

# Call for “Statements of Interest” for Art Installations Chicago Botanic Garden 50th Anniversary Celebration 2022

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## Introduction

The Chicago Botanic Garden will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022. A series of public programs and art experiences will celebrate the Garden’s remarkable growth and will establish the tone for the next decade.

Experiences will feature work from several artists in spaces throughout the Garden, with the goal of visitors encountering and interacting in different ways during the season. For this effort, we are seeking Statements of Interest from artists who are interested in developing a site-specific outdoor installation.

The Statement of Interest is not a proposal; we will work with selected individuals to develop proposals in the next stage. We anticipate commissioning several different artists/pieces for the celebration.

## About the Chicago Botanic Garden

The Chicago Botanic Garden opened 49 years ago as a beautiful place to visit, and it has matured into one of the world’s great living museums and conservation science centers. Every year, more than one million people visit the Garden’s 27 gardens and four natural areas, uniquely situated on 385 acres on and around nine islands, with six miles of lake shoreline.

Our Mission: *We cultivate the power of plants to sustain and enrich life.*

Our Diversity Policy:

The Garden’s mission is grounded in the belief that caring for gardens and natural areas is fundamentally important to the well-being of everyone. We strive to make the Garden and all its programs available and accessible to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. We value diversity in all its forms and at every level of our organization – board, staff, volunteers, and vendors. Through the diversity of backgrounds, perspectives and experience, the Garden is more effectively able to create extraordinary and welcoming experiences for our increasingly diverse audiences. We

are committed to ensuring a sense of belonging to every individual we encounter, regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, intellectual ability, or economic status.

## **Chicago Botanic Garden Curatorial Statement**

For the Garden's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the exhibitions and public art experiences will:

- adhere to the Garden's environmental stewardship principles;
- showcase nature-based work that supports its mission and aligns with its narrative themes;
- seek to connect visitors with nature in new ways;
- provoke dialogue and reflection;
- be site-specific;
- support inclusion/accessibility best practices;
- welcome all;
- allow for collaborative/social experience.

## **50th Anniversary Installation Specifications**

- Summer installations will live in outdoor Garden spaces (on land and/or water) from May-September 2022 (exact dates TBD). Commissioned work must be finished by May 1, 2022. In the case of structural pieces, all work should be ready for transportation to the Garden and installation beginning as early as May 1, 2022.
  - Please see attached map for possible locations. The areas noted on the map do not represent a total quantity of works desired by the Chicago Botanic Garden; instead, they are possible locations for inspiration. We will work with artists to match concepts with locations.
- What we are looking for:
  - Site specific sculptural works that are visually arresting, invite visitor interaction and convene community.
  - Artists who are comfortable engaging with the public, either through artist talks or through participatory "happenings" with the work itself.
- Materials must be sustainable / in support of the environmental stewardship mission of the Garden.
- Installation must be structurally sturdy enough to withstand the Chicago elements. And, while this is meant to be a temporary work, the intention is for the work to be active and interacted with in the summer and perhaps last until

December.

- We expect budget for the artist fee (inclusive of concepting, planning, and materials; exclusive of transportation and installation) to be reflective of each artist's scope of work and could range from \$5k to \$40k for individual commissions.
- We will work with selected artists to align concepts with the celebration's narrative themes.

### Statement of Interest Guidelines

- Please send your Statement of Interest by **April 12, 2021**, via PDF or email with a link to download to:

Gabriel Hutchison  
Exhibitions and Programs Production Manager  
Chicago Botanic Garden  
[ghutchison@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:ghutchison@chicagobotanic.org).

- In your statement, please include:
  - Why you are interested in this opportunity.
  - A high-level description of your typical work process.
  - Images of previous installations and/or a link to a digital portfolio.
  - Description of public programs you have designed or facilitated in conjunction with your art or other artists' work. [This is not a requirement for selection, but if you have this experience, we would like to learn more about it.]
  - Artist statement: the themes of your work, what you make and why, and your point of view on public art in particular.
  - Artist resume/CV.

### Timeline and Process for Review

- Statements of Interest will be reviewed by a team of Chicago Botanic Garden educators, designers, and horticulturists.
- A short list of artists will be selected by **April 19, 2021**. We will schedule video calls to share more about the celebration vision and programming, learn more about you, and talk about potential to collaborate.

- **Final selections of artists will be made by April 26, 2021.**
- Scheduled meetings between the Chicago Botanic Garden staff and selected artists to review narrative themes, installation locations, public involvement and conceptual directions to take place from **April 26 to June 1, 2021.**
- Selected artists to present proposed work by **June 1, 2021.**  
Presented work should include:
  - Fabrication details including materials,
  - Rendering or photos of the work in the proposed or designated site,
  - Rigging and construction details necessary for installation,
  - Weather related concerns and processes to consider as the work may be in place for 4-6 months. If wind will be a factor in public safety, please provide wind or gusts speeds you feel the piece should be closed to public interaction. Similarly, if water level will be a factor, please speak to that as well.
- Finished commissioned work to be ready for installation by **May 1, 2022.**

We thank you for considering a collaboration with the Chicago Botanic Garden and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,  
Gabriel Hutchison

Exhibitions and Programs Production Manager  
Chicago Botanic Garden  
[ghutchison@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:ghutchison@chicagobotanic.org)