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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Art Effect Receives \$100,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY (May 13, 2021) – The Art Effect has been approved for a \$100,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts’ Our Town Program to support the Youth Arts Empowerment Zone in the City of Poughkeepsie. This is one of 63 grants nationwide that the NEA has approved in this category to support projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and social outcomes; ultimately laying the groundwork for sustainable systems change. This is the largest grant The Art Effect has received from the NEA in recent history.

“As the country and the arts sector begin to work towards a post-pandemic world, the National Endowment for the Arts is proud to announce this Our Town funding. These awards will support cross-sector partnerships such as the one lead by The Art Effect that demonstrate the power of the arts to help communities create a better future for themselves,” said NEA Acting Chairman Ann Eilers.

The Art Effect directly serves over 2,000 young people throughout the Hudson Valley each year through arts education, creative placemaking, and workforce development. In its 30 year history in Poughkeepsie, The Art Effect has integrated arts, culture, and design activities into community development, serving as a key partner in the revitalization of downtown Poughkeepsie. The NEA-supported Youth Arts Empowerment Zone is a logical expansion of The Art Effect’s arts-based, youth-led community development initiatives.

With support of the NEA Our Town grant, The Art Effect at the Trolley Barn will serve as an anchor arts institution in downtown Poughkeepsie. The Youth Arts Empowerment Zone will celebrate core tenets of creative entrepreneurship, youth leadership, and innovative public art in a series of two arts festivals in 2022 and 2023. This unique concept will expand beyond the installation of a mural or public art piece, with festivals that directly engage with the community to benefit youth and the local arts community as well as the cultural and social environments of Middle Main Poughkeepsie.

“The Art Effect looks forward to collaborating with community and national partners such as the City of Poughkeepsie, Hudson River Housing, MASS Design, and others to execute an inclusive community engagement strategy that will work with local youth to plan, design, and implement art festivals that we know will bring excitement, inspiration, and community cohesion to the area,” says Nicole Fenichel-Hewitt, Executive Director at The Art Effect. “This two-year project will initiate an annual series of festivals at the Trolley Barn and serve as the first step in

establishing the Youth Arts Empowerment Zone, revitalizing downtown Poughkeepsie through creativity.”

For more information on the projects included in the Arts Endowment grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://www.arts.gov/news).

About The Art Effect: The Art Effect was created in 2018 from two long-standing arts education agencies in Poughkeepsie, NY: Mill Street Loft and Spark Media Project. The Art Effect empowers youth and people of all ages to explore, experience, and excel in the arts: by introducing them to visual arts and media, giving them the opportunity to develop real skills in these fields, and guiding them towards achieving their academic and career goals. With the opening of the new 3,000 square-foot Trolley Barn Gallery for exhibitions and classes, The Art Effect is continuing to nurture and grow Poughkeepsie’s vibrant art scene and help revitalize Main Street.

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