



## LIT CITY Public Art Project: Lucille Clifton Sculpture

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SUMMARY INFORMATION

Just Buffalo Literary Center seeks a qualified artist or artist-team to design, fabricate, and install a site-specific sculpture or installation inspired by the poetry of Lucille Clifton to be placed in Buffalo's new Reading Park. The deadline for proposals is **Friday, March 30, 2018 at 5:00 PM.**

All proposals should demonstrate a connection to Clifton's work or be inspired by her writing as a whole. Proposals that incorporate lines of text from her poems are especially welcome. The following poem, "let there be new flowering," was a particular favorite of Clifton's:

let there be new flowering  
in the fields let the fields  
turn mellow for the men  
let the men keep tender  
through the time let the time  
be wrested from the war  
let the war be won  
let love be  
at the end

(SEE Additional resources listed at end)

### Part II: Introduction and Project Description

#### JUST BUFFALO LITERARY CENTER

**Just Buffalo Literary Center** is a not-for-profit organization that believes in the love of reading, the art of writing, and the power of the literary arts to transform individual lives and communities. For more than 40 years, Just Buffalo Literary Center has brought the world's greatest writers to Buffalo, hosted poetry events and readings, and supported the development of young writers. Learn more at [www.justbuffalo.org](http://www.justbuffalo.org)

#### LUCILLE CLIFTON



**Lucille Clifton (1936-2010)** remains one of the most important African-American poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born Thelma Lucille Sayles in Depew on June 27, 1936 to Samuel, a steelworker, and Thelma who worked in a laundry, little Lucille grew up on Purdy Street on Buffalo's East Side. At the age of ten, she began writing her first poems. By sixteen, Lucille graduated from Fosdick-Masten Park High School—now City Honors—and was headed to Howard University on scholarship to study drama.



After two years, she transferred to SUNY-Fredonia and then made her way back to Buffalo where she became involved with a local theatre group and met her husband, Fred Clifton, a philosophy professor at the University at Buffalo.

Lucille and Fred gave birth to four daughters and two sons in Buffalo, living in various locations on Buffalo's East Side. In 1969, Langston Hughes selected some of Clifton's poems to appear alongside the likes of W.E.B. DuBois, Countee Cullen, Richard Wright, and Gwendolyn Brooks in the groundbreaking anthology, *The Poetry of the Negro, 1746-1970*. That same year, Clifton left Buffalo and Baltimore and published her first book of poems, *Good Times* (Random House). By year's end, it was named one of the *New York Times* best books of the year.

For the next four decades, Clifton continued to break barriers and make history. The poet laureate of Maryland from 1975 to 1985, her second collection of poems, *Two-Headed Woman* (1980), earned Clifton her first Pulitzer Prize nomination. Then, in 1988, she made history as the only author to ever receive two Pulitzer Prize nominations in a single year—one for *Good Woman: Poems and a Memoir: 1969-1980* and a second for *Next: New Poems*.

Over the course of her career, Clifton published fourteen books of poetry, a memoir, as well as eighteen books for children, including her much-loved Everett Anderson series. Clifton's awards include an Emmy for her work with Marlo Thomas on the TV special *Free To Be...You and Me*, a Coretta Scott King award for children's literature, the National Book Award for *Blessing the Boats: New and Collected Poems 1988-2000*, and the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize—yet another historical moment as Clifton was the first African-American woman to win this award.

Toni Morrison, who edited Clifton's memoir, writes that the "love readers feel for Lucille Clifton—both the woman and her poetry—is constant and deeply felt.... Accolades from fellow poets and critics refer to her universal human heart; they describe her as a fierce caring female. They compliment her courage, vision, joy—unadorned (meaning 'simple'), mystical, poignant, humorous, intuitive, harsh and loving." And yet, Morrison continues, "I am startled by the silence in these interpretations of her work. There are no references to her intellect, imagination, scholarship or her risk-taking manipulation of language."

At Just Buffalo Literary Center, we wish to address another silence: the fact that so few Western New Yorkers are aware that this leading African-American voice grew up here in Buffalo. Lucille Clifton's life and extraordinary accomplishments can be a source of inspiration and affirmation for all generations of Buffalo residents as well as visitors to the region.

## **LIT CITY: CELEBRATING BUFFALO'S LITERARY LEGACY**

LIT CITY is a public art initiative that highlights Buffalo's renowned literary legacy. For more than a century, Western New York has been home to some of the most important and innovative writers. LIT CITY strives to showcase Buffalo's literary legacy and honor its industrial and steel-making history while further elevating the visibility of poetry and the literary arts—one of our region's



distinctive cultural assets. The proposed sculpture/installation honoring Lucille Clifton will be the most significant piece of art for LIT CITY to date.

Please note that this artwork should focus on the poetry of Lucille Clifton and be inspired by her poetry and her life's work (*not* a statue of Clifton herself).

### **Context & Site Selection**

The location of the piece will be in the newly designated Reading Park, adjacent to Central Library, at the corner of Broadway and Washington Streets in downtown Buffalo, New York. As one of the anchors of the Washington Street "literary corridor," facing Lafayette Square, this location will offer substantial visibility for the sculpture. (See photos in Appendices)

Along with the artwork itself, artists are required to select a location for installation. The Reading Park Design Team has identified five potential locations throughout the site from which artists are welcome to choose (see site map in Appendices). The Design Team sees the location selection as part of the project proposal itself, in order to ensure the piece is context-sensitive to the highest degree. Artists are requested to explain the rationale behind their selection as part of their proposal, as noted in Item 3 in the submission requirements below.

### **Materials**

As the piece will be located in a newly designed park-like area, the artwork must be weather-resistant and made of non-corrosive materials: steel, metal, concrete, stone, etc. If the installation rests on or is embedded into other materials, the proposed elements should have details for maintaining the integrity and weather tightness of all materials (both existing and proposed). Wood shall not be considered. Possible material considerations may include, but are not limited to: steel, other metals, concrete, stone, fiberglass, acrylic.

### **Safety**

As the artwork will be in the public realm, artists are reminded to be cognizant of safety precautions (i.e. able to withstand being climbed on, no sharp edges that might cause injury below the level of 6 feet, etc.)

### **Project Budget**

One work of art will be selected. The budget for the piece will be \$35,000 including the artist's fee and construction materials, delivery, off loading, assembly, foundation/base and installation requirements. Payment for the piece will be done in three installments: \$10,000 at the signing of the contract for the piece; \$20,000 upon approval of the work in progress; and \$5,000 upon installation of the completed sculpture in the park area. **All work must be completed no later than September 30, 2018.**



## Project Schedule

Request for Proposals Available	February 2018
Proposals due at Just Buffalo Literary Center	March 30, 2018 at 5:00 PM
Finalist selected	April 16, 2018
Initial concepts submitted for review	May 16, 2018
Detailed design, materials palette & maquette submitted for review	June 20, 2018
City of Buffalo reviews	June 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts commission</li> <li>• Permitting for installation</li> </ul>	
Approval of design for fabrication to begin	Late June 2018
Installation period	September 2018
Unveiling Ceremony	October 2018

## Part III: Artist Eligibility and Submission Requirements

### ELIGIBILITY

Just Buffalo Literary Center invites artists or collectives of artists who are 21 years or older, from all disciplines and from all regions of the country, who have previous experience in the design, fabrication and installation of monumental-size original works of art (or a design team that includes a professional artist). Just Buffalo Literary Center (JBLC) actively encourages proposals from artists of all races, religions, gender expressions, sexual orientations, and national origins. JBLC reserves the right to determine additional eligibility requirements.

### Submission Requirements

All proposals should include:

1. **Artist Statement or Letter of Interest** (500 words max) indicating aspects of the project that attract the applicant's attention including qualifications based on previous work experience
2. **Résumé or CV** (3 page max) including contact info, education, honors and grants, commissions, exhibitions, and related experience
3. **Written description** of the design intent (500 words max) including rationale for location selection, intended contextual fit with Reading Park design, & selected materials
4. A **visual representation** of the concept sufficient to give an accurate visual impression of the finished work.
5. Detailed **plan for construction and installation** including foundation details with dimensions.
6. **Work samples** (up to 10 jpg images) of recent work as PDF or links to Dropbox or a similar program. Up to two video samples can also be shared with an unlocked Youtube or Vimeo link (preferred but other sites ok); total viewing time per sample will be no more than 5 minutes.
7. **Proposed budget** of how funds will be utilized for materials and installation including a detailed materials list.



## **Deadline**

Complete proposals must be received by **5:00 PM** on **Friday, March 30, 2018**.

Electronic submissions (PDF format) can be emailed to [submissions@justbuffalo.org](mailto:submissions@justbuffalo.org) with "SCULPTURE PROPOSAL" in the subject line.

Hard copy submissions can be mailed to:

**Just Buffalo Literary Center  
468 Washington St., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Buffalo, NY 14203**

## **Selection Process**

A selection committee comprised of representatives from Just Buffalo Literary Center, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, Buffalo Renaissance Foundation Sculptural Art Committee, and independent jurors specializing in the field will review submissions to select the winning proposal.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following selection criteria: Artistic Merit; Public Impact; Demonstrated Experience; Feasibility; and Artist Availability (upon final selection) to begin work promptly and complete fabrication and installation by the September 2018 target date.

## **Funding Support**

Funding for this project is generously provided by Buffalo Renaissance Foundation (BRF) through the Sprit of Buffalo series; the Southwest Airlines Heart of the Community grant program; First Niagara Foundation in partnership with Key Bank and New York State Council on the Arts.

## **Additional Resources**

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/lucille-clifton>

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/lucille-clifton>

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/remembering-lucille-clifton>

**Questions?** Email Just Buffalo Literary Center at: [info@justbuffalo.org](mailto:info@justbuffalo.org) with "sculpture question" in the subject line.

*Just Buffalo Literary Center reserves the right to cancel this request for proposals, to change the scope of work, to accept proposals in whole or in part, and to reject any and all proposals.*

# COMBINED SCHEME

## CUBES, KNOLL, AND CANOPY



# BIRD'S EYE VIEW



## APPENDIX: POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION



As noted in the Context & Site Selection section above, the map to the right and descriptions below depict five potential locations for artwork installation. There is of course a direct relationship between location suitability and the type of installation proposed (sculpture, engraving, etc.).

Location (1) could act as a landmark entry point at the prominent corner of Washington & Broadway.

Locations (2) or (3) could provide a marker for the access point between the upper and lower levels of the Library's outdoor space. This could contribute to addressing the topographical differentiations, which is one of the greatest design challenges of this site.

Location (4) could provide much-needed activation along Clinton Street, better connecting the Southern edge of the site to its surroundings. A piece at this location would need to be installed along the wall of the Library ramp.

Artwork at location (5) would be installed on the northern wall of the Library, anywhere from the westernmost edge to the Ellicott Underpass; this location could offer high visibility from the north, and great improvement to the Library's façade.