

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 402**Are you a 501(c)3 organization in good standing with the IRS?**

Yes

According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?

West Hartford

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

West Hartford

Will this activity occur after November 1, 2024?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

Roberts2022

Organization Name

Hartford Art School at the University of Hartford

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

060731360

Principal Contact Name

Rebecca Brandt

Title

Senior Director of Development & Grants

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West Hartford, Connecticut 06117
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[Map It](#)

Website<https://www.hartford.edu/has>

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 402**Amount requested this application**

\$10,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Today's workforce hungers for creative problem solvers—people who can catapult fresh ideas ahead of the competition. The Hartford Art School cultivates creative minds through a broad-based education, preparing them for a wide range of careers. The Hartford Art School Galleries serves to launch conversations, expand creative thinking, and kindle engagement with our community through the lens of contemporary art.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Now in its sixth decade, the University of Hartford began as a commuter school during the post-World War II boom when returning soldiers were looking for an education financed by the G.I. Bill. The University's roots go back to 1877 when one of the three founding schools, the Hartford Art School, opened. It was initially called the Hartford School for Decorative Arts, and was founded by prominent Hartford women Olivia Clemens, Elizabeth Colt, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary Bushnell Cheney, and Susan Warner. With backing and encouragement from local community and business leaders, art school came together with The Hartt School and Hillyer College in 1957 on a 150-acre stretch of farmland on Bloomfield Avenue known as the Gabriel farm and the University of Hartford was born. Fast forward to today; the Hartford Art School offers areas of study leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), one Bachelor of Arts (BA) program in Art History, and two Master of Fine Arts (MFA) programs. Hartford Art School students have the best of both worlds. We educate the whole artist through rigorous studio-based disciplines that are an integral part of a thriving liberal arts university environment.

Describe the demographics of your audience/people served by your activities.

The HAS Galleries are a critical space for the meeting of art and education. At the University of Hartford, we target learning and identity groups who will be invested in the specific topics of our exhibitions. In this case, given the booming popularity of tattoo culture, that includes people of all ages with interests in art, tattooing, and/or social justice issues in the Greater Hartford area and, by virtue of our membership with the CT Art Trail, throughout Connecticut and New England.

Describe your organization's governance.

The University of Hartford is governed by a 23-member Board of Regents who meet three times per year. We average 80% attendance at these meetings, whether in person or virtual. In May 2023, Don Allan Jr. '86 was appointed as the Chair of our Board of Regents. Don is the CEO & President of Stanley Black & Decker. On July 1, 2024, Lawrence Ward began his tenure as the University's seventh president.

Describe the diversity of your board.

Within our 23-member Board of Regents, 8 (35%) identify as people of color and 8 (35%) identify as female.

What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?

93%

Project Name

Human Marks: Tattooing in Contemporary Art

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 402**Is this project related to the Visual Arts?**

Yes

Will the artists associated with this project be financially compensated?

Yes

Project Description

The exhibition, publication, affiliated performances, and symposium Human Marks: Tattooing in Contemporary Art present a range of work created by artists who also tattoo to explore how the ritual, ethics, and identity-formation of tattooing shape their studio and performance practices in experimental and revelatory ways. The primary goal of Human Marks is to put the worlds of art and tattooing into more explicit conversation to ask what the fine art world can learn from the ethics, strategies, and concerns of the tattoo community. Today's leading tattoo artists describe their craft as a form of social work that provides transformative care for the differently abled, chronically ill, formerly incarcerated, and people with body or gender dysphoria. Highlighting this work through contemporary art is a strategy that both empowers tattoo artists as community leaders and challenges popular perceptions about the capacity for art to bring about real change in the world.

Total estimated project budget

\$278,950.00

Project start/opening

09/15/2025

Project end/closing

12/13/2025

Project venue

Hartford Art School Galleries, University of Hartford

Project town

West Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

The HAS Galleries and our programming are free and open to the public. We anticipate welcoming approximately 2,000 visitors over the course of the exhibition for the 3 months that it is on view. We also plan to welcome 200 attendees to the daylong symposium, and 100 attendees to the staging of the performance Realigned Possession in Silpe Gallery.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

In addition to announcements in our newsletters and social media platforms, we will place ads in the print and online versions of the magazines Art New England and Artscope, and in digital newsletters for the art platform Hyperallergic (reaching over 300,000 readers). We are a member of the CT Art Trail, which advertises our programming in their monthly newsletters to reach audiences across the state. A postcard for Human Marks will be made available in tattoo shops in Connecticut.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

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Roberts funding will support the 8-hour performance *Realigned Possession* by transgender artists Creighton Baxter and Miller Robinson on October 2, 2025. Many of the artists in *Human Marks* are transgender, as both tattooing and trans body-modifying practices empower individuals to become truer versions of themselves. As a relational artform, performance—and *Realigned Possession*, in particular—is essential for conveying how the human body specifies and transfigures multiple modes of identity.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Roberts Foundation will be recognized in the all didactics, advertisements, print and digital materials related to *Human Marks*, including the exhibition's introductory wall text, the front matter of the publication (to be published by Hirmer Verlag), the symposium program, paid advertisements, the HAS Galleries' website, and social media posts, among other locations.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

Artistic excellence at the University of Hartford means seeing the world differently. At the Hartford Art School Galleries, our purpose is to launch conversations, expand creative thinking, and kindle engagement with our community through the lens of contemporary art. Contemporary art takes multiple forms, and we honor a balance between traditional and experimental modes of making. As teaching galleries, we prioritize the growth and empowerment of our students and the greater public by creating opportunities for learning directly from art and artists. Our exhibitions create environments that spark curiosity, engagement, and knowledge production by foregrounding the materiality and full sensory effects of contemporary art. In our exhibitions and programming, we model the shared responsibility of open, civic discourse to build a more just, inclusive, and equitable society. We are free and open to the public—a hub for everyone in the community to gather, learn, and imagine through art.

How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?

Human Marks emphasizes the importance of creativity and collaboration in thinking through pressing contemporary issues. If one role of the artist is to analyze society and culture to better understand and, ideally, bring about positive change to the world, then tattooing has been a significantly overlooked topic for analysis. Moreover, this project will revive the International Distinguished Artists Symposium and Exhibition (IDASE) program, an esteemed exhibition and symposium series that began at the Hartford Art School in 1994. IDASE was launched to create a primary center for creativity, scholarship, and communication in contemporary art. Past exhibitions have brought the likes of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Cornelia Parker, Robert Smithson, and Ana Mendieta to the campus, creating opportunities for the public to interface with the greatest practicing artists of the day. *Human Marks* will be the eighth iteration of IDASE after an eleven-year hiatus.

How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?

By interfacing with artists and artwork through the exhibition, publication, discussion-based symposium, and performances, audiences will come to understand the recent surge in the popularity of tattooing as an urgent response to a diverse range of societal issues, from gender affirmative care to the climate crisis to Indigenous rights to the land. What all these seemingly disparate examples have in common is the feeling of losing control (of one's identity, future, and home). By contrast, tattooing is a definitive and communicative expression of individual agency. For those who see tattooing as taboo, the project aims to unveil the healing, transformative power of the art form. For those who already fully embrace it, *Human Marks* provides a platform to reevaluate tattooing itself as a legitimate and valuable art form that should be taken as seriously as painting, sculpture, or performance—if not more so.

How will this project be evaluated?

Our primary measure of success is how much our audiences learn from our programming. During the symposium, we plan to gather feedback in two main ways: 1) audience intercept interviews; and 2) a digital survey. The digital survey will also be

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available through a QR code in the exhibition and performance venues. It will consist of multiple-choice answers rating the quality of each event followed by opportunities to leave brief comments. To encourage participation, we will advertise that the digital survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete, and that those who complete it will be entered into a raffle to win a \$100 gift card to a local tattoo shop.

Cover letter

- [Human-Marks-Cover-Letter.pdf](#)

Board list

- [UHart-Regents.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [1958-Letter-from-US-Treasury-Dept.PDF](#)

Financial statement

- [2022-2023-UHart-Audit.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [FY24-Budget-September.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [UHart-FY25-Budget-.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Balance-Sheet-request.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Human-Marks-Budget-for-Roberts-Foundation.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Does your organization have a formal policy or organizational commitment to ensure that visual artists are financially compensated?

No

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Grant Report

- [University-of-Hartford-Hartford-Art-School-Grantee-Reporting-Form-.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget - the University's finance team is currently working with our external accounting firm to finalize last year's figures and complete the FY24 audit. We anticipate having that information in early 2025 and can provide it upon request. What is provided is the working budget for last fiscal year.

Balance sheet - That request would need to be made directly to our senior finance team. Please let us know if you would like us to do so.

Strategic plan - We had UHart Start (<https://www.hartford.edu/about/mission-vision/strategic-vision/>) under our previous president but will be adopting a new vision and strategy under President Ward.

Artist compensation - while there is not a currently a formal written institutional policy, the Art School and galleries are committed to compensating artists for their work and do so regularly, including in the case of this request.

Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?

Yes

Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?

Yes