a new steel sculpture created for this exhibit.

To compete for the remaining Uptown Art Park display opportunities, thirty-five artists responded to a call for sculptures issued by the City in fall 2012. The five selected artists will receive \$1,500 per piece exhibited. The sculptures are accessible to the public, with three pieces lining the Telegraph side of the one-acre site and the remaining six dotting the perimeter on 19th Street. Each piece will be rotated after 12 months.

The East Bay Bicycle Coalition, Walk Oakland Bike Oakland (WOBO) and Bikes4Life will host a fun, 1.5 mile bike ride to the event. Riders of all ages are invited to gather at 5:30 p.m. at Bikes4Life, 1600 7th Street @ Willow in West Oakland (take BART to the West Oakland station). Free bike lights will be offered to participants courtesy of the City of Oakland (limited supply – arrive by 5:30 p.m.). Bike valet parking will be provided by Richmond Spokes.

For more information on the Uptown ArtPark and April 5 opening celebration, please visit [www.oaklandnet.com](http://www.oaklandnet.com).

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\*America’s Top12 ArtPlaces 2013, ArtPlace America

<http://www.artplaceamerica.org/articles/americas-top-artplaces-2013-2/>