



# CALL FOR ARTISTS PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITY

RITZ THEATRE & LAVILLA MUSEUM;

SIGNATURE ARTWORK REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

ESTIMATED PUBLIC ART BUDGET: \$85,000.00

DEADLINE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2006, 5:00 P.M. EDT

OPTIONAL INFO MEETING FOR ARTISTS: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2005 6:00 P.M.

RITZ THEATRE & LAVILLA MUSEUM, 829 N. DAVIS ST., JACKSONVILLE FL.

## ESTIMATED TIMELINE

Qualifications Due: .....Thursday, January 12, 2006 by 5:00 p.m., EDT.  
 Panel Review: ..... January 2006  
 Finalists invited to develop proposals: .....February 2006  
 Artists Present Proposals: .....March/April 2006  
 Artist(s) Selected by: .....May 2006  
 Artwork installed: .....Winter/ Spring 2006-2007

***All dates subject to change-***

Please note above the optional informational meeting; for any interested artists to ask questions, etc.

## CALL SUMMARY

The City of Jacksonville, Florida's Art in Public Places program is seeking artists or artist collaborations to create innovative, original and site-specific artwork for the recently rebuilt Ritz Theatre & LaVilla Museum, in the heart of the historic, downtown LaVilla neighborhood.

The Art Selection Committee for the Ritz is seeking an artist or artist team who can understand and express in their art the Ritz's connection to historic, contemporary and future expressions of the vibrancy of African-American culture within the context of Jacksonville's character as a whole. Possible locations include a range of sites including walls, sidewalk, open street-corners and corners and features of the building. Possible types of artwork include, but are not limited to:

- Hardscape
- Lighting
- Three dimensional outdoor work (freestanding or on building)
- Two dimensional outdoor work

## BUDGET/COMMISSION

The estimated total public art budget for the Ritz, including all aspects of design, lighting, fabrication and

installation, is \$85,000.00. The final location(s) for the commissioned artwork(s) will be determined in collaboration with the selected artist(s).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Ritz, which opened in 1929 and was a cornerstone of a thriving, African-American business and entertainment district, was rebuilt in 1999. It functions now as a performance and film-screening venue, and a museum for historical artifacts and contemporary art. The Art in Public Places Commission (APPC) seeks to commission an original and dramatic site-specific work, or works, of art which enhance the site and engage visitors and passersby, night and day, 365 days a year. The selected artwork(s) do not have to be literal representations of people or things. The art must capture the 'spirit' of the Ritz and its legacy and role, described in "Project Site Background," below. This artwork will not only complement the architecture of the building, but act as a beacon and provide instant recognition of the Ritz as an active and vital institution reflecting the heritage of the city's African-American community, at a gateway to the LaVilla neighborhood and from there to the City.

*Please see the 'Background' section, below, and links noted on the "Resources" sheet for more in-depth information on the Ritz Theatre's history and activities.*

## ARTWORK LOCATIONS

Four possible locations were decided on by the Art Selection Committee (please see diagram and pictures):

- Ritz Main Entrance, surrounding streetscape
- Stucco Wall Sections (three different walls present options)
- Roof/ Existing Architectural Accent (oriented toward traffic on Union St.)
- Corner of Building at Davis and Union Streets

The Committee is open to 2-d, 3-d or combinations thereof; the response of finalists will help determine which site, and what medium, the commissioned artwork will address.



## ART REQUIREMENTS

The artwork(s) will be sited in a prominent location or locations on the exterior of the building or in the streetscape near it. The artwork(s) must be durable, low maintenance, and appropriate to the location, and be able to withstand large amounts of sun, rain and wind. Public art projects are in the public realm and are therefore exposed to weather and may be subjected to vandalism. Florida's high winds and extremely humid and hot temperatures must also be taken into consideration.

### **Conceptually, this artwork(s) should:**

- Create excitement and interest for the community
- Honor and commemorate the rich history of the Ritz
- Celebrate the impact the Ritz has had and continues to have on the community
- Inspire young and old to remember the past, and embrace a legacy that belongs to them and to future generations.
- Express all of the above in an artwork that is contemporary and of excellent quality.

The artists' willingness to learn in-depth about the community and have a dialogue with interested community members from which to apply the concepts, is integral toward developing the artwork(s). See more about the Ritz below.

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

*PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND MAKE SURE ALL CRITERIA ARE MET.*

### **Application packaging**

Please submit all materials in a sealed envelope (9x12 or 10x13). Do not bind or staple. Make sure to write the name of the project applied for on the **OUTSIDE** of your entry envelope. Make sure to include all materials listed below. Use light colored paper that can be clearly photocopied. All materials (other than videotapes) must fit into a standard file folder.

**Slides** - To be considered for this project, the artist must submit five to ten slides of previously completed artwork; OR, applicant may submit a videotape, for kinetic, electronic, light, sound or other such work, which shows no more than 10 projects with a total

playing time no longer than 5 minutes. All examples should represent work completed within the last 5 years. Slides must be 35mm in 2in x 2in mounts; no glass, no larger transparencies, and in a 9 X 11" clear plastic slide sheet labeled with artist's name. The quality of each applicant's artwork as shown in the slides is a significant factor in the selection of semi-finalists. We recommend you get them professionally done. EACH slide or videotape must be labeled with the following: Artist's name; Slide number; Title of work; Medium; Size (h x w x d); and, on slides: Place a dot in the front lower left-hand corner (for placing in carousel).

**Note: stick-on labels may jam slide projectors and should not be used.**

**Slide List** - submit a separate slide list which is headed at top with Artist name, contact info, and title of the project being applied for. Indicate the following for each slide: slide number; title of the work; year of completion; location of the work; medium; dimensions of the work (height by width by depth); and the total art project budget.

**Letter of Interest** - submit a short statement (250 words max) addressing artist's conceptual approach, potential approach to the project in question, and the relationship of work shown in slides to the requirements of this particular project. This is not a request for a specific proposal; do not include drawings or plans as they will not be considered. Not to exceed one page.

**Resume** - submit a current professional resume that outlines your professional accomplishments as an artist, including exhibition history, public collections, public commissions and site-specific experience. Catalogs and reviews may be included.

**Completed application form** - Be sure to note name(s) of all projects applied for on application form as well as on the outside of submission envelope.

**Self Addressed Stamped Envelope (SASE) in each package** - sufficient postage, and envelope for return of slides. If no SASE is included, materials will not be returned, and may be discarded. (If selected for Artist Registry, materials will be retained; see below). Please indicate if you wish other material in addition to slides to be returned, and include postage to cover it.



## DEADLINES

**Application Deadline: Thursday, January 12, 2006 by 5:00 p.m.**

Applications must be received by this date and hand-delivered entries by this time. The Art Selection Committee will not review incomplete or late submissions. Applications not received or postmarked before this date are considered late and will be returned unopened.

## ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION:

**Eligibility** - Jacksonville's Art in Public Places Program is open to all artists regardless of racial or ethnic origins, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, marital status, disability or, unless otherwise noted, residency. Artists working in any media are eligible to apply. Artists are not required to have previous experience in public art. One artist may not receive more than two purchases or commissions of \$10,000 or more each, within any five-year period. Members of the Art in Public Places Commission, Art Selection or Advisory Committee, or staff of the Jacksonville Cultural Council are not eligible for commission or purchase of work during their term of service.

**Electronic Visuals**- The Jacksonville Art in Public Places Program is not equipped at this time to use digital imagery in its selection process. Digital images may be submitted as supplements, but they are unlikely to be seen by the Committee.

**Maintenance and Durability** - All applicants are requested to consider the issues of long-term conservation and maintenance of public art. Public Art Projects should be fabricated of highly durable, low-maintenance materials. Artists' proposals and awarded contracts will be reviewed by the City of Jacksonville's Public Works Department to ensure conformity with City standards of maintenance and durability.

**Project Evaluation** - The Art in Public Places Commission (APPC) supervises the selection process and is responsible for final approval on all art selected for the Art in Public Places Program. An Art Selection Committee (ASC) appointed by the Commission will review applications. The ASC includes a member of the APPC, 1-3 artists or art professionals, an architect or design team member, and agency and community representatives. The ASC is responsible for reviewing the site, establishing criteria and writing a Call for Artists, reviewing applications, short-listing and interviewing finalists.

Each ASC may recommend different criteria and review procedures so please read this Call carefully.

**Selection Process** - Artists will be selected based on materials submitted- please see Submission Guidelines. One to three artists will be short-listed for interviews and may be asked to prepare proposals prior to final selection. Any proposal request will be compensated with an honorarium of approximately \$1,000. These artists will receive more specific information about the project and will have the opportunity to talk to design team members prior to the interview. One artist/ artist team will be selected as finalist for the project. The nominated finalist and proposal will be presented to the Commission for approval. If no proposal is approved, the Commission reserves the right to re-open the search for artists or take whatever action is deemed appropriate to complete the selection process. Once approved by the Commission, all allocations from the Art in Public Places Trust Fund are subject to standard Jacksonville City Council approval processes.

**Criteria**- Artist applications will be judged on past work as illustrated in slides, including all aspects of the following: creative concept, use and understanding of materials, quality of fabrication, appropriateness of site-specific works to the context of their environment, scale of works completed, and suitability of the artist's work and style to the context and demands of this project. Also considered will be an artist's professional experience, including experience creating public art or other site-specific projects, exhibition history, and art education background. The relevance and quality of the Letter of Interest may also be a factor.

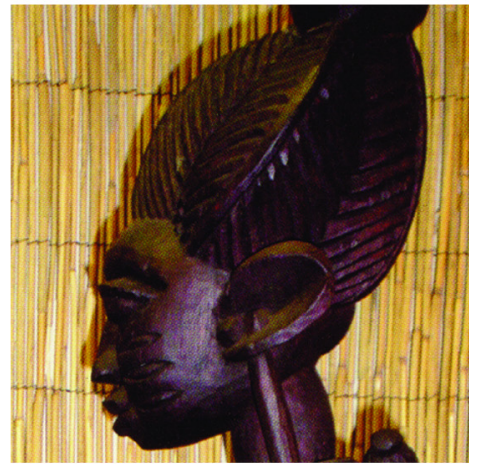
### Send Applications to:

Art in Public Places Program  
300 West Water Street, Ste. 201  
Jacksonville FL 32202

### For More Information call:

Art in Public Places Program  
(904) 358-3600 x.11





## About Ritz Theatre & LaVilla Museum

The original Ritz Theater opened its doors on September 25, 1929 as a movie house for African American audiences. It soon became an entertainment hub for Jacksonville's African American community, and on any given night was filled with movie goers watching westerns, romance and horror shows. In addition to movies, live entertainers sometimes performed on its stage. Just a couple of blocks away is Ashley Street, which was then a thriving entertainment and nightlife area. Jazz greats such as Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, and Ella Fitzgerald performed in the Ashley Street district. Following legislated Integration, and an exodus of patrons as they moved into other neighborhoods, the LaVilla area began to decline in the 1960's and 70's, and the Ritz Theater was forced to close its doors. Beginning in the 1980's, efforts were made to restore the Art Deco building; ultimately, a decision was made to re-build, retaining the marquee and the "Ritz" brightly lighted sign (one of the earliest uses of neon in Jacksonville). In 1999, after an extensive design process, what was formerly the Ritz Theater re-opened as Ritz Theatre & LaVilla Museum, a state-of-the-art theatre and museum dedi-

cated to preserving African American heritage and culture in Northeast Florida.

LaVilla, often known as the 'Harlem of the South,' was at its height when the Ritz was built in 1929 and throughout the '30's and '40's. Silent movies were phasing out and talking movies coming in. A.L. Lewis, one of the South's first black millionaires, helped found the Afro-American Life Insurance Company there and several black-owned businesses thrived in an era when blacks were excluded from doing business at white establishments. The Ritz provided the cultural cornerstone of the bustling business district and marked the gateway to the LaVilla neighborhood, as well as the gateway from the neighborhood to the rest of the city. It was available to families; a "Saturday place" where young people could come with 25 cents and leave with change, after staying all day. Boys could come from public housing projects just across the street to see black Westerns, popularly known as "shoot-em-ups," featuring black actors like Bill Pickett and Bessie Coleman and (many of them) produced in Jacksonville's own Norman Studios, the first and only





celebration, Ritz Theatre & LaVilla Museum also has come to symbolize the African American experience of survival and renewal, within the thread of cultural expression.



The La Villa area is currently in the process of major re-building, restoration, and new development, and houses Jacksonville's LaVilla School of the Arts, a middle-school magnet for gifted and artistic students. The Ritz is still situated at the “gateway” to the neighborhood which is, as well, a main gateway to the city. The Union Street exit from nearby I-95 takes drivers right past the rear side of the building on a major thoroughfare into Downtown.

all-black film production house in the nation. Several entertainers got their start at the Ritz.

Today Ritz Theatre & LaVilla Museum houses a 400 seat auditorium; a growing permanent collection of LaVilla artifacts including the Weems collection of photographs; an animatronics exhibit highlighting the life and work of James Weldon Johnson and his brother, Rosamond Johnson; a gallery space for rotating temporary exhibits; and a season of live performances that have featured living legends Bobby “Blue” Bland and Ahmad Jamal, Michelle Ferrell, and Neo Soul artist KEM. Monthly, the Ritz presents “Amateur Night at the Ritz” a local talent showcase modeled after the Amateur Night at the Apollo Theater (New York). While an active, contemporary center for cultural



# APPLICATION FORM - JACKSONVILLE ART IN PUBLIC PLACES - 2005

ARTIST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Project applied for: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of slides sent: \_\_\_\_\_

## CHECKLIST:

- Slides
- Slide list
- Resume
- Completed application form
- Letter of Interest
- Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope (SASE) (for return of slides)

If application is being submitted by a gallery, consultant or artist's representative, please complete a separate application for each artist for whom you are applying and complete the information below for each. We prefer to receive personal applications from the artists themselves whenever possible, with a site-specific letter of interest included.

ARTIST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Representative \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that any artist selected for a commissioned work under this ordinance will contract directly with the City of Jacksonville, whether the application is received directly from the Artist or from a representative. Agreement between Artist and representative will be separate from any such contract. Purchases of work either directly or through a representative require the Artist's signature regarding copyright unless the work is owned by the representative.\* Representative please sign below to indicate agreement with the above.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

(This application form may be duplicated)

\* This applies only to Direct Purchases, in the case where an open competition RFQ is NOT used. All Open Competition projects will commission artists to design and create original, site-specific, permanent works.

**Art in Public Places Program**  
**300 West Water Street, Ste. 201**  
**Jacksonville FL 32202**  
**(904) 358-3600 x.11**

## WEBLINKS TO MORE RITZ INFO, LAVILLA HISTORY AND PRESENT DAY

### **RITZ AND LAVILLA-SPECIFIC LINKS:**

**Jacksonville Downtown Vision, Inc.'s listing for the Ritz Theatre and LaVilla Museum:**

[http://www.downtownvision.org/detail/?loc\\_id=1904&page\\_id=17](http://www.downtownvision.org/detail/?loc_id=1904&page_id=17)

**City of Jacksonville/ Ritz Theatre homepage, history:**

<http://www.coj.net/Departments/Ritz+Theatre+and+La+Villa+Museum/History+of+the+Ritz.htm>

**Times-Union 1998 article (long) on LaVilla and Ritz renovation project:**

[http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/072698/met\\_1f1LaVil.html](http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/072698/met_1f1LaVil.html)

**Times-Union 1999 article (long) on Ritz Restoration (good photos):**

[http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/031499/met\\_2a1ritz\\_.html](http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/031499/met_2a1ritz_.html)

**Associated Times-Union 'Flash' animation tour through new Ritz and old Neighborhood** (basic but informative, takes Flash plug-ins and a video viewer):

<http://www.jacksonville.com/special/theritz/>

**Times-Union 2000 article (long) on LaVilla as new Business District**

(note: LaVilla Grill, mentioned in the article, is no longer in business):

[http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/010300/bus\\_1h8LaVil.html](http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/010300/bus_1h8LaVil.html)

**Times-Union 2001 article on Sally Corp's Animatronics installation at Ritz:**

[http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/021101/met\\_5371022.html](http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/021101/met_5371022.html)

**Stanton High School article on Animatronics installation** (on Blacksonville.com):

<http://www.blacksonville.com/Ritz%20Automatronic%20Exhibit.htm>

**Times-Union brief article on history of Ashley Street, LaVilla's former entertainment district:**

<http://jacksonville.com/learningcenter/blackhistory/15story.html>

**More on Ashley Street from JacksonvilleStory.com:**

<http://www.jacksonvillestory.com/Picture%20of%20Four%20Ink%20Spots.htm>

**Knights of Pythias building (Ashley St.), photo and history from JacksonvilleStory.com:**

<http://www.jacksonvillestory.com/Picture%20of%20Knights%20of%20Pythias%20Building,%20One.html>

### **JACKSONVILLE AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL PERSONALITIES, AND GENERAL HISTORY LINKS:**

**On James Weldon Johnson:**

- **From Modern American Poetry website, featuring essays on the life of JW Johnson:**

[http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/g\\_l/johnson/johnson.htm](http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/g_l/johnson/johnson.htm)

- **From Jazz Roots website:**

<http://www.jass.com/c&j.html>

**On A.L. Lewis, co-Founder of Afro-American Life Insurance Corp. in LaVilla:**

[http://www.myflorida.com/myflorida/governorsoffice/black\\_history/bios/abraham\\_lewis.html](http://www.myflorida.com/myflorida/governorsoffice/black_history/bios/abraham_lewis.html)

**On MaVynee Betsch, "The Beach Lady," granddaughter of A.L. Lewis:**

- **Times-Union Article 2002 about history of American Beach:**

[http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/022302/nen\\_8689447.shtml](http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/022302/nen_8689447.shtml)



**- From 'TheHistoryMakers.com:**

<http://www.thehistorymakers.com/biography/biography.asp?bioindex=833&category=civicMakers>

**- T-U article 1997 about new American Beach history book:**

<http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/060897/0608amer.html>

**Jacksonville Public Library's site on Notable Jacksonvillians:**

<http://jpl.coj.net/DLC/FLorida/FamousJacksonvillians.html>

**General Jacksonville research page, JacksonvilleStory.com**

(many, many links to various sources):

<http://www.jacksonvillestory.com/index.htm>

**JacksonvilleStory.com's resource page on prominent local African-Americans:**

<http://www.jacksonvillestory.com/Prominent%20Local%20African%20Americans.htm#BUSINESS%20PEOPLE>

## **CONTEMPORARY LINKS FOR NOTABLE LAVILLA -AREA COMPANIES AND SCHOOLS:**

**Jacksonville Urban League (Ritz Theatre's neighbor, across Davis street) Homepage:**

<http://www.jaxul.org/home.htm#>

**LaVilla School of the Arts, Ritz's neighbor 2 blocks to the South on Davis Street:**

<http://www.educationcentral.org/lavilla/default.htm>

**Sally Corporation, Internationally-known fabricator of animatronics and Dark Rides:**

(creators of James Weldon and John Rosamond Johnson animatronics show at the Ritz)

<http://sallycorp.com/>

**Elkins Constructors, Inc.(recently relocated to LaVilla):**

<http://www.elkinsconstructors.com/>