

Arts & Artists Outdoors Update

As we bundle up and watch the season change to winter, we also prepare for some new changes in the [A₂O: Arts & Artists Outdoors](#) program. *Arts & Artists Outdoors* began back in 2011 as a partnership between Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and The City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. A₂O is an environmental arts program that brings youth and rising local artists to recreation facilities. Together, they create permanent or temporary artworks that highlight the nearby green space. Jocelyn Nelson, the founding program manager of A₂O, will be leaving the position as of December 2014 and will be replaced by Aislinn Pentecost-Farren.

Aislinn Pentecost-Farren, along with being a former A₂O artist at Dorsey Playground, comes to Mural Arts with four years of experience in environmental art, youth programming, and artist project management. She created a public installation inside the Fairmount Water Works for the 2013 Philadelphia Hidden City Festival, and worked with the Park Service in Wales, UK on projects in 2013 and 2014. She spearheaded the current fall session of A₂O, and we are thrilled to welcome her to the program.

Unlike previous sessions, this year A₂O will continue at the same sites with the same artists into the spring session, in order to develop larger projects and establish a deeper connection between the artist and recreation facility community. With the support of recreation leaders at Dorsey Playground, Chew Playground, Wright Recreation Center, Mander Playground and Francisville Playground, A₂O artists Alana Bograd, Ellie Brown, Lucy Pistilli, Heidi Ratanavanich and Steven Teare are taking their students on ecological explorations of insects, water, pollution and botany.

Throughout the past fall session of A₂O, students have taken field trips to Bartram's Gardens, the Philadelphia Insectarium, the Fairmount Water Works, FDR Park and other sites around the city. Inspired by their new experiences, they are creating cyanotype prints, bug-wing inspired ceiling fans, flags inspired by traditional West African designs, comic books, animations and more.

Each A₂O site will pick back up in a few months and run from March 9–May 14, 2015. [Head to our website to sign up for the next session.](#) By spring, the program will culminate in public art projects at each site, which will be featured at the Mural Arts Art Really Awesome Art Show on May 14, 2015 at the Asian Arts Initiative. Mark the date on your calendars and come celebrate the year of A₂O with the students!



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