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Department of Agriculture Unveils Newly Commissioned Public Artworks for Salisbury Animal Health Laboratory

Salisbury, MD (June 13, 2022) - The Maryland Department of Agriculture's recently completed Salisbury Animal Health Lab, located 27722 Nanticoke Road, is now home to the latest additions to the state of Maryland's public art collection. Artist Thomas Sterner (Westminster, MD) was awarded a \$70,000 commission through the Maryland State Arts Council's (MSAC) [Public Art Across Maryland program](#) to provide original artwork for the state building in Wicomico County. Governor Larry Hogan [participated in a dedication ceremony](#) for the new facility over the weekend.

Sterner was selected from more than 170 applicants based on his winning proposal to create two site-specific artworks for the new lab. "*Feather of Monumental Size*" is a 23' stainless steel feather, located outside of the lab's main entrance and visible from Nanticoke Road. "*Running Horses*" is a wall mounted relief carved from the wood of native trees and located in the lab's new conference room designed to host many state and local groups. Both artworks celebrate the important role of the animal health program employees, keeping Marylanders safe by being a first line of defense in controlling infectious diseases in livestock and poultry.

"I am honored to have made the permanent art for this new building. My hope is that the beautiful, transparent feather draws attention to this important facility, and gives it a magical sense of place. The herd of running horses inside makes one feel they are part of the awe and power within," says Sterner.

Replacing the original 1953 facility, the new diagnostic laboratories at the Salisbury Animal Health Lab has a special focus on poultry disease that can impact the state and region's industry. The construction of the lab was made possible through Maryland's Capital Improvement Program, with the design and

construction managed by the Maryland Department of General Services. The inclusion of artwork is made possible by the Public Art Across Maryland: Artwork Commissions program, overseen by the Maryland Public Art Commission, and staffed by the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland Public Art Commission Chair Rand Griffin said of the program, “We believe that public art commissioned for public settings at state-owned buildings provides a visual enhancement to the working environment and improves the visitor experience. The investment continues to improve the everyday experience at these facilities and will result in a significant expansion of public artwork throughout the state of Maryland. “

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About Maryland State Arts Council

Founded in 1967, MSAC is an agency of the State of Maryland Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts, that plays an essential role, ensuring every person has access to the transformative power of the arts. MSAC advances the arts in our state by providing leadership that champions creative expression, diverse programming, equitable access, lifelong learning, and the arts as a celebrated contributor to the quality of life for all the people of Maryland. To do this, the agency awards grants to not-for-profit, tax-exempt organizations for ongoing arts programming and projects, awards grants to individual artists, and provides technical and advisory assistance to individuals and groups. MSAC receives its funds in an annual appropriation from the State of Maryland and from grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The Council may also receive contributions from private, non-governmental sources. For more information, go to msac.org.

About Public Art Across Maryland

MSAC’s [Public Art Across Maryland: Artwork Commissions](#) is the state’s Percent-for-Art program. For all new or renovated State-owned buildings, a percentage of the construction budget is set aside for public art. Independent artists apply for commission opportunities through an open Call to Artists and art selected by a committee of local stakeholders and representatives. The [Maryland Public Art Commission](#) oversees the operations of the Artwork Commission program and Commission representatives serve on every selection committee.