



@ YEA

2023 Project Highlights

Arts Street@Youth Employment Academy had an outstanding year in 2023 providing innovative opportunities for **174 unique youth** through our creative industry academies, internship, and mentorship programs. Our youth identify as **89% BIPOC** and **97% low-income** with many residents from our affiliate organization, Denver Housing Authority.

- Our creative industry academies served 183 youth with a 96% completion rate and **94% demonstrating an increase in industry skills**. We partnered with Denver Public School Colorado High School Charter Osage where youth explored their identities and learned skills in photography and digital design, while they earned credit towards graduation. **94% said they experienced an increase in understanding of their identity because of Arts Street**.
- Our summer academies worked with over 60 youth who learned about community issues in urban farming, affordable housing, and mental wellness. They focused on large-scale public art projects including traditional murals and in the La Alma and Sun Valley neighborhoods, graphic design, photography, and textile art for our clients.
- Our internship program worked with 25 young adults who earned stipends while they created outstanding commissions for our clients including interactive public art for La Alma Park and traditional murals for inside Denver Housing Authority community buildings. **100% of our interns completed their internships and showed an increase in industry skills**.
- Our mental wellness programming continues to grow with all youth participating in mental wellness workshops, and many working 1:1 with our in-house counselor, Tamika Thomas and with our Youth Advisor, Destini Montez. They received support in reaching their education, employment, and mental wellness goals, including **95% of our high school students who stayed in school or graduated and 100% said they feel better about themselves because of coming to Arts Street**.
- Arts Street is also privileged to work with so many amazing Denver artists who teach their skills and mentor our young artists individually and in community. Our projects highlight this work led by these outstanding creatives; Katy Casper, Jess Early, Melody Epperson, Juan Fuentes, Anthony Garcia, Sr., Chelsea Romaniello, Devin Urioste and Jasmine Wynter. **“Staff fostered a space that makes participants happy to come in.” Arts Street Participant**

Tree Tales Public Art Installation

Spring 2023



Left: Interns cutting the ribbon at the opening of Tree Tales.
Right: Flags in the trees of La Alma Park.



Painting texture on fabric.



Khadijah M. screenprinting a flag.



Interns create flags by screen printing tree images to painted fabric.

Fifteen Arts Street youth artists, ages 15-19, worked on a public art project for Denver Arts and Venues *P.S. You Are Here* titled *Tree Tales*, led by Denver artist Melody Epperson. Youth were guided to write personal stories about trees, and recorded these stories at local non-profit, Youth on Record. Youth artists then utilized fabric to learn basic sewing techniques and create flags, adding paint to create texture and color. Arts Street then partnered with local arts organization, Ink Lounge, where youth learned to create their own screenprinting screens based on photos they took of trees in La Alma Lincoln Park. The final screen printed flags were installed in this same park. Each tree had a QR code that visitors could scan and listen to Arts Street youth reading their very special *Tree Tales*. See more here: <https://www.rmpbs.org/blogs/rocky-mountain-pbs/youth-express-themselves-through-tree-tales/>. Youth artists included; Akira B., Audrey V., Justine T., Dasi B., Dee W., Esma M., Estrella M., Evangelina M., Jada K., Khadija M., Malachai W., Mea U., Nevaeh T., Yozmi R., and Yukami M.

Youth show off their screens after working with Ink Lounge.

Youth on Record's Jesus poses with students after recording their tree stories.



Ski Building Workshop

Spring 2023

Arts Street had the opportunity to work with Colorado School of Mines and the innovative organization, Community Skis (www.communityskis.com). Community Skis bring their mobile ski workshop around the country, teaching young people hands-on design and building skills. Arts Street put out a call for youth artists to submit designs that would really pop on snow skis. From that open call, we chose eight youth artists whose designs were produced by Community Skis and brought to a weekend intensive workshop. Youth learned multiple skills; from using power tools to construct high quality skis, to transferring their designs, to applying fiberglass and the resin finish. Youth were astounded by their accomplishments, and these skis will be auctioned off to benefit future Arts Street programming. Read more about it here: <https://www.rmpbs.org/blogs/rocky-mountain-pbs/arts-street-youth-ski-program/> Youth Artists included; Adama B., Amy X., Dani R., Justine T., Tutu B., Luis A., Yukami M., and Sudri C.



Graduation 2023



Congratulations!

We are so pleased to congratulate all our YEA 2023 graduates. This graduating class had many challenges over their time in school, with figuring out new ways to go to school during a pandemic and missing out on many social activities. However, they stayed motivated and positive and earned their diploma. Many of our graduates are planning on attending college or have started their career paths.

Sudri C. (photo at right), is one of our outstanding graduates. Sudri participated as an intern with Arts Street in summer 2022 and continued working on special creative projects through spring 2023. She is an amazing artist and team leader who excelled in school and graduated as Valedictorian from West High School. As a first-generation student, she will be attending University of Colorado in Denver majoring in engineering.



Mariposa District Community Mural

Summer 2023



Denver Artist, Anthony Garcia, Sr and youth artist Kevin, get ready to paint. Youth artists work on cement benches.



JoAnna and Melissa painting wall mural.



Youth artist SirJoseph.



Dorian painting the bike pad.

Nineteen youth artists, ages 15-18, in Arts Street summer Creative Industries Academy, worked on an exciting community mural for the Mariposa District. Located at 10th & Mariposa, the mural includes a wall mural, painted bench, bike pad, and other cement seating areas on two sides of the street. This project was led by Denver artist, Anthony Garcia, Sr. and was a partnership with 5280 Trails, Downtown Denver Partnership, Arts Street and Denver Housing Authority. Youth first learned about Anthony's career pathway from being an Arts Street participant when he was a teen to becoming an international artist and founder of the non-profit Birdseed Collective. The young artists worked on designs inspired by Anthony's artistic style and that they felt represented the neighborhood. These were incorporated by Anthony into the final design. Youth then got to enjoy the hot sun while they were guided by Anthony in prepping and painting the large components of the mural. They were excited to work with a professional artist of Anthony's caliber and to contribute to their community. This mural highlights part of Denver's 5280 Trail and encourages residents to walk & ride their bike while also bringing vibrant energy to the corner.



Manuel prepping wall to paint.



Youth artists posing in front of the finished mural.

DHA Finance Department Textile Acoustic Panels

Summer 2023



Youth worked in teams to cut, piece and secure each component of their fabric designs,

Maria P., creating a digital design



Arts Street worked with nineteen youth artists, ages 15-19 for our summer 2023 creative industries academy. This team was commissioned by Denver Housing Authority's Finance Department to solve an issue in their hallway of bare walls and acoustics that made for a very noisy work environment. Arts Street devised a solution of creating large-scale, vibrant textile art pieces and covering sound absorbing foam panels for the client. The youth team met with the client to learn about specifications and preferences such as colors and themes. The client expressed that they would like nature scenes and colorful but calm palettes. Then, led by Arts Street artist/instructor, Jessica Early, youth sketched designs for the panels and then moved them to digital designs. These were submitted to the client who chose their top four designs created by Dani R., JoAnna A., Melissa V., and Lee M. The digital designs were enlarged to create paper patterns used for cutting the designs from material for the large 27" x 54" panels. Youth learned sewing techniques while "painting" with fabric to produce amazing results. Other artists contributing to the project included; Heidi A., Zariah A., Ariana A., Zareen B., Dorian C., Hailey D., Manuel E., Eli G., Christian M., Elijah M., Kevin N., SirJoseph O., Maria P., Sam R., and China R.

Youth artist Chris M., learning how to hand sew with Arts Street's Jessica Early



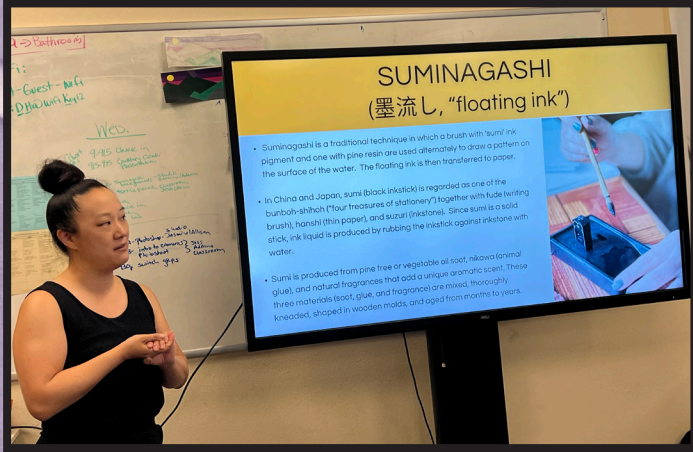
Completed panels installed at DHA's Finance Department



Youth artist Sam R. learning how to use a sewing machine

St. Francis Apartment Signage

Summer 2023



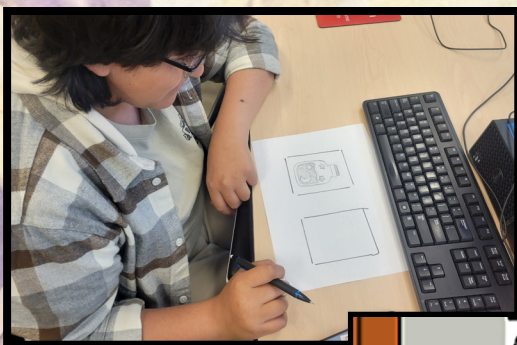
Courtney Ozaki discusses the art of Suminagashi with the youth artist team (above), and artist begins to create patterns with ink (right).



This summer Arts Street worked with 19 youth ages 14-19, to increase their digital design skills and experience working for a real-world client on a product with specifications and deadlines. St. Francis Center is building a new affordable housing development for senior citizens in Denver. Their architect, Shopworks Architecture, tasked Arts Street in creating designs for unit signage that reflected comfort and home.

Youth were given an overview of specific expectations by our client St. Francis Center and the architecture team. Arts Street interns created a survey of questions for current St. Francis residents to help them brainstorm the themes of home and comfort. Led by artist Jasmine Wynter, they learned about symbolism and using Procreate software to create symbols to represent that theme.

They learned about the historical Japanese art of Suminagashi, a marbling ink technique, from Courtney Ozaki, and created our backgrounds. They then combined those two images using Photoshop creating unique and home centered imagery. These designs will then be fabricated as unit signage and installed in the new housing development.



Above: Youth work on their unique ink patterns as well as their personal designs .

Right: All patterns and designs were digitally added to the signage template.



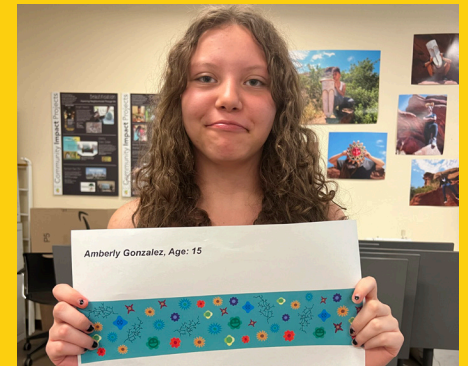
Floating ink takes over the Arts Street studio.

Sun Valley Grows: Fence Murals and Pollinator Habitats

Summer 2023

Arts Street worked with 21 youth, ages 14-19, to gain knowledge in urban farming while creating artistic elements for Denver Housing Authority's Sun Valley's Grow Garden. Led by Denver artist and permaculture specialist, Katy Casper, youth first learned about the importance of pollinators. While exploring personal identity and environmental racism they then created individual pollinator habitats using their own painted designs as decorative embellishment as well as materials such as branches, pinecones and small pieces of wood they had collected. These habitats were hung on the Sun Valley Grow Garden so that the colorful painted sides are seen by those on the street and the habitat side faces into the garden.

Led by artist Jasmine Wynter, youth also worked on digital designs for large-scale fence wraps for the garden. Utilizing their knowledge about urban farming and to promote the garden to the Sun Valley community, youth first sketched ideas for designs inspired by patterns in nature they observed on field trips to green spaces. They then learned how to translate these designs to Adobe Illustrator for printing. Six of these designs were chosen by DHA, fabricated and attached to the fences of the garden to attract visitors, showcase the vegetables and flowers, and promote healthy food access.



Youth created their pollinators habitats using found wood, pine cones, sticks and bark that they painted to represent their personal identity.

*Above: Youth artists work on and show-off their digital fence designs.
Below: The final designs printed and installed on the garden fence.*



The team shows off all their hard work with lead artists Katy Casper, Jasmine Wynter, Adama Bamba and Jess Early.

Sun Valley Decatur Fresh Mural

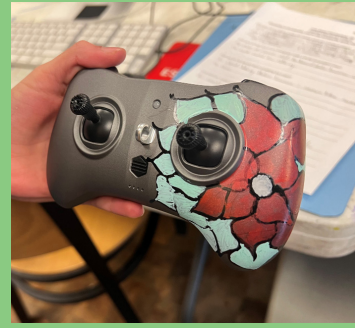
Summer 2023

Throughout July 2023, six youth artists, ages 15-18, worked with artist instructor, Chelsea Romaniello, to create a new mural for the front of Youth Employment Academy's social venture, Decatur Fresh (Decaturfreshmarket.com). The artists created designs that represented Sun Valley's international market using mandalas that were then turned into stencils. The artists worked as a team to paint the background and then using their stencils spray painted on top of the background. Youth artists included; Evangelina M., Justine T., Leila A., Mea U., Nevaeh T., and Yunis A.



Drone Construction

Fall 2023



Left: Bryan Early introduces youth to the basic assembly of the drones.
Right: After completing all the components, each person customized their controller.



Arts Street was able to provide a unique opportunity for our participating students – making their own drone! Arts Street was awarded a U.S. Housing & Urban Development (HUD) grant of individual drone kits from the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Through our partnership with Colorado High School Charter, Arts Street educators, Jessica Early and Juan Fuentes, led twenty-eight high school age youth in building their very own drone.

To kick off the project, Bryan Early, retired chief engineer for BAE Systems presented a brief history and career opportunities in aviation, the path that he took to get to his position and what he thought the future of drones might be. Instructors also taught about how drones are being used in the creative industries for film and business. Students then began building their drones one piece at a time and were also able to add in their creativity and paint to some components to really make them their own. The young adults were excited to learn about the technology of different components and how they worked together. After they completed building the drones, students were able to connect them to their handsets and learn how to fly the drones. Wrapping up this STEAM learning opportunity, students were able to take the drones home to continue to fly and dream about a future in video or aviation.



Juan Fuentes shows how to use the controls (left) while youth works on assembly (right). The whole group shows off their finished drones (below).



Top to bottom: Close-up of the final drones, youth takes their work for a test flight and Jessica Early shows how to connect the controls to a phone.



DHA Connections Building Murals

Fall 2023

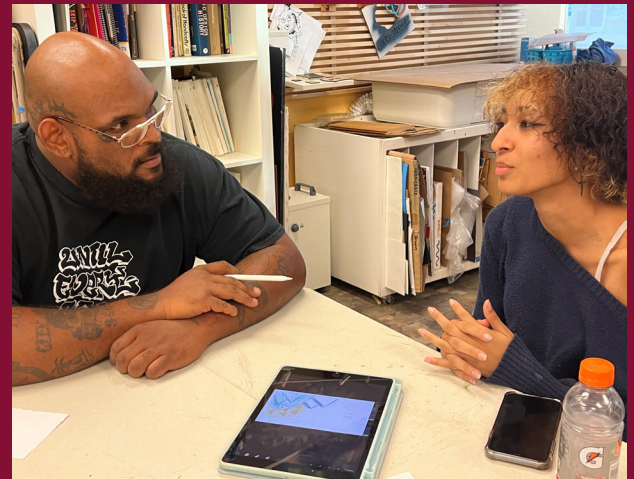
Arts Street hosted fourteen Arts Street fall interns, ages 15-20, for a 12-week internship that included designing and painting two large wall murals in Denver Housing Authority's (DHA) Connections building at 1089 Osage St. Interns received specifications and deadlines for the murals from our client, DHA, and then each submitted a individual design. The final two images were chosen by DHA staff and youth began the process of installing the murals. Led by Denver artist/muralist, Devin Urioste, interns learned how to submit to a "call for artists", what it takes to make a career in the arts, and specific design and painting skills for creating murals. Youth worked many hours to complete these vibrant and beautiful murals for the community building and we held a community celebration to recognize their creations.



Above: Youth used drawing software and digital design techniques to create their mural proposals.



Left: Youth presented their final mural to DHA staff



Above; Lead artist, Devin, chats with youth about their design process.



Youth worked for 12 weeks to complete each component of this mural including large butterflies and flowers for the community computer lab.



Photography with Juan Fuentes 2023

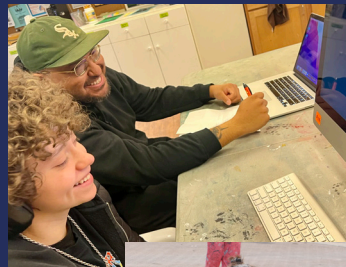
Arts Street is honored to have artist, Juan Fuentes, as a guest artist/instructor for our creative programs. Juan's work has been featured in books and in multiple shows such as at the Denver Art Museum and Museum of Contemporary Art to name just a few.

We began working with Juan at the height of the pandemic in March 2020. Since then, he has led youth to gaining skills in photography and documenting their community as well as exploring their own identity. In 2023, Juan worked with multiple classes through our partnership with Colorado High School Charter (CHSC) as well as with a cohort of interns in the summer. They learned skills in digital photography, Photoshop, collage work and 3-D sculptures. They completed large scale client pieces as well as personal self-portraits all while gaining insight into themselves.



Spring

CHSC youth explored identity through the creation of self-portraits using digital, double-exposure techniques which were showcased during a gallery exhibition at Denver's The Temple studios. They also created a photography mural wall for DHA's Connections building in the La Alma neighborhood.



Summer

Summer interns explored different techniques to capture portraits of DHA residents. This work was then turned in to a large photo collage and hung in DHA's Tapiz building. They learned about Photoshop and used their edited photos to create 3D sculptures. Finally, they got the chance to see some of Juan's work at the Denver Art Museum.



Fall

This fall a new crew of CHSC youth explored some of the first forms of photography; the cyanotype and pin hole cameras. They used the Arts Street dark room to develop their work and then used the final pieces as well as digital photographs to create 3D identity sculptures.

Mental Wellness Nature Excursions 2023

Thanks to the amazing funding from the Colorado Health Foundation, Arts Street was able to bring youth on excursions that went beyond Denver city limits including a multi-day trip to Steamboat Springs, an overnight trip to Colorado Springs and other day trips to green spaces near Denver. On each trip youth used different forms of art and creativity to explore their identity and mental wellness. They tried drumming outdoors which turned into a rainstorm and finally a rainbow! They did a “blind” charcoal drawing workshop with well-known artist, Greg Block. They experienced their first alpine lake. They climbed through Garden of the Gods and did portrait photography with masks they created expressing their identity and most importantly they spent time with other youth artists, artist mentors and learned about themselves.



*Far Left: It's important when outdoors to be "Bear Aware".
Left: Photography excursion to the Botanical Gardens in Steamboat.*



Above: Youth artist in Garden of the Gods wearing identity mask.

Below: Garden of the Gods team enjoying the view as they hike.



Above: After drumming so hard they brought on a rainstorm, youth enjoy a glimpse of sunshine and a rainbow.

Below: Looking only at her face in a mirror, Shamirra does a self-portrait, blind contour drawing.



Above: A gorgeous afternoon at an alpine lake outside of Steamboat Springs.

