

DOWNTOWN ART ESSENTIALS

SELF-GUIDED PUBLIC ART TOUR

presented by



Thank you your interest in exploring art in Downtown Huntsville! This **Downtown Art Essentials** guide is a resource by the City of Huntsville's Public Art Program. This self-guided tour invites you to explore a curated selection of some of Downtown Huntsville's most noteworthy works of art in public places.



This tour will take most participants 1-2 hours to complete and is best-suited for **teens and adults**. For a more engaging experience for younger children, please check out our family-oriented self-guided tour, **The Amazing Space Race**.

While we recommend following the order presented in this guide for an efficient route, feel free to begin your journey at any point and discover the art at your own pace.

This guide has been provided as a simplified resource to facilitate the tour for some participants. If you prefer, you may utilize an Internet enabled device by navigating to this tour on the Public Art Archive. The Public Art Archive also includes extra details about each artwork on the tour, including artist biographies and additional images.

Travelers II (2022)

David Dahlquist and Matt Niebuhr | RDG Studios



Start on the south side of Big Spring Park across from the AC Hotel

Travelers II is a dynamic sculpture that captures the essence of movement and connection. The arcs of this piece create a sense of journey and exploration, inviting you to consider the paths we take and the connections we forge. The name 'travelers' was intended by the artists to denote all forms of travel as it relates to Huntsville, from the earliest indigenous travelers that were attracted to the big spring here at the park, to innovation from our city that has helped bring humans to space.

Another nod to the word 'traveler', the orbital shape of the



benches is inspired by ring ‘travelers’ used to spin cotton. Such ‘travelers’ similarly-shaped grommets may be found embedded in the floorboards of historic textile mills in the area. Lighting is situated around both the benches and sculpture alike, creating interplays of shadow and light at both day and night. As the artists state: “Our vision is grounded in Huntsville’s history while celebrating the city’s trajectory into the future.”



Continue your tour by walking east on Williams Avenue. For a five-minute detour to see *Travelers I*, the companion piece to *Travelers II*, turn right onto Joseph E. Lowery Blvd. and proceed to Community Foundation Park near Redstone Federal Credit Union.

Travelers I, installed in 2021, is also by David Dalquist and Matt Niebuhr and is located within the park, a space suitable for small community events.



Eclipse (2017) - Glenn Dasher



East on Williams, left on Church Street to the Huntsville Museum of Art

Glenn Dasher’s *Eclipse*, located outside the Huntsville Museum of Art, is a surreal sculpture that invites viewers to engage with its forms and perhaps consider altered or improbable conceptual contexts. As an outdoor piece situated near the museum, it contributes to the city’s public art landscape, aiming to spark curiosity and reflection among passersby. Dasher, a sculptor with a background in academia, often creates works that can be described as playful or iconoclastic monuments, hinting at deeper meanings beneath their immediate appearance.

Gracelyn Rose (2021) - Josh Coté



Huntsville Museum of Art

Gracelyn Rose welcomes visitors to the Huntsville Museum of Art. The artwork is a wire hare in a ballet arabesque atop a recycled pipe sphere. This 11-foot tall artwork, a four-year labor of love, showcases Coté’s unique wire-weaving technique, transforming linear drawing into three-dimensional form. Its coppery patina, reminiscent of earth and cosmos, provides a striking contrast to the hare’s graceful pose, celebrating both visual and performing arts, thanks to the generous support of Joyce Griffin.





The Little Lion of Big Spring Park (1900)

J.F. Hummel & Sons



200 Church Street - Huntsville Big Spring Park East, at the waterfall on the east side of the park.

This little lion may not seem like a ‘big’ choice to include in our tour, but as arguably the oldest known piece of public art in Downtown Huntsville, this small sculpture earns its place as an essential choice to include in our Downtown Art Essentials tour.

Marble worker J.F. Hummel is believed to have donated the sculpture in 1900 in honor of Big Spring Park’s opening, but then at some point the lion went missing. In 1990, crews found him submerged in the Big Spring, with no idea who put him there or how long he’d been underwater. Historic Huntsville Foundation restored the piece and reinstalled back in the park, where he’s sat ever since, serving as a traditional photo opportunity for a ‘lion calvary’ of young children who enjoy sitting astride his back.

Welcome to Huntsville (2016) - Gracie Lennox



200 Church Street, Big Spring Park East, on the way to Spraggins Street.

Gracie Lennox’s wonderful welcome may be simple, but it’s also one of the most photographed pieces of public art in Huntsville, and for obvious reasons!

The postcard-like art comes with its own hashtag, #hellohsv, creating a great photo op for Huntsville visitors.



Koi Mural (2016) - Dustin Timbrook



Walk up Spraggins Street and turn right on Spring St. (Participants unable to navigate stairs will be able to access a stair-free ascent by first crossing Spring Street).



Artist Dustin Timbrook led a team of volunteer artists to create the this koi artwork, a striking example of “smart public art” designed to engage and inspire. Downtown Huntsville Inc. unveiled the artwork as part of its “Something Interesting Downtown” program in 2016. The work utilizes a forced perspective technique to render the iconic koi fish of Big Spring Park in three-dimensional detail when viewed from a specific vantage point.

This project, made possible through collaboration with the city and building owner Anne O’Shea, aims to showcase Huntsville’s creative talent and encourage further innovative public art installations.

Light Tree (2016) Christopher Fennell



Ascend the hill and turn left on Jefferson Street. Continue north for approximately five minutes.

Chris Fennell's "Light Tree," a 26-foot sculpture across from the Avenue Apartments, features 60 illuminated bulbs shaped like a tree. It symbolizes the city's diverse community, with each bulb representing an individual contributing to the collective light.

The artist intends the "Light Tree" to represent the diverse population of Huntsville, where individual differences coalesce into a unified community, symbolized by the collective light emanating from the tree's bulbs. Like a city that provides refuge and belonging, the tree serves as a metaphor for protection and shared identity.



At this point, you can optionally extend your tour north on Jefferson to the intersection of Jefferson and Lewter's Way to see *Light Arch*, a complementary artwork to *Light Tree*.



Celestial Symphony (2019)

Jessie Andrews (Honey Blood)



Backtrack by heading south on Jefferson Street and then turn left on Holmes, half a block east.

Celestial Symphony transforms the nondescript back wall of an insurance agency in Downtown Huntsville into colorful space scape.

This large-scale artwork depicts a creative take on a solar system as envisioned by the artist. Jessie Andrews collaborated with Drop Metal, a local metal design and fabrication company, to create the mural's striking aluminum planets, which are integrated into the painted backdrop.



After viewing *Celestial Symphony*, turn right and walk south on Washington Street to continue your tour. As you pass the Downtown Huntsville, Inc. office, look back to see Micah Gregg's *Tunneling to Callisto*, a small metal wall piece. Micah (Drop Metal) is the same local artist that assisted Jessie Andrews with the aluminum planets for *Celestial Symphony*!



This Girl Can (2020) - Kim Radford

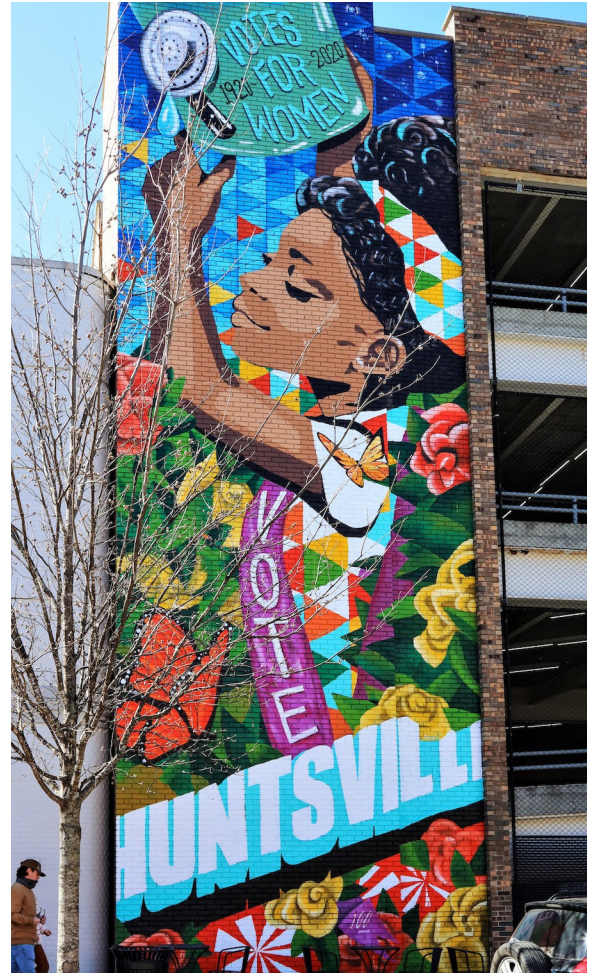


Continue walking south on Washington Street until reaching 'This Girl Can' on your right.

This Girl Can is a vibrant three-story artwork on Washington Street that commemorates the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote. Created by Nashville-based artist Kim Radford, the mural is a powerful celebration of female empowerment, blending historical context with artistic interpretation.

Sponsored by The Women's Economic Development Council, Arts Huntsville, and other community organizations, the artwork features an African American girl watering a camellia garden, wearing a "votes for women" sash, and holding a watering can marked with "100." Radford incorporates folk art, pop art, and textile patterns, reflecting her Tennessee roots, while addressing the historical struggle for women's suffrage, particularly in the South.

The artwork's message, "Vote Huntsville," serves as a call to civic engagement, acknowledging the long and arduous journey towards women's full citizenship and the ongoing importance of participation in democracy.



Courthouse Square - Various Artists



Continue walking south to Northside Square, near the Madison County Courthouse, to visit the four sculpture pads, one on each side of the courthouse.

The SPACES Sculpture Trail, a public initiative launched in 2010, once transformed Huntsville and Madison County with collection of sculpture pads temporarily featuring works by artists from across the country.



While the SPACES HSV app and trail in its original form are no longer active, remnants of this ambitious project can still be found around the Madison County Courthouse. Four sculpture pads, originally part of the trail, remain here, showcasing the legacy of SPACES. Managed by Arts Huntsville, three of these pads continue to host rotating temporary exhibits, offering ongoing opportunities to experience diverse sculptural art.

Notably, the fourth pad, located on West Side Square, now permanently houses *Woman with 7 Birds* by Russell Whiting, a piece added to the City of Huntsville's permanent collection. Though the full SPACES experience has evolved, these remaining installations continue to enrich the public art landscape of Downtown Huntsville, a testament to the trail's original mission to engage and enliven the community.

The City Hall Collection (2024) - Various Artists

 To conclude the Downtown Art Essentials tour, walk towards Fountain Circle from South Side or West Side Square, and approach Huntsville City Hall.



Our final 'Essential' art experience downtown focuses on the comprehensive 'Our Civic Canvas' collection at Huntsville's new City Hall.

This building, designed by architect Mark Coyle, marks a significant milestone by serving as the city's first capital project to fully meet the 'percent-for-art' goals recommended by the Public Art Master Plan.

Since its opening in May 2024, City Hall has showcased 'Our Civic Canvas,' a groundbreaking collection within Huntsville's Public Art Program. Featuring the work of ten artists across a diverse range of media, this collection represents a first-of-its-kind initiative for any municipality in Alabama.

'Our Civic Canvas' fosters a dynamic and inclusive environment for both residents and visitors by integrating art into the very fabric of our city's seat of governance. This integration cultivates a deeper appreciation for artistic expression and celebrates the vibrant cultural tapestry and natural environment of Huntsville and North Alabama.

Three of the ten artworks within the collection are readily accessible to the public, either through street view or by entering the building. Shuli Sadés *Watermarks*, a digital glass collage featuring notable city landmarks, is installed on the main lobby wall. Cliff Garten's *AquaLapis*, a symbolic representation of the local mountains and the Big Spring, is suspended over the Grand Staircase, and Ben Butler's *Lay of the Land*, an artistic topographical map of the local landscape, is located at the first-floor security entrance.

To fully experience 'Our Civic Canvas,' we encourage you to explore the entire collection on the Public Art Archive. Additionally, you may sign up for a free public tour on select dates through the Arts Huntsville website.

