



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS: TEACHING MURAL ARTIST

THE ROCKWELL MUSEUM: 2026 ALLEY ART PROJECT

Application Deadline Extended: September 30, 2025

Artist Finalist Interviews: Mid-October, 2025

Artist Notification: November 14, 2025

Artist Agreement Signed by: December 1, 2025

Project Manager:

Amy Ruza

Youth and Visitor Engagement Educator

ruzaa@rockwellmuseum.org

Alley Art Project Scope:

[The Rockwell Museum](#), a Smithsonian Affiliate, located in Corning, New York, is seeking to hire an experienced mural artist to work with the Museum's Youth and Visitor Engagement Educator and Corning-Painted Post [High School Learning Center](#) (HSLC) students to plan, design, and paint a public mural. The artist must have teaching and mural design experience, preferably direct experience working with teens. The artist co-teaches with the Rockwell Educator and Project Manager and takes a leadership role in developing the concept; creating a cohesive mural design that both represents the students' artwork and honors the artist's creative ideas. The development of the mural design is a collaborative and creative process that uses a work of art in the Museum's collection as inspiration and is connected to The Rockwell's annual theme.

The 2026 annual theme will be *Rockwell Re/framed* as we embark on celebrating The Rockwell's 50th anniversary in addition to America's 250th commemoration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This provides an opportunity to reimagine a work in the collection, re-center the evolving American experience through storytelling, and reframe perspectives as we look to the future.

The selected Teaching Mural Artist is required to: sign a contract with The Rockwell Museum; attend planning meetings (remote as needed); attend 10 weekly mural design classes

(remote/hybrid); participate in a mural design unveiling event and reception; paint the mural onsite with students; and attend the community ribbon cutting ceremony in August 2026. This is an eight-month commitment. The teaching artist will be onsite for approximately 10 days in August, and onsite for one mural design class and the student reception (depending on artist location). See Artist Guidelines and Project Dates & Timeline for details.

Program Goals:

- Feature youth collaborating with a professional, teaching mural artist
- Complete The Rockwell Museum's 18th Alley Art Project mural in Corning
- Uplift public art projects and overall community aesthetics in Corning
- Demonstrate the importance of community collaboration: The Rockwell Museum, Teaching Mural Artist, the Southeast Steuben County Library, the High School Learning Center, and the City of Corning

Teaching Mural Artist Guidelines:

The artist is responsible for creating a visual framework to allow the vision of the students to be clearly recognized in a professional aesthetic design that fulfills the project goals and complements the building wall. It is essential for the artist to thoughtfully depict and honor the students' artwork and ideas in the final mural design, while also creating a design that is representative of their own unique vision inspired by The Rockwell's collection and connection to the featured work of art. Striking a balanced blend of the artist's original art integrated with the student artwork in the final design is vitally important.

The artist is responsible for creating a preliminary design to share with students for feedback. The artist will then produce a final mural design for submission to the Museum and partners in April 2026 for review and approval. Modifications to the design may be requested. The hired artist must be willing to make adjustments and changes to the design in response to input and feedback from Rockwell's Executive Director, Education and Curatorial staff, the HSLC, the Southeast Steuben County Library, and the City of Corning for approval.

Once the design is approved by all parties, the artist will work with The Rockwell to complete on-site preparations for painting with students in August. The artist is then responsible for the execution and completion of the mural with students within the given time frame.

Artist Honorarium:

The artist will receive an honorarium of \$6,800 in 2026. The payment will be broken into three installments to be paid as follows: 25% in January, 25% in May upon approval of the mural design, and the remaining 50% in August upon completion of the mural painting.

In addition, The Rockwell will provide class and mural painting materials, cover the cost of travel and lodging. A meal stipend will also be provided during the week of painting onsite in August 2026.

Building Location:

The 2026 mural will be at the [Southeast Steuben County Library](#), 300 Nasser Civic Center Plaza Suite 101, Corning, NY 14830. The mural will be on the North facing façade, a poured concrete wall of the library staff parking lot. This site is adjacent to the downtown Civic Center Plaza, visible from a main thoroughfare, and across from Fallbrook Park. There is a pedestrian walkway to other nearby murals in Corning from past years of the Alley Art Project.

Wall Dimensions: The wall is 69' 6" long x 11' 4" height.



Wall Material: Poured concrete. The surface is lightly textured. The wall will be primed prior to painting and the artist can request a primer color after the mural design is submitted and approved.



About The Alley Art Project:



The [Alley Art Project](#) is a unique educational mural program that connects local students to both The Rockwell collection and their community at large. The Museum has partnered with the Corning-Painted Post High School Learning Center (HSLC) since the program's inception in 2010, working with youth to beautify public spaces. The

program has included many organizations during its lifespan, including the Laura Richardson Houghton Corning Youth Center (2012), and more recently SUNY Corning Community College (2022, 2024). The Alley Art Project embraces start-to-finish, project-based learning initiatives and the idea that public art has the power to bring people together, encourage conversation, and ignite the imagination.

Each mural project is inspired by art in The Rockwell's collection and enables students to meaningfully contribute to the aesthetics of their community. Students are guided by artists and educators throughout the creative process by questioning ideas relevant to the project theme and selected objects. In a mural design course, students research and study art, learn about symbolism and design, and explore aspects of individual and community identity. This

holistic program prioritizes civic engagement, offering students the opportunity to use the arts for exploration and self-expression, fostering safe dialogue, and developing a stronger sense of self. More information is available at <https://rockwellmuseum.org/alley-art/>.

About The Rockwell Museum, A Smithsonian Affiliate

Located in Corning, New York, The Rockwell Museum is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and tells the story of the evolving American experience through the work of American artists. Founded in 1976, The Rockwell is a community hub showcasing the diversity of American art through its collections, compelling exhibitions, and imaginative programs. Housed in Corning's former historic City Hall, The Rockwell is active in the local community and holds special events and educational programming with area schools. The Museum strives to provoke curiosity, engagement, and reflection on art and the American experience.

Originating with a gift from local business owners and collectors Bob and Hertha Rockwell, the Museum's permanent collection of American art has grown over five decades to comprise approximately 2,400 objects that fall within the broad categories of Native American material culture, American paintings, drawings, and works on paper (circa 1840-1940), illustration, Western art, Modern and Contemporary art (post WWII – present day), sculpture, and photography.

Rockwell Museum Collection Inspiration Artwork:



We invite artists to respond to the pre-selected inspiration artwork for the 2026 mural—[Devan Shimoyama's *Le Mat \(The Fool\)*](#). Museum staff selected this contemporary work in the permanent collection for its colorful media and Tarot-inspired subject matter that make it approachable for teens. The themes of identity, journey, and discovery will be explored with students for the development of a mural design aligned with The Rockwell's signature theme for its 50th anniversary as well as the broader America 250 commemoration.

Devan Shimoyama (b. 1989), *Le Mat*, 2022, oil, Flashe, collage, colored pencil, glitter, fabric, sequins, silk flowers and jewelry on canvas stretched over panel, 84 × 68 in. Clara S. Peck Fund. 2022.17.1

Previous Mural Projects:



Emergence, 2023 mural with Sarah C. Rutherford

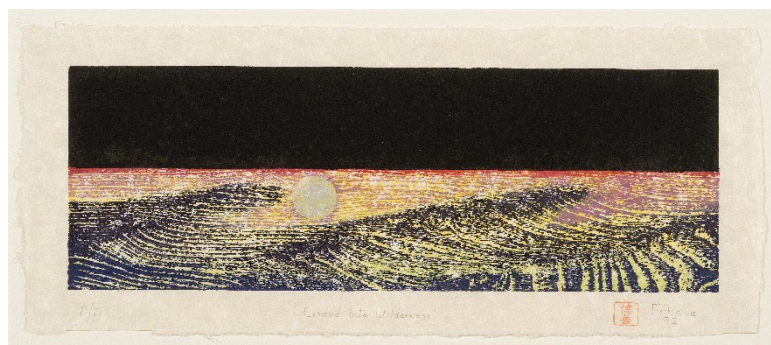


Rockwell Collection inspiration for *Emergence*:

Martine Gutierrez (b. 1989), *Demons, Xochipilli 'The Flower Prince'* (page 91 from Indigenous Woman Magazine), 2018, C-print mounted on Sintra, 39 × 27 in. Clara S. Peck Fund. 2019.7.1.a-b. © Martine Gutierrez



Worlds Collide, 2022 mural with Tori Immerwahr



Rockwell Collection inspiration for *Worlds Collide*:

(left) Rosalie Favell (Cree / Metis, b. 1958), *Navigating by Our Grandmothers (from Plain(s) Warrior Artist)*, 2000, Iris Giclee print, 32 × 32 in. Clara S. Peck Fund. 2000.24

(right) Robin Tichane (1948-2005), *Errand into Wilderness* from the Series *AIDS' Dark Terrain: Twelve Stations from a Yankee Pilgrimage*, 1992, color woodcut print on Inomache Nacre paper. 7¾ x 18 in. Anonymous Gift in memory of Robin Tichane and John Schmidt. 2022.3.3



Life in a Tapestry, 2021 mural with Betsy Z. Casanas



Rockwell Collection
inspiration for *Life in a Tapestry*:

Dine (Navajo) Artist Once Known,
Rug, circa 1884-1895, wool,
aniline dye, 56 ½ x 39 ¾ in. Gift of
Sandra Rockwell Herron.

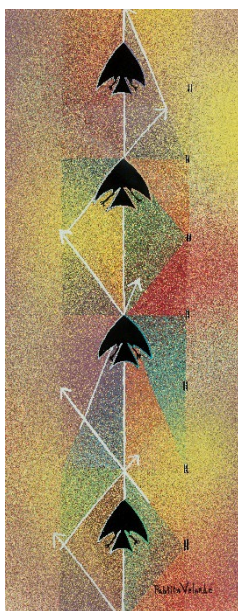


***Earth Mother*, 2020 mural with Rockwell Educators and Tori Immerwahr**

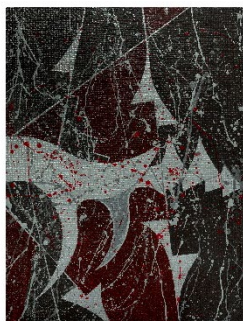


**Rockwell Collection inspiration
for *Earth Mother*:**

(top left) Helen Hardin / Tsa-sah-wee-eh (Kha'po Owingeh (Santa Clara Pueblo), 1943-1984), *Pueblo Pottery Images*, 1973, casein on paper, 14 ½ x 11 ½ in. Gift of W. Keith and Martha J. Bryant. 2018.7.8



(top right) Pablita Velarde / Tse-Tsan (Kha'po Owingeh (Santa Clara Pueblo), 1918-2006), *Untitled: The Unseen Path - Design of the Bat*, circa 1968, casein on paper, 27 ¾ x 15 ¾ in. Gift of W. Keith and Martha J. Bryant. 2018.7.1



(bottom) Margarete Bagshaw (Kha'po Owingeh (Santa Clara Pueblo), 1964-2015), *Thunder and Lightning*, 2012, oil on linen, 25 ¼ x 57 ¾ in. Gift of W. Keith and Martha J. Bryant. 2018.7.14a-c



Transcendence, 2019 mural Bradford Leiby



Rockwell Collection inspiration for *Earth Mother*:

Tammy Garcia (Kha'po Owingeh (Santa Clara Pueblo), b.1969), *Harmony*, 2005, polychrome bronze, mahogany base, 75 x 17 x 17 in. On Loan from James B. Flaws and Marcia D. Weber. L2015.2

Alley Art Project Dates & Timeline:

January 2026: Mural Course Preparations

Two - three virtual meetings with Project Manager. Additional communications through email to confirm course preparations and mural design plan.

- One introductory meeting in early January.
- A minimum of two course planning meetings in January and February.
- 10, two-hour classes will be held from February – April 2026. The artist will work with The Rockwell to schedule these class sessions to take place via Zoom and in person for one class depending on the distance of where the artist resides.
- The artist researches The Rockwell's collection and artist Devan Shimoyama independently, in addition to resources shared by the Museum.
- The artist works with the Project Manager to plan the mural design course for a maximum of 12 high school students. The lesson plan will focus on connecting a student project with the Shimoyama artwork in The Rockwell's collection and to the 2026 Museum annual theme of *Rockwell Re/framed*.
- The student artwork will be part of a student exhibition.
- The artist works with the Project Manager to order and prepare class materials by early February.

February – April 2025: Mural Design Course with Students

Artist attends all classes through Zoom or in person, depending on the artist's location and distance from The Rockwell. Virtual meeting capabilities are available in the Museum's Education Center so that the teaching artist can interact with students while they work on their projects.

- The artist collaborates with the Project Manager in teaching mural design classes to interact, connect, and engage with the student designers.
- During the classes, the Project Manager will present students with a brief history of murals and show past Alley Art Project murals as examples.
- Students will study artwork in The Rockwell's collection and discuss the concept for the mural design connected to Devan Shimoyama's *Let Mat (The Fool)*.
- Students will be guided in the creation of individual works of art inspired by the Shimoyama piece and will be provided with project directions connected to the theme. The artist will incorporate the student art into the final mural design.
- During the classes, students will be encouraged to discuss their ideas and explain the meaning behind their creations. This aids in understanding the students' intentions to integrate their artwork into the cohesive mural design.

Early April 2025: Mural Draft

One meeting with the Project Manager is held to discuss the overall design idea and review the student artwork connected to the artist's vision.

- The artist drafts a mural design.
- The artist is tasked with creating a visually strong and cohesive image that will ultimately complement the building on which it will be painted.
- A final mural design class is held in April with students, during which a mock-up design is presented.
- Students can respond and provide feedback. Students and the teaching artist discuss the overall concept and collective interpretive narrative of the mural design.

Mid-April 2025: Final Mural Design Draft & Approval Process

The final mural design due date will be determined at the beginning of the project. The timing allows for review and approval prior to the student exhibition reception and mural design unveiling to the community.

- The artist incorporates student and Project Manager feedback to produce a completed mural design.
- The Rockwell presents the mural design to Museum leadership and partnering agencies to review and approve; partners include the HSLC school administration, the Southeast Steuben County Library, and the City of Corning.
- The artist may be asked to make alterations to the design and is expected to follow through with requests so that an agreeable design can be determined.
- A digital reproduction of the approved mural design will be included in an Alley Art Project student exhibition that will be on view to Museum visitors from June through August 2026.
- A high-resolution image (300 dpi) of the final approved mural design is required for printing.

June 2025: Student Exhibition Reception & Mural Design Unveiled to the Public

A student exhibition opening reception and mural design unveiling is held in June with students and the community. Reception date and time TBD.

- The mural design is unveiled to the community! The opening event is an opportunity to celebrate and recognize the artist and mural design students for their collaborative artistic creations.

- The teaching artist attends the reception in person if they reside close to The Rockwell. If they are long distance, a pre-recorded video may be shared with the artists' remarks.
- A text panel highlighting the teaching artist, a printed digital rendition of the mural design, and The Rockwell collection art inspiration are included in the exhibition.

July 2025: Mural Materials and Supply Preparations

- The artist works with the Project Manager to prepare painting materials and supplies to be ordered. Nova Color and/or Golden Paints are used - <https://novacolorpaint.com/> and [Golden Artist Colors, Inc. \(goldenpaints.com\)](https://goldenpaints.com/)
- An all-terrain scissor lift will be provided. Only the Teaching Mural Artist, Project Manager, and professional assisting artist will be permitted to operate the lift. Once parked in a position to paint, students are allowed to be on the lift to paint.

August 2025: Mural Painting & Community Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Mural painting will take place over the course of approximately 10 days in August. Dates/Times TBD.

- The artist will work with the Project Manager to outline the mural design on the building façade. This task is usually done at night using a projector to trace the design. The Rockwell has a short-throw projector available.
- Student painting sessions typically occur from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. AND 2 – 5 p.m.
- All HSLC students (25-35 students) will help paint the mural. We typically schedule about 4 – 5 students per shift and invite HSLC graduates to stop by.
- The artist directs the mural painting on site with students daily. They are expected to provide technical instructions and work one-on-one with students to guide them in specific painting techniques.
- A professional assisting mural artist will be hired to work with the artist daily.
- For student painting sessions, the artist arrives one hour early to set up the painting cart and materials and stays an hour late to clean up with the mural assistant.
- The artist is allowed access to the mural site at all times and may work independently to complete the mural by the agreed-upon date and time.
- A ribbon cutting will be held at the mural site to celebrate the completion of the project with the teaching artist present. Date and time TBD (typically held at 5pm).
- Local news stations and public media are invited to attend the community celebration. The Corning Mayor and school district administrators are typically in attendance.

September 2025: Clear Protective Coat & Mural Plaques

- A clear, anti-graffiti protective coat is applied by the assisting artist one week after the mural painting is completed.
- A mural plaque and label are installed on the building wall to recognize the Teaching Mural Artist and student designers. The artist will be asked to review a final draft of the plaque prior to installation.

Sample Plaque:



Please submit the following information to Amy Ruza at ruzaa@rockwellmuseum.org to be considered for the 2026 Teaching Mural Artist position for The Rockwell Museum's Alley Art Project.

For questions or additional information, please contact Amy Ruza by email. Thank you!

- **Resume**
- **Sample images of artwork**
- **Website URL where you are featured as a muralist and/or social media accounts**
- **Answers to the following four questions**

Questions:

- Why do you think you would be a good fit for the Teaching Mural Artist position? (200-word limit)
- Please share your background. What inspires you as an artist? (200-word limit)
- What is your experience working with youth on group projects? (200-word limit)
- What are your strengths in community-based project work? (200-word limit)