

The New Bedford Artist IG takeover is happening! New Bedford Creative's column exploring arts and culture in times of Covid-19.

Written by Steven Froias, contributing writer.

If you follow New Bedford Creative on Instagram – and you shouldn't deny yourself the visual pleasure of following @nbcreative – you will notice something new during the last week of July, August and September.

During those weeks, the account defined by #NBcreative will experience a takeover. It's an entirely benign and welcome takeover by New Bedford artists who answered the call to showcase the city, these times and their work through their own smartphone camera lenses.

"We're constantly looking for new ways to promote city artists and what better way to showcase through their own personal lens," says Senior Creative Fellow Jasmyn Baird. "Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, it's important that we mobilize every tool we have to support arts and culture for the entire region. This opportunity allows for artists to share not only what they do but how and why they create their art. It gives our audience an exclusive experience into each artists' life which contributes to the creative community within New Bedford."

With social distancing still on the agenda, one of the most useful tools at an artist's disposal is digital, and perhaps that is why eleven artists signed up to populate the New Bedford Creative Instagram account with their visual thoughts

and fancies.

During the last week of each month through September, the following artists will handle the posting duties and thus represent the City of New Bedford and its artists.

They are: Violet Foulk; Brittany Baglini; Alyn Carlson; Tracy Silva Barbosa; Adrian Burke; Jim Charette; Lana Quann; Patricia A. Thomas; Scott Bishop; Ephraim Christopher Morgan; and Rhonda M. Fazio.

About three to four artists will be featured during any given week during the takeover term. What will they be posting? It's anyone's guess! The line-up boasts artists of many disciplines – visual, performance, musical, textile – reflecting the range of talent in this authentic seaport community with a cultural heritage that stretches back centuries.

For guidance, the artists were given the following topic examples: What's a day like in the life of an artist during this moment in time? Has your art been impacted by #COVID-19 and/or #BlackLivesMatter? Can you give us a glance into your art studio, creative space, and process? Or, tutorials of making your art at home or in your studio...?

Normally, @_nbcreative spotlights many of the artists employing their talent in the city. Also, the various programs and projects designed to support arts and culture in New Bedford and for the entire South Coast are shared through its Instagram account.

This includes the successful Wicked Cool Places grant program, administered by New Bedford Creative as part of the New Bedford Economic Development Council.

In a reflection of the reality that is the coronavirus, Wicked Cool Places now encompass cyberspace. So, each of the artists sharing their time and skill will be compensated with a stipend for their work during the Instagram takeover.

“It’s important to ensure that our arts community receives some practical support at this time,” says Creative Strategist Margo Saulnier, “and this is one way we can help place a value on the immense contribution they and all of our arts and culture purveyors have made on New Bedford, especially in recent years.”

Indeed, the city has largely been viewed as enjoying both a cultural and economic renaissance over the past ten years or so, reclaiming its historic role as a regional hub and destination in Massachusetts.

“We don’t want to lose what got us to this point,” concludes its Creative Strategist. “We’ll find innovative ways to persevere and keep the focus on the unlimited possibility New Bedford’s arts and culture promises into the future.”

Find it on Instagram, once again @_nbcreative, featuring the outstanding images and spirit of a city still and always on the move.