

Alexandria Public Art Bike Tour 2021

Overview

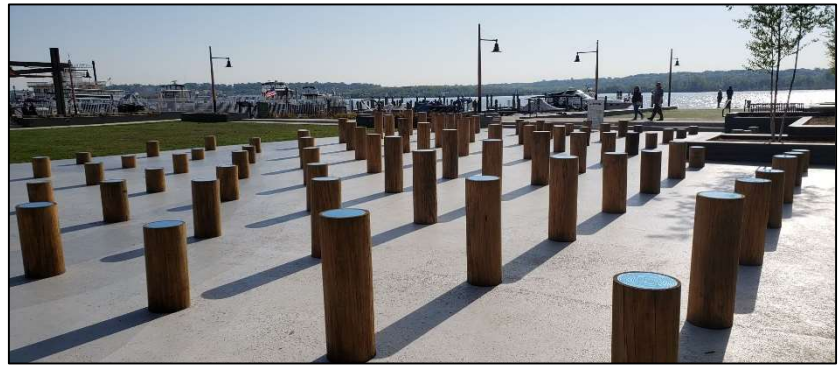
- This tour explores some of Alexandria's public art, including some temporary art installed in 2021.
- Please note that this is just a sampling of public art in Alexandria. There are many more fascinating pieces within the City.
- The route is about 16.1 miles long. Fourteen pieces are discussed below, and there are brief notes about others along the route.
- Go to <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/35402749> for cuesheets or turn-by-turn directions.

1. Waterfront Park, 1 Prince Street

Starting point: at Groundswell, the 2021 art installation within the park.

Groundswell, by artist Mark Reigelman, is the third in the Site See: New Views in Old Town annual public art series, and will be on display through November 2021.

Reigelman focused on Alexandria's working waterfront as the shoreline crept further into the Potomac River. Starting



in the 18th century, thousands of wood pilings were driven deeper and deeper into the Potomac River over time, thereby shifting the city's waterfront over decades. This allowed Alexandria to develop and grow its sprawling dock into a major commercial port.

Groundswell pays homage to this ever-evolving history and brings an element of play to the shoreline's material topography. The installation features a ground mural depicting the floor of the Potomac River and more than 100 wood pilings throughout the site. The pilings range in heights from 12 to 42 inches, in accordance with the river floor topography or bathymetry. Each 14-inch-diameter piling is topped with a cobalt blue mirrored surface etched with growth rings that suggest the passing of time. They glisten in the light like the nearby water, reflecting the sky, as well as the faces of passersby. Reigelman hopes visitors will be immersed in this shimmering landscape as they navigate through the pilings, considering their place in the city's history.

Reigelman has also exhibited his work at other public sites, galleries and museums across the country. His works have been recognized by the Americans for the Arts as being among the 50 most compelling public works across the country. Reigelman studied Sculpture and Industrial Design at the Cleveland Institute of Art in Cleveland, Ohio and product design at Central Saint Martins University of the Arts in London. The artist lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Source: <https://alexandrialivingmagazine.com/arts-entertainment/waterfront-art-exhibit-groundswell-on-display/>.

Start your ride by heading west on King Street. Turn left onto S. Union Street. After you pass Wolfe Street, look to your right for the Wilkes Street tunnel. Turn right and go through the tunnel. Continue onto Wilkes Street. After you pass S. St. Asaph Street, look to your right: there is **temporary window art** on the window of Firehook Bakery. Continue on Wilkes Street, cross S. Washington Street and S. Patrick Street, then turn right onto S. Payne Street. Turn left onto Roundhouse Lane, then turn right onto S. West Street. Take the first left onto Jamieson Street. At the corner of Jamieson Street and Holland Lane, turn left onto the sidewalk at the southeast corner of the intersection, and bike on the sidewalk next to the African-American Heritage Park. Stop at the plaza that contains **Truths That Rise From the Roots – Remembered**.



2. Truths That Rise From the Roots – Remembered

Stopping point: by the sculpture.



Jerome Meadows' inspirational sculpture, titled "**Truths That Rise From the Roots – Remembered**," is the central point in the African-American Heritage Park. The bronze memorial sculpture is in the form of three stylized trees, etched with African American names and accomplishments. The trees rise 12 to 15 feet above the Black Baptist Cemetery established 100 years ago.

The flat surfaces of each tree are etched with information on people and groups to acknowledge religious, cultural, social, and professional accomplishments. The names and

images are an acknowledgment of some of those who served as the foundation, the builders, the source and substance of this historic and vibrant community. Meadows also included a raised grave mound in bronze with limestone supports. The trees and mound are in a circle surrounded by gray stone. He has stated that his concept for the sculpture "draws from the immediate environment of the cemetery and surrounding site." The tree branches suggest "organic and expressive movement."

This work speaks to Meadows' philosophy: "As an artist I enjoy opportunities to have my work exist as an integral part of a collective effort whose focus addresses the myriad issues pertinent to humanity. In spite of the prevailing notions of art as elitist, it is, in truth, an inherent part of the broad fabric of human involvement..."

Sources: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic/info/default.aspx?id=42988>;
<https://www.slaverymonuments.org/items/show/1183>.

Continue south on the sidewalk for about a half block, then use the curbcut on your right to make a u-turn and head north on Holland Lane. Turn left onto Jamieson Avenue. Go around John Carlyle Square and continue on Jamieson Avenue. Continue straight onto Mill Road. Turn left to stay on Mill Road, then

*turn right onto Eisenhower Avenue. Turn right at Cameron Parke Place and stop at **Angels of the Americas** in the plaza in front of the office building.*

3. Angels of the Americas

Stopping point: in the plaza with the statues.

“We always thought [art] was an important ingredient to set our buildings apart,” said Bob Buchanan of Buchanan Partners, the development company that built the office building. The Eisenhower Avenue location posed a special challenge, said Bob’s wife, Sharon, who works as an arts consultant. It sits across from the depression that is Cameron Run, with the roar of the Beltway beyond that. It needed something vertical to keep the building’s occupants from feeling that they were entering a well.

That’s where Be Gardiner came in. When the North Carolina sculptor was approached by the Buchanans, he remembered a large piece of pink marble he had seen in an abandoned Tennessee quarry (the same marble that clads the exterior of the National Gallery of Art buildings, by the way). That became the tallest of the three pieces. Each shows a draped figure set with a face sculpted from white Carrara marble.

He said what interested him about the Eisenhower Avenue sculpture is the way it combines different styles. “When you drive in the driveway, you see the abstraction,” he said: flat expanses of stone with rough drapery. “When you see that it’s clear these are faces, it’s a figurative thing.”

Gardiner later left sculpture and became a Zen monk. “I think it’s safe to say that the desire to somehow get the transcendent was as operative then as now,” he said. “It was just a different way of looking for that same thing.”

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/what-are-the-three-moody-figures-on-eisenhower-avenue-trying-to-say/2013/03/16/0f741e20-8c0f-11e2-9f54-f3fdd70acad2_story.html.

*Continue west on Eisenhower Avenue. Turn right into the parking lot for Great Waves Waterpark. Just beyond the ticket booth, there’s a **mural of a beach scene**. Retrace your path out of the parking lot and continue west on Eisenhower Avenue. At the entrance to the animal shelter, hop onto the sidewalk trail that runs on the north side of Eisenhower Avenue. Just before the bridge, turn right to join the Holmes Run Trail. Continue on the Holmes Run Trail. Instead of following the official detour across the bridge to Ben Brenman Park, stay on the trail and keep the playground on your left. Continue to the end of the trail and then go through the parking lot, toward the Shell station. Press the pedestrian beg button to activate the traffic light so that you can cross Duke Street. On the north sidewalk of Duke Street, next to the bus stop, you’ll see a wrapped **traffic control box**.*



4. Traffic Control Box Wraps on Duke Street

Stopping point: next to the traffic control box

In 2015, Alexandria's Public Art Program invited artists and artist teams residing and working in Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina and Tennessee to submit their qualifications for the Traffic Control Box Vinyl Wrap Public Art Project. Two artists and one artist team were selected to design wraps for 12 traffic control boxes located at intersections along Duke Street in Alexandria. The wraps cover all four sides and the top of each box.

The traffic box wrap at Foxchase was created by Anthony Palliparambil, Jr., who notes, "I have long been interested in exploring the role of technology in the arts, and finding a bridge between the two. With a swipe of the finger, a simple photograph can be transformed into a vintage-hued snapshot of life, posted for millions to view, like, share, and comment on. Borrowing this approach to fast art, my works were created entirely from original photographs of Alexandria, manipulated and transformed digitally. My work aims to reimagine seemingly ordinary visual glimpses of day-to-day life and transform them into fantastic, otherworldly explorations of color, light, line, and memory. The original source material for my designs in this project are varied – images of City Hall, the river, even photographs of the interesting architectural details found throughout the city all served as jumping off points. I wanted to create works that were directly inspired by the vibrant community and effervescent pace and quality of life only found in Alexandria. I hope these works will serve as colorful, activated moments along the Duke Street corridor and remind the passersby to look for beauty in the most unexpected places."



Sources: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/PublicArt>;
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/arts/info/default.aspx?id=84655>.

*Head west along the northside sidewalk of Duke Street, then turn right to rejoin the Holmes Run Trail.
Look up to see **Flock**.*

5. Flock

Stopping point: pull off alongside the trail.

At the beginning of 2021, the City of Alexandria invited artists from Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia to create original, temporary artworks along trails to provide a sense of respite, discovery, and fun during the dark, cold winter months for the hundreds of people who use these trails every day.

For this Winter Passages project, three artists were selected to install public art works along three of Alexandria's trails: Holmes Run Trail, Potomac Yard Trail, and Four Mile Run Trail. Installations will be in place through May 2021.



Flock, by artist Cristina Fletcher, consists of about 100 polycarbonate birds hung from trees along the Holmes Run Trail. Fletcher's birds are made primarily of laser-cut polycarbonate and hung with safety wire, casting colorful shadows on the trail.

"The goal of this particular public art is to bring joy and delight using color and natural light to the people that use the trail," Fletcher said in an Instagram post. "The birds are 'sponsored' with names, messages, memorials, mantras, inside jokes, and well-wishes from folks that donated, then hung from the trees as a group in order for us all to 'flock together' even while we still have to be apart."

Sources: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/arts/info/default.aspx?id=119461>;
<https://alexandrialivingmagazine.com/lifestyle/art-adorns-alexandria-trails-in-new-public-art-initiative/>.

Continue along the Holmes Run Trail, then turn right toward Holmes Run Parkway. Ride on Holmes Run Parkway for one block, then turn right onto N. Pegram Street. Continue on N. Pegram Street, climb the hill, then turn left onto N. Pickett Street. At the traffic light, turn left onto Seminary Road. Turn right onto Library Lane and stop in the library parking lot.

6. Confluent Threads, future public art at the Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library

Stopping point: in the library parking lot.

The City of Alexandria's Public Art Program in collaboration with Alexandria Library is commissioning an original, permanent public artwork for the Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library (Burke Branch Library), a key community venue serving almost 100,000 residents and visitors in Alexandria's west end. The artwork is expected to be in the Seminary Road side of the library, making the library more visible from the road and serving as a landmark for the west end. The project budget is \$100,000, and funding was allocated in FY18.

In Spring 2020, the City contracted with Project One Studio, a digital design and fabrication studio based in Indianapolis, Indiana to design, fabricate, and install a new artwork at the library. In February 2021, the Alexandria Commission for the Arts voted to approve the concept proposal. Titled Confluent Threads, the artwork celebrates the rich diversity and sense of community found throughout Alexandria's West End. Individual "threads" are woven together in the same way the community is woven together. The fabric becomes richer and stronger as individuals engage and interact with each other. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the installation date is still to be determined.

Source: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/arts/info/default.aspx?id=109266>.

Continue on Library Lane, then take the first left to go through the parking lot. Head toward Kenmore Avenue, then turn right onto Kenmore Avenue. Continue onto N. Van Dorn Street. Turn left onto Menokin Drive, then turn right onto the King Street service road. At the traffic light, turn left onto Dearing Street and cross King Street. Continue onto S. Wakefield Street. Turn right onto S. 34th Street. At the traffic circle, take the second exit onto S. Stafford Street. Turn right onto S. 32nd Road/S. Stafford Street, then turn right onto S. 32nd Road. Cross N. Quaker Lane at the traffic light and continue onto Preston Road. Turn left onto Valley Drive, then right onto Tennessee Avenue. Turn left onto Old Dominion Boulevard. At

the W. Glebe Road intersection, press the pedestrian beg button to activate the traffic light. Turn left onto W. Glebe Road, then immediately turn right onto Old Dominion Boulevard. Turn left onto Notabene Drive, then continue straight onto Four Mile Road. At the traffic light, turn left onto Mt. Vernon Avenue, then immediately turn right into the parking lot behind the Four Mile Run Conservatory Center. Stop there to talk about **Rock Cairn**.

7. Rock Cairn

Stopping point: parking lot behind the Four Mile Run Conservatory Center.



Rock Cairn, by Alexander Rudd, was installed along the Four Mile Run Trail as part of the Winter Passages project but removed due to vandalism in April 2021.

A cairn is a man-made pile of stones used for memorials or landmarks. In this series, three cairns were created to represent activities that happen along Four Mile Run Trail.

The first cairn was a recreation cairn with stacked rocks alternating with items representing sporting equipment. The second cairn represented the different species of wildlife found along the run. The third cairn included forms one might find on an afternoon stroll through the park, including architectural elements like the cubic lanterns

lining the trail, picnic items, a dog leash/collar, and a cell phone.

Source: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/arts/info/default.aspx?id=119461>.

Continue through the parking lot and join the Four Mile Run Trail, heading west. Turn left to take the Four Mile Run Wetlands Trail, site of the former installation for Rock Cairn, then continue onto the Four Mile Run Trail. At the traffic light, cross Richmond Highway and continue into the Potomac Yard shopping center. Follow the road as it curves right behind the stores. Make the first left, then turn right onto Potomac Avenue. At Swann Avenue, use the traffic light to turn left across Potomac Avenue and the Potomac Yard Trail. Turn right and make your way to **Life of a Seed**, the temporary art installation north of the playground.

8. Life of a Seed

Stopping point: by the artwork.

Life of a Seed, by Thomas Sterner, is a temporary installation that is part of the City's Winter Passages project. It is made of stainless steel and cast concrete.

The sculpture represents hope, transformation, growth, perseverance, strength, and purpose. The piece is meant to be experienced in several ways: viewed from a distance at a scale appropriate to the site, enticing the



viewer to investigate more closely, and contemplate the transformation of a seed from germination to sprout, flower and seed formation, continuing the cycle of life. Each sculpture can be appreciated individually for color, texture, gesture, and shadow.

Artist's statement: "Portray thoughtful and humorous ideas using varied techniques, often with unusual juxtaposition of image, action or title to prompt the viewer's personal interpretation. The goal of his art is to make people smile and think."

Sources: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/arts/info/default.aspx?id=119461>;
<https://sternerartfactory.com/Asset.asp?AssetID=71800&AKey=4WXEJ7WF>.

*Retrace your path back to the traffic light at Swann Avenue. Cross at the traffic light and continue south on Potomac Avenue. At the intersection with Main Line Boulevard, turn left and then hop onto the sidewalk at the southwest corner of the intersection. Ride on the sidewalk on the south side of Potomac Avenue, then turn left onto the bridge going over the train tracks. At the south end of the bridge, make a sharp left onto Slater Lane (watch out for turning cars). Take the first right onto Powhatan Street. Turn right onto N. Columbus Street. Turn left onto Wythe Street, then look to your right to see **Come Together**.*

9. Come Together

Stopping point: sidewalk in front of the mural.

In the days after George Floyd's killing at the hands of Minneapolis police officers, T.C. Williams rising junior Shelby Bavin felt frustrated. She wanted to show her support for the Black Lives Matter movement in a tangible way, but social media felt insufficient. Instead, she began thinking about a mural on Alexandria's streets – one that would send the message of unity that she wanted to convey.

Bavin, 16, asked a few business owners if they'd let her use their building as a canvas. Then, the coxswain for the T.C. Williams rowing team thought of Jaime Rubini. Rubini, who owns Rubini's Jewelers on the corner of Wythe and Washington streets, is a coach for the T.C. rowing team, and the jewelry store, which sells rowing-themed jewelry, is located blocks from the boathouse. Rubini and his daughter, Joanna, also a former rower, agreed to the plan.



Bavin and her friend Caroline Mitchell, 17, a rising senior and fellow aspiring artist, got to work. Mitchell, who visited the Sistine Chapel in Italy last summer, landed on an idea with echoes of the famed chapel's ceiling - a black hand and a white hand, reaching toward one another, fingers pointed just as they are in Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam," with a spark electrifying what could happen if they united. Purple flowers, painted on to look like they are climbing up the wall, show, "there's room to grow in our society," said Bavin.

“They just did a beautiful job,” said Joanna Rubini, who worked closely with the girls to approve the design. She wanted the hands to touch. The girls resisted - they wanted to show progress still needed to be made – and finally, they found a compromise. Now, a spark hovers over both fingers, showing the potential of what unity could bring.

It took eight days for the project to be completed, days when the girls climbed scaffolding. To raise money for it, the girls designed and sold “Black Lives Matters” T-shirts that they had designed, with the proceeds going to scaffolding and supplies.

Jaime Rubini said he was impressed by the initiative both girls showed in making the project come to fruition. “They were go getters,” he said. Customers have noticed: “They will come in and they love it, and they want to know who did it,” he said.

Source: <https://www.tcwcrew.org/home>.

*Continue east on Wythe Street and cross N. Washington Street. Turn left onto N. St. Asaph Street. At the intersection with Madison Street, turn right and hop onto the sidewalk along the south side of Madison Street. Stop halfway down the block at **City Sweep**.*

10. City Sweep

Stopping point: sidewalk in front of the artwork.

City Sweep, by Bernard Collin, consists of three stainless steel panels, each measuring 12 feet high by 8 feet wide. The artwork depicts iconic images and cultural hot spots of historical Alexandria, as well as nearby Washington DC.



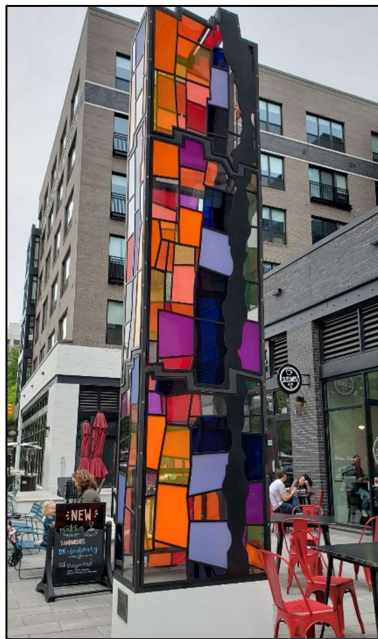
Here’s how the artist describes his artistic process: “For as long as I can remember, I’ve been drawn to metal. Growing up in the fertile countryside of Burgundy, France, on my family’s 500 year old estate La Boutière, I was first inspired to give form to my creations, as if an integral part of nature. First with the torch, welder and forge, then with the modern marvel, the electric plasma cutter, which enables me to express myself in fine detail. I opt only to use a hand-held plasma cutter. Having a computer duplicate my design is much too impersonal. It is important that every detail be my own, cut with precision and love. Each piece has its own personality.”

Sources: <http://www.bernardcollin.com/project-for-old-town-alexandria-virginia.html>;
<http://www.bernardcollin.com/about-uscontact.html>.

*Continue east on Madison Street. Turn left onto N. Pitt Street. Turn left onto Montgomery Street and hop onto the sidewalk along the north side of Montgomery Street to see **Plinth**.*

11. Plinth

Stopping point: sidewalk in front of the artwork.



Plinth, by Tom Fruin, is a mosaic pillar at the entrance to The Gables, the retail and rental apartment community located at 525 Montgomery Street and built in 2019. It was installed by the building's developer as part of its community benefits contributions tied to development approvals.

Plinth is an abstract map of the Alexandria Canal that ran just north of Montgomery Street from the Potomac River on its way to Washington DC. The sculptor, Tom Fruin, is a contemporary American artist whose work is represented in many national and international museums and collections including the Museum Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf, Germany; the Richard J. Massey Foundation for Arts and Sciences in New York, NY; and the Buenos Aires Design Center in Argentina. He is especially known for his work with reclaimed and scavenged materials, like the 2012 Watertower built of Plexiglas and steel, and located in Brooklyn.

Source: <https://www.oldtownnorthalliance.com/news/tom-fruin-sculpture-is-a-significant-donation-to-public-art-in-old-town-north>.

*Continue west on Montgomery Street. Turn right onto First Street, then left onto N. Pitt Street. Turn right onto Second Street, then right onto N. Royal Street, then left onto First Street. Continue onto Canal Center Plaza and stop in the roundabout to see **Promenade Classique**.*

12. Promenade Classique

Stopping point: plaza by the fountain.

Instead of settling for the usual hunk of decorative sculpture, the developers of the Canal Center office complex convened Washington's leading experts on contemporary art -- among them James Demetrian of the Hirshhorn and Jack Cowart of the National Gallery -- to see how advantage might best be taken of its spectacular waterfront site, one block east of North Fairfax Street.

The result: the first large-scale American commission for the renowned French sculptural team of Anne and Patrick Poirier. Working with landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg, the Poiriers devised a succession of neoclassical sculptural elements, starting with a bronze lightning bolt, which, except in winter, launches the flow of water. From there, the water makes its way past gargantuan sculptural fragments, through a reflecting pool and into a heap of "ruins" under a waterfall at the river's edge.



The Poiriers have long specialized in evoking a sense of the ancient past by creating miniature archaeological ruins. Here, on a vastly different scale, they seem to toy with the notion of history, conjuring an awareness both of Alexandria's age and its relative youth -- relative, that is, to that of ancient Greece. The piece then draws the viewer's eye across the river to contemplate the neoclassical aspirations and pretensions of the even younger city of Washington.

Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/magazine/1990/12/23/promenade-classique/c5915e25-9722-4291-b29c-3c0309bdc4f1/>.

Retrace your path back to Canal Center Plaza, then turn left onto N. Fairfax Street. Turn left onto Queen Street, then take the first right onto N. Lee Street. Just before you reach Cameron Street, stop at the Pedego store on your right.

13. Mural at Pedego

Stopping point: sidewalk in front of the store.

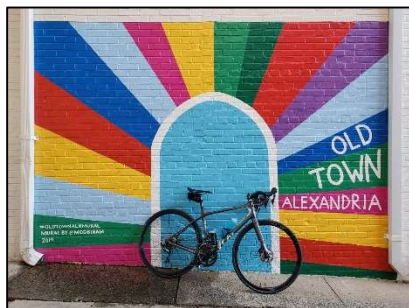
From Todd Ketch, store owner: "My daughter Elise created the mural. It has a hidden bicycle in it. It was inspired by the 8-bit videogame Tron, and if you take a picture from a specific angle, it makes it look like anything in front of it is floating on a flat grid."

*Continue south on N. Lee Street for one block. Turn right into Ramsey Alley and stop at the **Old Town Alexandria mural**.*



14. Old Town Alexandria mural

Stopping point: in front of the mural.



Painted by muralist and Alexandria-based artist Meg Biram, the mural includes a rainbow of colors and text reading "Old Town Alexandria." A bench directly in front of the artwork provides visitors and residents the perfect place to pose for a photo.

The mural was funded by members of the Old Town Boutique District, ALX Community and other area sponsors. OTBD announced the installation of the mural on July 9, 2019, and Biram painted it shortly after.

The project's purpose is to engage visitors through interactive art that portrays the character of Old Town and its passion for inclusivity, according to a news release.

Source: <https://alextimes.com/2019/07/murals/>.