



NYC Parks



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Contact: David Maddox,  
[david.maddox@thenatureofcities.com](mailto:david.maddox@thenatureofcities.com)

Website: [www.ufsarts.com](http://www.ufsarts.com)

## **Ecological Artists Begin Year-Long Residency with Scientists and Environmental Practitioners to Explore New Imagination for Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Cities**

As part of the Urban Field Station Collaborative Arts Program, eleven artists have been selected to collaborate with the USDA Forest Service, The Nature of Cities, and local agency teams to explore innovation and new imagination for more sustainable and green cities. The core questions of the program include: how are artists changed when they collaborate with scientists? How are scientists changed when they collaborate with artists? How can collaboration create new ideas and new directions that can inform sustainable, resilient, and inclusive cities?

The Urban Field Station Collaborative Arts Program was founded in 2016 to explore the intersection and interdisciplinary nature of the study of cities and urban planning, artistic expression, and scientific ideas through collaborations with artists and urban ecology practitioners. This year, the Urban Field Station Collaborative Arts Program has expanded this year to support artists across the United States and internationally. This year's partnerships include:

- USDA Forest Service:
  - Northern Research Station - NYC Urban Field Station, Baltimore Field Station, Philadelphia Field Station, Springfield, MA Urban Field Station
  - Rocky Mountain Research Station - Denver Urban Field Station
  - USFS International Programs in the West Bank
  - International Institute of Tropical Forestry in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic
- New York City Department of Parks and Recreation's Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources Division and Arts in Parks Program
- State of Hawaii: Kaulunani, Hawaii's Urban & Community Forestry Program

This year's artists were selected from a pool of competitive applications which represent the diversity and creativity of their respective cities. **Krystal Mack**, Baltimore, will spend her residency working on a new literary work that aims to honor the reclamation of urban spaces by the natural world and Krystal's environmental heritage as a Black woman, a Baltimorean, and a second-generation descendant of the Great Migration.

*"With this new work, I hope to celebrate the presence of Black people in nature, urban forest patches themselves, and how both intersect as organic forms of protest and resistance in our industrialized world." - Krystal C. Mack*

The Baltimore-based residency is aimed at co-producing an artistic exploration of the social and ecological benefits of urban forest patches, including the ways in which urban forest patches and natural areas can yield community and ecological benefits such as social cohesion, physical, mental, and spiritual health, climate resilience, improved environmental justice, biodiversity, youth and family engagement, workforce development and/or jobs, and more.

*"Krystal's vision speaks to the deep connection that Baltimore's communities have to forest patches in their neighborhoods and I can't wait to work with her as we explore these spaces together in a new way." - Nancy Sonti, USFS Baltimore Field Station*

The Baltimore Field Station is part of the Urban Field Station Network. Forest Service scientists bring expertise in social and biophysical science to studying cities as social-ecological systems and supporting urban natural resources stewardship. Baltimore Field Station scientists are studying the ecological manifestations of racial segregation and environmental injustices to inform change toward a more equitable and just urban future. This includes understanding historical and present-day distributions of tree canopy and forest cover in the city. The Baltimore Field Station also engages with partner organizations like [Baltimore Green Space](#) to understand and improve the ecological functions, stewardship values, and public health benefits of forest patches in the community.