

MONMOUTH ARTS and THE COUNT BASIE CENTER FOR THE ARTS PRESENT STAMPED STORIES

Monmouth Arts invites artists from New Jersey to submit applications for Stamped Stories, a series of postcards marking the Centennial Celebration of Red Bank's Count Basie Center for the Arts, whose historic theater opened in 1926. New Jersey-based artists will be commissioned to create artwork representing each decade of the theater's existence, from the 1920s to present day.

Each Stamped Stories postcard will focus on a specific decade while incorporating elements of the Count Basie Center for the Arts - the landmark marquee, the history, the performances, the community. The postcards will be printed and available monthly as well as in a commemorative set.

Postcard images will be printed on 5"x7" cards, with the front being the art itself, and the back containing the title of the work, a 2-3 sentence synopsis and the Basie Center's Centennial Celebration logo. Artist credit, website, and social media handles will be included. Artists and their work will also be showcased at www.thebasie.org/centennial.

Monmouth Arts shares a deep history with the Count Basie Center, which originally opened in 1926 as Reade's Carlton theater. In 1973, an anonymous donor provided Monmouth Arts with funds to purchase the historic theater, renaming it as the Monmouth Arts Center. In 1984, the theater was renamed the Count Basie Theatre in honor of jazz icon and Red Bank native William "Count" Basie. In 1999, Monmouth Arts and the Basie separated into two nonprofit organizations so that each organization could better focus on its individual mission. In 2018, the Count Basie name was raised to represent the entirety of the Monmouth Street facility, which now contains a second venue, The Vogel, as well as the Grunin Arts and Education Building and the Turner Academy of the Arts.

The Stamped Stories project provides an opportunity for the two nonprofits to showcase area artists and present diverse interpretations of the history of the Monmouth Street performance venue throughout the decades.

We invite artists to draw inspiration for their designs from the various time periods, as well as notable events or cultural happenings that took place in the theater. Personal connections are also welcome, for example: Did your grandparents have their first date at the theater? Did you see your first concert or theatrical performance there? We're looking for creative, beautiful, and interesting artworks, and we welcome all perspectives and interpretations for Stamped Stories.

Artist Eligibility: This opportunity is open to artists of all experience levels who are 16 years or older, reside in New Jersey, and are members of Monmouth Arts. Interested in submitting to Stamped Stories but not yet a member? Membership information can be found at www.monmoutharts.org/join-us. Artist memberships are \$40 and student memberships are free.

Fees: There is no fee to submit an application for Stamped Stories, but all applicants must be members of Monmouth Arts.

Artwork: Only original works will be accepted; no copies, no Ai-generated artwork, and no content from manufactured postcards will be accepted. Accepted mediums include acrylic, oil,

watercolor, gouache, pastels, graphite, ink, mixed media, and digital art. Original artwork will be retained by the Stamped Stories throughout the duration of the project.

Submission Requirements

An application will be submitted online and will require the following:

- Contact information: name, address, email, phone number.
- Artist Qualifications: Provide a resume or artist statement (300 words maximum) that highlights your relevant experience and artistic background; include links to website and social media.
- Work Samples: Submit three examples of past work that demonstrate your ability to create artwork for this project.
- Brief narrative of your personal connection to the theater or your inspiration for the work (250 words maximum).
- Artistic Concept: Describe your proposed artwork, including title, decade, media, and size (can be 5 inches x 7 inches or able to be scaled and reproduced at 5 inches x 7 inches; for example, 10 inches x 14 inches).
- Sketch of your proposed artwork: High quality digital images are required.

Postcards will be released by decade on the first of every month in 2026. The decades will be released in this order:

1. January = 2020s
2. February = 2010s
3. March = 2000s
4. April = 1990s
5. May = 1980s
6. June = 1970s
7. July = 1960s
8. August = 1950s
9. September = 1940s
10. October = 1930s
11. November = 1920s

Selection Process: A committee of representatives from Monmouth Arts, the Count Basie Center for the Arts and professional artists will review proposals and select the finalists for each decade. Our panel will focus on the artistic qualities as well as any narrative that may inspire the artwork.

Timeline:

- Application Available: August 14, 2025
- Application Deadline: September 22, 2025 4:00pm
- Artist Notification: October 3, 2025
- Completed Artwork Deadline: October 31, 2025
- Original Artwork Exhibition & Auction: November 2026

Compensation: Selected artists will be paid a fee of \$2,000 for artwork upon completion and acceptance of Stamped Stories artwork. In addition, original artwork will be exhibited at ArtSpace and auctioned at the conclusion of the Centennial Celebration in November 2026; artists will receive 70 percent of auction proceeds.

Submission Instructions: Applications should be submitted electronically through Submittable, our online portal: [Stamped Stories Application](#).

For assistance or questions about submitting to this opportunity please contact Connie Isbell, Membership & Community Engagement Director, at connie@monmoutharts.org; 732.212.1890 ext 101.

FAQs

How will the selection work?

Applications will be reviewed by a panel consisting of professional artists and representatives of Monmouth Arts and the Basie Center for the Arts. We're looking for creative, beautiful, and interesting artworks, and we welcome all perspectives and interpretations for Stamped Stories. Our panel will focus on the artistic qualities as well as any narrative that may inspire the artwork.

Can I enter more than once?

Artists may submit up to three Stamped Stories concepts, depicting up to three different decades.

How will the artwork be used for the Centennial Celebration?

Chosen artworks will be printed as postcards to be distributed by The Count Basie Center for the Arts and Monmouth Arts. Original artwork will be retained and exhibited in November 2026 at ArtSpace, Monmouth Arts' gallery and community space, as part of the conclusion of the Celebration. Images will be shared on social media and websites, with artist credit noted.

What fees will be paid to artists whose work is chosen?

Selected artists who enter into a contract for Stamped Stories will be paid a fee of \$2,000. Original artwork will be auctioned at the conclusion of the Centennial Celebration in November 2026; artists will receive 70 percent of auction proceeds.

What mediums can be used to create artwork?

Accepted mediums include acrylic, oil, watercolor, gouache, pastels, graphite, ink, mixed media, and digital art.

Should artists incorporate seasonal imagery to match the month/decade of the submission?

Seasonal vibes are welcome but not mandatory.

Can I use AI to create my artwork?

No, AI-generated artworks will not be accepted..

Other Questions?

If you have other questions regarding this call for applications, please contact Connie Isbell at connie@monmoutharts.org.