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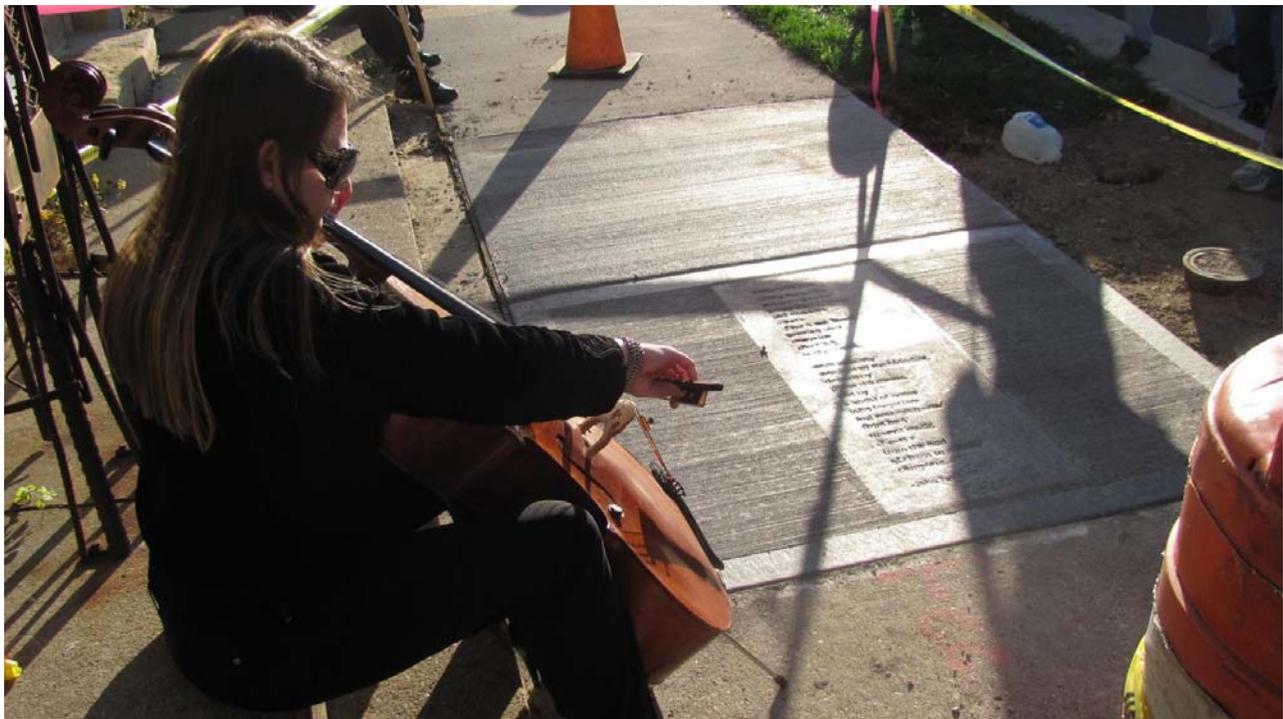


http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/madison-arts-commission-set-to-select-poems-to-be-stamped/article_07697fc4-3a8e-52dd-8bc1-f14ee16bc683.html

Madison Arts Commission set to select poems to be stamped on Monroe Street sidewalks

CHRIS AADLAND caadland@madison.com Apr 10, 2018

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Angela McJunkin, the subject of John Tuschen's poem "Angela's Cello," performs as part of an unveiling celebration in 2011 of Williamson Street Poetry in Sidewalks.

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Poetry will soon come to the sidewalks of Monroe Street.

Up to a dozen poems written by Madison's current and former poets laureate are set to be stamped into the sidewalks along the Near West Side thoroughfare sometime during the street's reconstruction.

The street-side public art project will mirror a similar project in 2011 that resulted in four poems being stamped in a seven-block stretch of sidewalk along Williamson Street on the city's Near East Side.

In a city with abundant visual art, the project is a good way to increase awareness of Madison's poet laureate program or spark curiosity about poetry, said Kia Karlen, who chairs the Madison Arts Commission.

"It's been a unique way to incorporate more art in this town," she said.

The Arts Commission will choose the poems at 5 p.m. Tuesday, the 10th day of National Poetry Month. The meeting is in room 357 of the City-County Building, 210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Comments can also be emailed to madisonarts@cityofmadison.com.

Karlen said she hopes the project eventually spreads to other neighborhoods in Madison.

The commission will choose some or all of the poems, which address topics such as sidewalk chalk, summertime activities and Monroe Street history. One is written in Spanish.

Karin Wolf, the city's arts program administrator, said 12 poems were submitted and a dozen locations for the poems have been proposed.

The poems had to be short and written by a Madison poet laureate. They can't contain profanity, religious content or commercial, political, hate or public-issue speech.

The project is estimated to cost about \$1,000 a poem, including the cost of the stamping, Wolf said.

Oscar Mireles, Madison's current poet laureate, said people might be surprised at first to find poetry when walking along the reconstructed Monroe Street.

The brief poems will allow readers to pause and reflect on their message or gain insight they previously didn't have, he said.

"We're often just too busy to stop and reflect," Mireles said. "Any way that you can get poetry out there I think is important."

Mireles submitted two of his own poems.

Each deals with the history of Monroe Street, with one reflecting on what the area would have looked like hundreds of years ago and the other honoring longtime area events, businesses and buildings, he said.

Wolf said it's unclear when the poems would be stamped on the Monroe Street sidewalk. She said that timeline depends on the larger Monroe Street reconstruction project.

The \$21.5 million overhaul is scheduled to be completed in November.



Creative construction: Read the 12 poems being considered for imprinting in the Monroe Street sidewalk

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Chris Aadland | Wisconsin State Journal

Chris Aadland is a reporting intern for the Wisconsin State Journal.

