

Alexandria Public Art Bike Tour

Overview

- This tour explores some of Alexandria's public art, primarily in the West End, Arlandria, and Eisenhower East neighborhoods.
- Please note that this is just a sampling of public art in Alexandria. There are many more fascinating pieces within the City.
- The route is about 13.7 miles long. About ten pieces are discussed below, and there are brief notes about others along the route.
- Go to <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/33883158> for cuesheets or turn-by-turn directions.

0. Starting point: Fort Ward Park, 4301 W. Braddock Road.

Fort Ward Park has public parking and public bathrooms. When you're ready to start the ride, exit the park and turn right onto W. Braddock Road, then right onto N. Beauregard Street, then right onto Berkeley Street.

1. Array at West Alex, 3445 Berkeley Street.

Stopping point: pedestrian plaza with tables.

There are three pieces of public art in this new apartment complex.

En Pointe, by artist Harry McDaniel, took three years to sculpt. It is located on an exhaust vent above a parking deck, so the continual flow of air keeps the large, abstract sculptures of people moving slowly in circles. "As the design took form, I began to see the combined forms (in motion) as dancers," said McDaniel. "That was not by intention, but the association stuck with me, so I settled on the title 'En Pointe' which refers to the dance position and describes the fact that each of the sections of the sculpture is balanced on a point." McDaniel received a \$40,000 commission for this piece.



Last Summer, by local artist Alma Selimovic, consists of steel flowers and a branch on a 45-foot wall across from the pedestrian plaza. The 130 blue, orange, and yellow flowers add life to an otherwise plain concrete wall. "I love the area," said Selimovic. "Last Summer is my first public sculpture, I've always wanted to build big pieces and I finally got the chance to do that in Alexandria." Selimovic said her piece "represents life but also a moment that has passed. Flowers are like glimpses of memories that pop up to remind us of something and then disappear."



The Event, by artist David Smedley, is around the corner on the wall facing King Street. Smedley spent two years designing the piece, which is made with recycled, frost-resistant tile. "I call this work 'quilt painting,'" Smedley says. "I'm dealing with that shape of isosceles triangles and the squares. It's the same kind of thing as the patterns that I find on the quilts my great-grandmother made. I'm black, I come from the African American experience. Quilting has been a part of my family and the African American tradition, and I wanted to throw that in there, a very subtle [nod to] the cultural continuum."



Sources: <https://www.alxnow.com/2019/11/19/three-pieces-of-public-art-debut-at-incoming-west-end-apartment-complex/>; <http://harrymcdaniel.com/works/EnPointe.html>; <https://northernvirginiamag.com/culture/culture-features/2020/05/12/find-these-6-beautiful-public-murals-around-nova/>; <https://thezebra.org/2019/12/10/far-out-three-new-pieces-of-public-art-are-on-display-at-the-array-at-west-alex/>.

At the entrance for the parking garage, merge back onto King Street, then immediately get into the left turn lane to turn left onto S. 28th Street. Continue onto S. Columbus Street, which becomes S. 29th Street. Turn right onto S. Abingdon Street, then left onto S. 31st Street. Close to the base of the hill, turn left onto S. Randolph Street. At the stop sign, turn left onto Campbell Avenue. Shirlington Library is on your left, at the corner where Campbell Avenue turns. Pull into the area in front of the library.

2. Shirlington Library

Stopping point: plaza in front of the library at 4200 Campbell Avenue.

Down Stream, by artist Martha Jackson Jarvis, is a two-part fountain that culminates in a semi-circular pool. Rich color, saturated with a veil of water, animates the fountain. Shapes, reminiscent of aquatic organisms, speak to the site's proximity to Four Mile Run and to the need to protect this ecosystem. Born in 1952, Martha Jackson Jarvis grew up in Lynchburg, Virginia and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and currently lives and works in Washington, D.C. She studied at Howard University and received a BFA degree from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University and an MFA from Antioch University. Jackson Jarvis began her career creating fragile ceramics that could easily shatter. When the inevitable breakage occurred, she embraced the notion of incorporating broken shards into her work, and thus her interest in mosaics was born. In 1992, this interest took her to Ravenna, Italy to study Byzantine mosaics and tesserae cutting. Jackson Jarvis drew on that experience to create Down Stream, which was installed in 2006.

Flow, by artist Erwin Redl, consists of four LED bands that flow skyward and are integrated into the library's architecture. The tallest band measures 64' and is installed on the facade, while three shorter strips are integrated into the back garden wall. Flow's vertical bands emphasize the building's height while at the same time draw the eye through the building from the facade to the back wall. Redl studied composition and electronic music at Vienna's Music Academy in Austria and received an MFA in computer art from New York City's School of Visual Arts. Redl now works in Brooklyn and composes with light, rather than sound.

Sources: <https://locate.publicartarchive.org/art/Down-Stream>;
<http://marthajacksonjarvis.com/biography>; https://locate.publicartarchive.org/art/Flow_5.

Continue north on Campbell Avenue, then turn right onto S. Arlington Mill Drive. Turn right onto S. Quincy Street. At the intersection of S. Quincy Street and Campbell Avenue, turn left in the crosswalk onto the northside sidewalk along Campbell Avenue, turn left again, and use the pedestrian bridge to cross 395. At the intersection of Gunston Road and Martha Custis Drive, turn left onto Martha Custis Drive. Continue onto Valley Drive, turn right onto Tennessee Avenue, then turn left onto Old Dominion Boulevard. At the intersection of Old Dominion Boulevard and W. Glebe Road, hit the pedestrian button to activate the traffic light. Turn left onto W. Glebe Road, then immediately turn right to continue on Old Dominion Boulevard. Turn left onto Notabene Drive, continue onto Four Mile Road, then turn right onto Mt Vernon Avenue. Turn right into the driveway between 3802 and 3800 Mt Vernon Avenue, then stop to look at the mural across the street.

3. Tenants and Workers United Building, 3801 Mt Vernon Avenue

Stopping point: driveway across the street.

A **mural** on the front of the historic Tenants and Workers United building highlights the causes and consequences of mass incarceration, and how youth in communities of color are affected. The mural, unveiled in August 2019, was brought to life by TWU's youth-led group along with local artist, Federico Frum, who works under the name MasPaz ("more peace" in Spanish). Frum said on Instagram that he collaborated with youth from the Chirilagua neighborhood in designing and painting the mural. They hope it will inspire positive change in the system.



When MasPaz paints, he considers how “to do something that has a message that my grandmother would appreciate, that my mother would appreciate, and also a little kid.” MasPaz was born in Colombia, raised by adoptive parents in Virginia, lives in Arlington, and travels the world to teach mural workshops. With his bold, abstract figures and lettering, he explores indigenous Latin American art. Five percent of all his project earnings go toward the orphanage that he lived in as a child.

Sources: <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/alexandria-mural-spotlights-consequences-of-mass-incarceration/131966/>; <https://folklife.si.edu/magazine/writ-large-art-chelove-maspaz>;
<https://www.arlnow.com/2018/03/07/arlington-native-artist-mas-paz-teaches-paints-murals-across-the-globe/>.

Continue south on Mt Vernon Avenue, then turn left onto W. Reed Avenue. Turn right onto Commonwealth Avenue. At the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Mt Vernon Avenue, hop onto the sidewalk on your right side and stop by the sculpture at the corner.

4. Three Eggs in Space

Stopping point: open area by the sculpture, at the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Mt Vernon Avenue.



Three Eggs in Space, by artist Karen Bailey, is a 12-foot tall, 30,000-pound marble and limestone sculpture. The piece was commissioned by Stewart Bartley, developer of the Del Ray Central apartment building, who mentioned to Bailey at their 30th high school reunion that his company was required to install a piece of artwork near the building as part of the development contract with the city. She told her old friend that she'd like to give it a try, and he agreed to let her.

"I was really responding to that location, that point, and how visible it would be, how much foot traffic, traffic, signs," Bailey said. "I wanted to create something still. Quiet. Centering." Bailey, who now lives in Colorado, said she wants people to "participate" with the Egg, climb on it, sit in it, have their photo taken with it. Far from taking offense, she's thrilled with the swirl of controversy around her work. "Even negative comments are good," she said. "That means people are paying attention."

Where, exactly, are the three eggs? One is the sand-blasted Tennessee gray marble at the base, Bailey explained. The other is the smaller, pink marble oval shape in the middle of the piece. And the third is the space created by the larger white limestone oval.

So the white oval is not an egg?

"No," she said. "I call that the doughnut."

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/24/AR2011012401930_pf.html.

Continue south on Commonwealth Avenue. After the train station, continue onto Daingerfield Road. Turn right onto Diagonal Road. Hop onto the sidewalk to take the pedestrian tunnel under Duke Street.



The recessed brick areas inside the tunnel contain **a series of 12 colorful artworks** by Maryland-based artist Mike McConnell. [Says McConnell](#): "Nature is my main inspiration. Big bold shapes immediately catch the eye from a distance. Having the shapes look like they continue outside the piece creates a space that feels larger than just the rectangle."

*Merge onto Dulany Street, then turn left onto the southside sidewalk along Ballenger Avenue. Pull up next to the **geodesic dome sculpture**.*

Richard Buckminster Fuller was granted Patent No. 2,682,235 for inventing a geodesic dome structure. Appropriately, this sculpture sits in the middle of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office



complex. Come back at night to see the pillars in the courtyard lit up in different colors and patterns.

*U-turn onto Ballenger Avenue and head west. Make a slight right onto Courthouse Square, turn left onto Jamieson Avenue, then turn left onto Mill Road. At the southwest corner of Jamieson Avenue and Mill Road, you'll see **Zulu**, a steel [sculpture](#) consisting of several abstract elements welded together in a cluster. Take the first right onto Grist Mill Place, then turn left onto Mill Race Lane. You may need to hit the pedestrian beg button to activate the traffic light to cross Eisenhower Avenue. After crossing Eisenhower Avenue, use the curbcut at the southeast corner to get on the sidewalk, then turn left onto the walkway along the south side of the pond.*

5. Eisenhower East Park at 750 Port Street

Stopping point: mid-point along the walkway.



There's a metal dragonfly perched on a reed at the west end of the park, two flocks of metal birds on the north side of the pond, a metal butterfly on the retaining wall on the south side of the pond, and a turtle at the east end of the park.

After exiting the park, ride north on the sidewalk for a half block, then turn right onto Eisenhower Avenue. Turn right onto Hooffs Run Drive, then left onto Limerick Street. If anyone needs to use the restroom, there are public restrooms just across from the gate leading into the soccer field. Admire the fountain in front of the Alex Renew building, then turn

*left onto Bartholomew Street. Follow the road around, and you'll see a **globe representing Alexandria's trading history** on your right. Turn right onto Hooffs Run Drive, then right again onto Eisenhower Avenue. At the traffic circle, take the second exit onto Holland Lane. On your right, you'll see **Truths that Rise from Roots Remembered**, a bronze [sculpture](#) that is part of the Alexandria African American Heritage Park. Turn left onto Duke Street, then immediately turn right onto Reinekers Lane. Hop onto the sidewalk by the little triangular park, then head over to the Edmonson Sisters statue facing Duke Street.*

6. Edmonson Sisters statue

Stopping point: open area around the statue.

Daughters of a free Black man and an enslaved woman, Mary and Emily were among the nearly 80 slaves who attempted to escape to freedom aboard a ship called the *Pearl* in April 1848. However, the *Pearl* was captured in the Chesapeake Bay before reaching safe harbor in the north. The Edmonson sisters, then ages 13 and 15, were sold to prominent Alexandria slave trader Joseph Bruin, who ran a slave jail on this site. They were almost sold into a life of prostitution in New Orleans, but the girls' father managed to purchase and free them.

Erik Blome, an instructor at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, was commissioned to create the piece in 2008. The sisters are pictured emerging escaping from the shadow of a rock that represents the darkness of



slavery. “I worked really, really hard on the faces for more than a week,” said Blome. He had just four photos to work with, so he also turned to descendants to complete the sisters’ likeness.

Source: <https://alextimes.com/2010/05/slavery-and-freedom-embodied/>.

*Continue north on Reinekers Lane, then turn right on Prince Street. At the southeast corner of Prince Street and Daingerfield Road, you’ll see **The Acrobat**, a steel [sculpture](#) of an acrobat standing on one hand on a sphere. Turn left onto Daingerfield Road. On your right, in front of the offices of the National Community Pharmacists Association, you’ll see **The Pharmacist**, a bronze [statue](#) depicting a male pharmacist and a boy. On your right after you pass Diagonal Road is King Street Gardens Park, designed around a large metal [sculpture](#) with hanging plants. Continue onto Commonwealth Avenue, then turn right onto W. Cedar Street. On your left, at 16 W. Cedar Street, you’ll see a blue house with a **dog sculpture** in the front yard. Turn right onto Russell Road, then take the first left onto W. Rosemont Avenue. Turn right onto King Street, then turn left onto Janneys Lane. After crossing Quaker Lane, continue onto Seminary Road and make the first right toward Deanery Drive. Continue on Deanery Drive until the parking lot directly east of the Chapel Garden.*

7. St. Cyprian’s Labyrinth, Mary as Prophet statue

Stopping point: parking lot east of the Chapel Garden.



East of the parking lot, behind the trees and down the hill, is **St. Cyprian’s Labyrinth**. The center of the labyrinth consists of bricks from the 1881 Chapel, which burned down in a fire in 2010. The rest of the labyrinth is made of unused bricks from Immanuel Chapel, which was dedicated in 2015. St. Cyprian’s Labyrinth invites pilgrims to take their anxieties into the center and leave them there for God to handle. A gift from the classes of 2009 and 2017, the labyrinth is named after St.

Cyprian’s Chapel, built circa 1880 at Virginia Theological Seminary and home to an African American congregation.

Mary as Prophet, by artist Margaret Adams Parker, offers a radically new interpretation of the pregnant Mary’s visit with her also-pregnant relative, Elizabeth (mother of John the Baptist). Parker, who has taught as an adjunct instructor at VTS since 1991, said that she chose “to focus on the prophetic dimension of their meeting. I imagined Mary seized by prophecy, with Elizabeth reaching out to support her.” Parker also depicted Mary and Elizabeth as African, with Mary having the round face and cropped hair of a very young girl, and Elizabeth the worn and sagging features of a very old woman. As Parker noted,



what I had not anticipated was how powerful this image would be for women of color. An African friend lingered for long moments, simply holding her hand against Mary’s head. A colleague has thanked me for “Mary’s hair.” A recent graduate told me how moving it is to see a Mary “like me.” She expects that future generations will see these women differently.

Retrace your route back to Seminary Road. Turn right onto Seminary Road, then right onto N. Howard Street. Turn right onto W. Braddock Road. Turn at the first left to return to the starting point in Fort Ward Park.