

Art on the Waterfront Showcases Public Sculpture

Four local artists exhibit pieces that reflect nature through art.



It's easy to find world-class museums in Baltimore, but arts aficionados won't be able to see the city's newest exhibition inside any of them. [Art on the Waterfront](#), a temporary showcase featuring four public installations, uses the great outdoors as its gallery instead.

Produced by the [Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts](#), the exhibition snakes throughout Middle Branch Park on the Gwynns Falls Trail. Four Baltimore-based artists created the larger-than-life sculptures, which each draw inspiration from and interact with nature. BOPA will celebrate the

show's grand opening at 4:30 p.m. on July 4 with a public reception followed by a view of the Ports America fireworks from the beach.

Ryan Patterson, the public arts administrator at BOPA, says the show fills a gap in the city's arts offerings. "We have wonderful art institutions around Baltimore where we can go see historic and contemporary artworks," Patterson says. "The one area we miss is the kind of contemporary sculpture that gets installed on a temporary basis, something that's a little longer than Artscape or one of those festival settings, but can really change an environment."

Featured artists Becky Borlan, Graham Coreil-Allen, Ashley Kidner, and Matthias Neumann approach their pieces in unique ways, but with similar local themes. Borlan's *Prisms* and Coreil-Allen's *Baltimore Banner Vista* both pay homage to the city's rich history of transportation, while Neumann's *Basics #24* explores the function of public sculpture in its natural surroundings.

Ashley Kidner's *Pollinator Hexagon* is perhaps the most unusual installation in the exhibit—a circular garden with 19 internal hexagons, each filled with plants native to Maryland that attract pollinators, like bees, butterflies, and birds. It's the fourth in a series of five public works by the English-born artist, who is, in his own words, "really big about trying to save bees."

"I'm hoping that people will look at it and say, 'Hey, that's a great idea,'" Kidner says. "People will be inspired to go and start planting their own native plants."

Art on the Waterfront is open to the public every day of the week and is completely free to visit by car, bike, and foot. The 150-acre Middle Branch Park, located across the Hanover Street Bridge, marks the southern end of the Gwynns Falls trail, which connects over 30 neighborhoods throughout

Baltimore.

Artist Becky Borlan jumped at the chance to display *Prisms* next to the Patapsco River, where she says the piece takes on special resonance. "It's sort of an appropriate context for this piece to have it next to the Baltimore harbor," says Borlan, whose work resembles five technicolor sailboats. "I hope my work heightens people's awareness of the visual world around them. It's something that I'm personally very attuned to, and maybe obsessed with."

The temporary exhibits will be on display along the Gwynns Falls Trail through September 28. There are no concrete plans yet for another showcase at Middle Branch Park, but Patterson hopes that this first edition will inspire an annual tradition of public art exhibitions.

"It's the beginning of how we can feature new artwork in parks," he says. "A number of really creative communities with all sorts of really great residents have visions for what that park can be."