



THE STORIES OF US



IMPACT REPORT 2024 - 2025



The Stories of Us is a nonprofit dedicated to amplifying local stories and civic imagination in cities across the United States.

We operate at the intersection of art and belonging in public spaces through our temporary outdoor art installations, on-site artist-led activations, and storytelling platform which builds connectivity between the artwork, artists, audiences and place.

This report details the impact that The Stories of Us has had during its 2024 - 2025 exhibitions.

WHAT WE DO.

EXHIBITIONS

Our exhibitions offer the public an opportunity to gather in shared space, to connect over a range of lived experiences in the United States - multiracial, multiethnic, multifaith and more.

ACTIVATIONS

Our exhibitions come to life with a program of interactive, creative, communal activations and educational activities designed by local artists and organizations that are always free.

STORYTELLING

Our digital storytelling platform currently includes Instagram and Bloomberg Connects audio guide. Using our ten narrative themes, we project our artists voices and invite our audience to imagine their own stories.

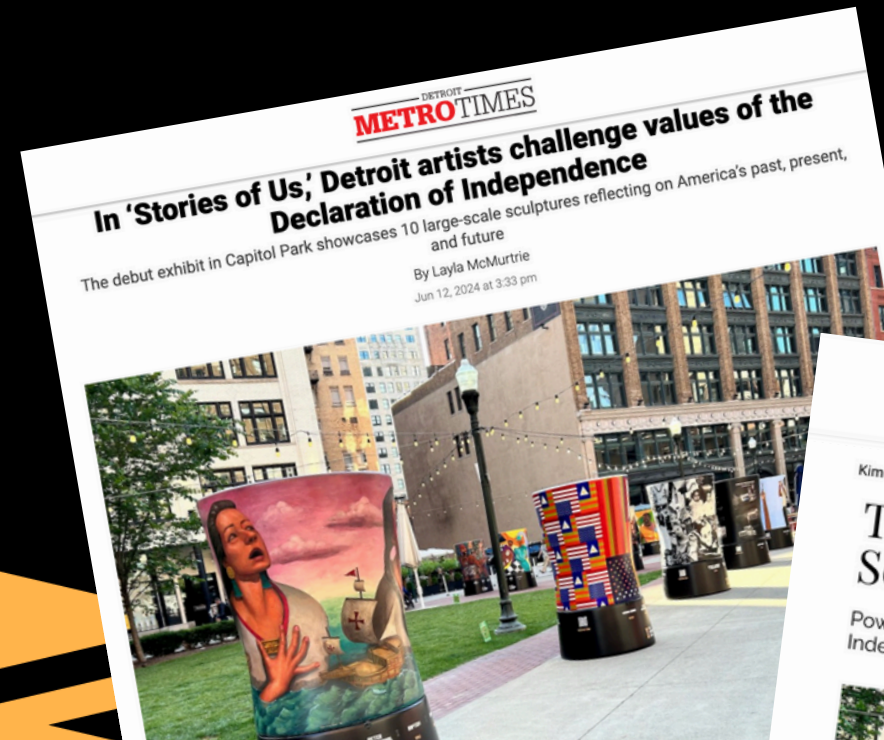
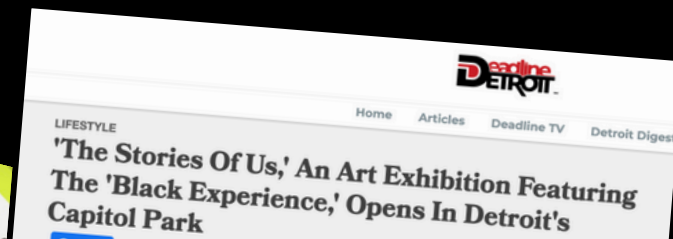
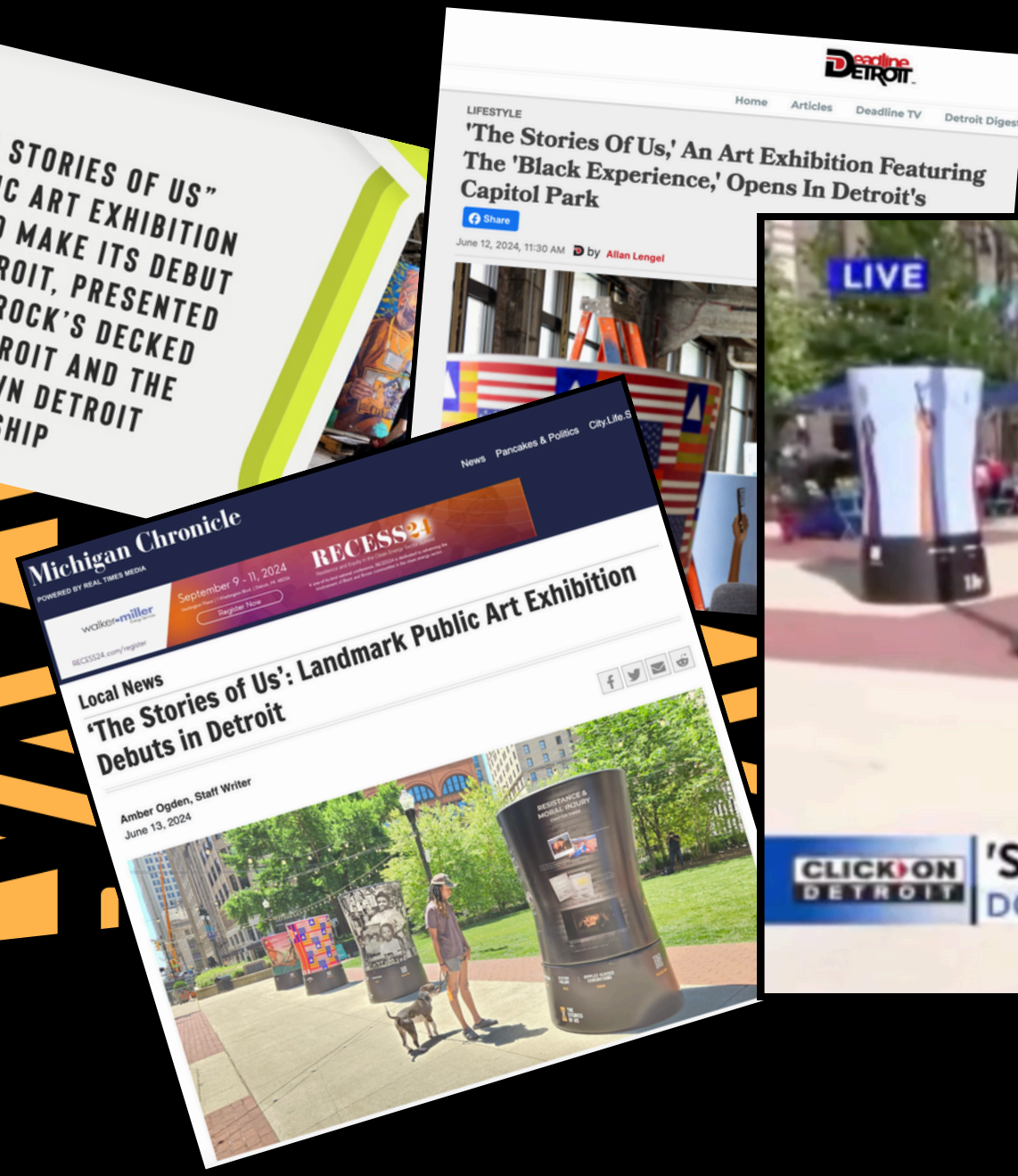


IN THE MEDIA.

We had extraordinary feedback, typified by this comment by Melissa Noel:

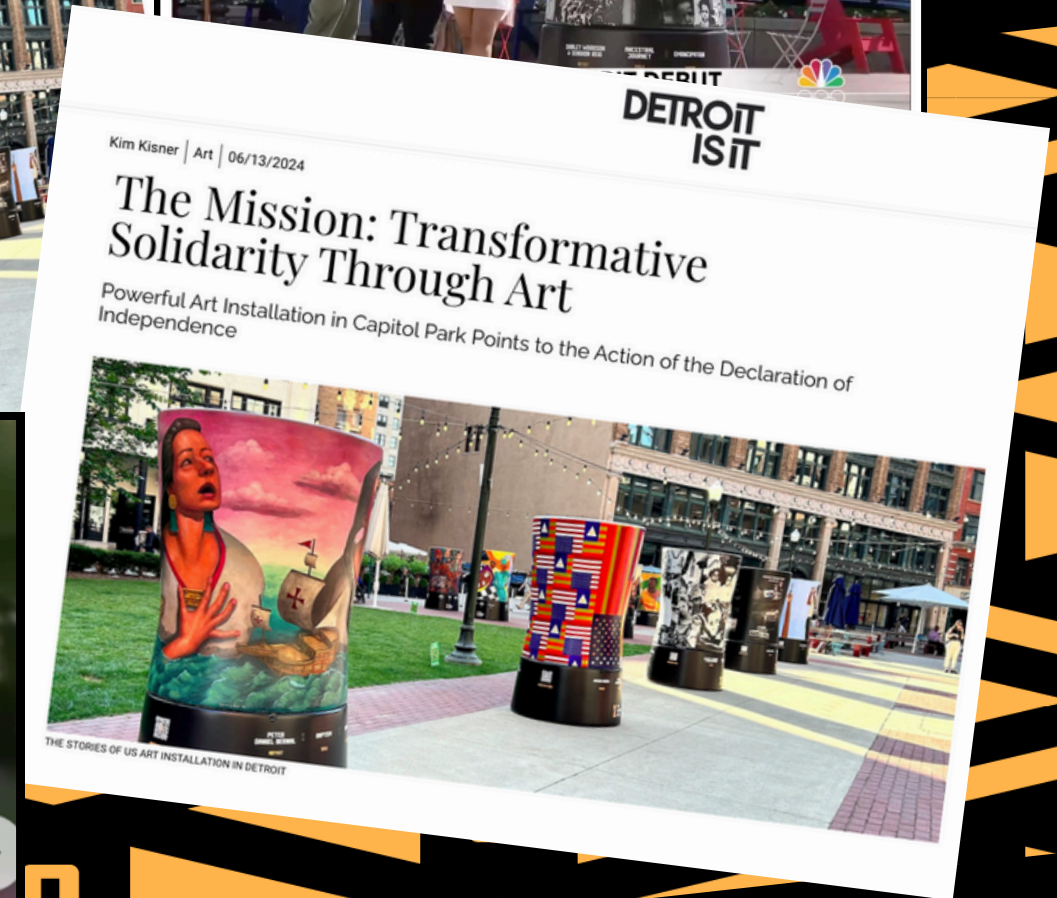
“These sculptures don’t try to give us answers. Instead, they ask big questions—about belonging, justice, and how we remember. It’s a reminder that art can spark the kind of honest reflection that global institutions don’t always make room for.”

“THE STORIES OF US”
PUBLIC ART EXHIBITION
SET TO MAKE ITS DEBUT
IN DETROIT, PRESENTED
BY BEDROCK’S DECKED
OUT DETROIT AND THE
DOWNTOWN DETROIT
PARTNERSHIP



Declaration of Independence inspires 'Stories of Us' art exhibit in Detroit

All 10 sculptures are in the shape of African drums, an instrument culturally key to storytelling



[CLICK TO WATCH](#)



IMPACT SUMMARY.

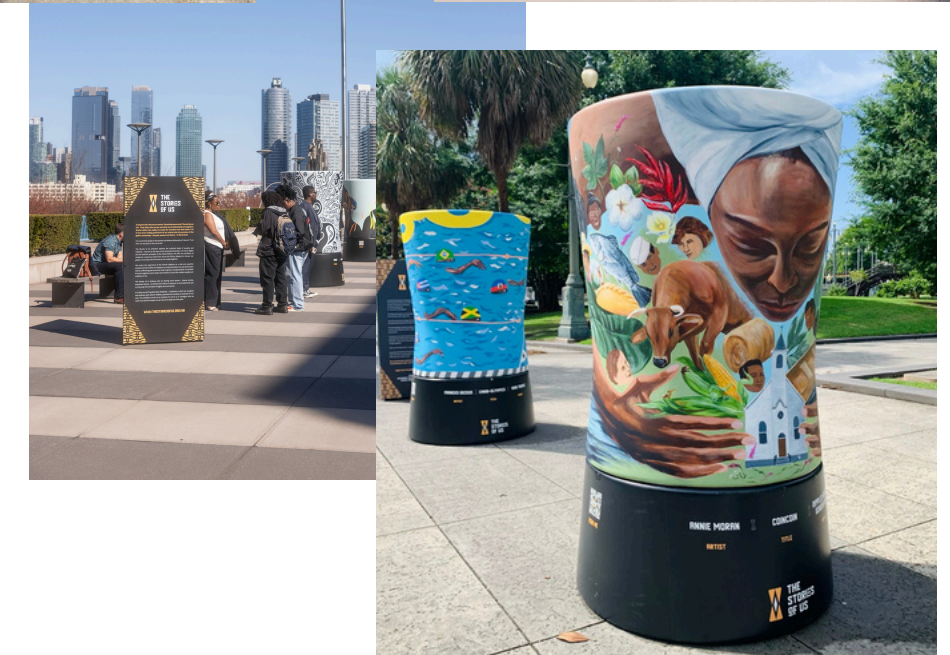
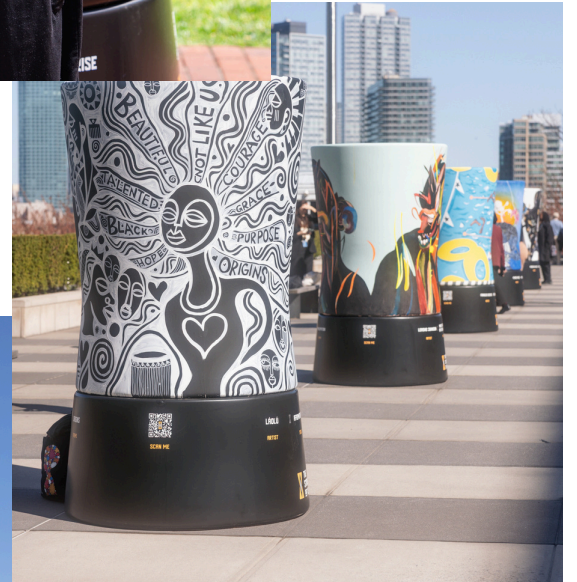
Our impact from 2024-2025 has been broad and deep. Over the past 18 months, we have reached an audience of 1.75 million people through our website, sculpture exhibitions and audio guide, and have had nearly 8 million media impressions. Within the nationwide artistic coalition we are building, the impact has been lasting. Below we share a synopsis of our findings from qualitative data that we have collected through interviews and questionnaires.

In the **communities** where we exhibited, visitors reported:

- **Increased Sense of Pride of Place and Belonging:**
 - This is rooted in: (i) pride in hosting a major, high-quality art exhibition; (ii) pride in local stories and artists being represented; (iii) the feeling of being represented and valued in public space; (iv) the communal experience of visiting the exhibition and exploring the storytelling platforms together; (v) the themes guiding audiences to engage with shared past and present, both good and painful, but with a firm eye on the uplifting and the future.
- **Increased Sense of Agency & Civic Engagement:**
 - Engaging with the stories and themes of The Stories of Us builds a sense of agency.
- **Increased Exposure to High Quality Art:**
 - The public placement of the sculptures allows for a long dwell time to engage with the art. This is particularly important for communities that may not have access to or feel able to access institutional exhibitions. The art also has relatable subjects with which they can identify.

In our nationwide **artistic coalition**, we have:

- **Increased Direct Commissions:**
 - Artists have reported getting work based on the sculpture they created.
- **Invested in Artistic Talent:**
 - The \$10,000 commission was the largest to date for many of our artists.
- **Expanded Profiles Locally and Nationally:**
 - Featuring in a high profile, high traffic public event (and public talks and tours) has enabled artists to build their profiles locally and beyond their host city.
- **Connected Artistic Community of Practice:**
 - This connectivity led to new collaborations between commissioned artists.



OUR IMPACT STATS (SO FAR).

Our **mission** is to inspire a culture of storytelling that fosters belonging and connection as civic acts, in digital and physical public spaces in the United States of America.

Reaching broad audiences

1.73M+

in-person audience.

7.9M+

media impressions.

Supporting creative talent

\$568,261

invested into artists, through commissions or fees.

31 visual artists
directly supported.

Offering public access

10

exhibition
locations.

5

cities across the
United States.

24/7

access for 6
locations.



Dynamic programming

6

public
dialogues.

28

guided
tours.

1302

audio guide
tours.

Creating new opportunities

30

sculpture
commissions.

1

poetry
commission.

2

film maker
commissions.

ARTISTIC HIGHLIGHTS.

DETROIT 2024

The inaugural 10 sculptures were featured in the CBD's Capitol Park, Robert C. Valade Park on the Riverfront, and at the AfroNation music festival. In Capitol Park, we were part of the core programming for a Juneteenth celebration.



ATLANTA 2024

Our 10 sculptures made in Detroit moved to the PolicyLink Equity Summit in 2024. We led a breakout session dialogue with our CEO and one of our artists, and sponsored 2 other artists to attend the conference.



UNITED NATIONS HQ 2025

We exhibited 5 new sculptures at the UN Headquarters and were featured during the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (where we joined a panel on art & activism), and the UN International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery.

BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK 2025

Following the UN we featured 15 sculptures at Brooklyn Bridge Park for a month.



CLEVELAND 2025

We exhibited on Mall C, next to City Hall, and in the historic Tower City Center. On Mall C, we showed 10 sculptures during the city's highly popular Juneteenth Freedom Festival and Machine Gun Kelly Day celebration. In Tower City we featured 20 sculptures in the Skylight Park atrium.



NEW ORLEANS 2025

We exhibited 10 drums at the historic Armstrong Park where we were part of the city's Juneteenth celebration.

ESSENCE FEST 2025

We exhibited the NOLA drums at the 31st Annual ESSENCE Festival of Culture where we were featured in two poetry activations and a panel with partner DTRF.



KEEPING IT LOCAL.



\$10,000

commission for each sculpture

20s - 80s

age span of artists

The Stories of Us is committed to making space for local voices to be heard so we commission new sculptures in each of our host cities.

Visual artists

Our artists who created sculptures were visual artists with social practices that engaged their communities through visual representation, education, mentoring, and direct programming.

They include photographers, collagists, painters, illustrators, muralists and a fresco artist.



Performing Artists

In New York, we commissioned our first local poet to create a poem in response to our narrative framework.



In addition to artists, The Stories of Us supports the creative ecosystem in each host city.

5

small businesses and start ups supported

4

BIPOC owned consultancies hired

\$187,500

paid to craftspeople for sculpture fabrication by hand

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING.

Visual artists

“The Stories of Us provided a safe space for me to write a love letter to the incoming class of future superheroes, while lending a platform for me to tell a story, only I can tell.” - Khary Mason (artist)

“This project...has shown me how creative work can foster critical conversations, challenge narratives, and serve as a bridge between communities. More than ever, I see my role as an artist not just in creating, but in using my work to amplify voices, address systemic issues, and contribute to meaningful change.” - Ackeem Salmon (artist)



Performing artist

“I’m truly grateful for the care, time and consideration you all put in to make this project intentional and clear about your stance as an organization.” - Brittany Barker (poet)



Partners

“I hope everyone experiences this powerful exhibition -- and contributes their own story to the ongoing work of making that future irresistible.” - Michael McAfee (CEO of PolicyLink)

“In each location, the sculptures created an inviting space to explore the stories of our brilliant Detroit-based artists. The transformative work of building a community for everyone requires spaces that bring people together, to truly see one another and see a role for themselves in creating a future rooted in connectedness.” - Kofi Bonner (CEO of Bedrock)

Audience member

“Storytelling - it breaks barriers. What this exhibit does is it gives space for people to connect beyond race, beyond location - it creates connection through stories.”

- Sarah K. (visitor)

WHAT'S NEXT?

On July 4, 2026, the United States will mark its Semiquincentennial – its 250th anniversary. This is a momentous opportunity to reflect on our shared history and reimagine our collective future.

Together, as storytelling vessels, this exhibition contributes to a national ongoing conversation about equality outlined in The Declaration of Independence. This Semiquincentennial exhibition offers the public an opportunity to gather in shared space, to connect over a range of lived experiences - multiracial, multiethnic, multifaith and more - and engage with the American story not as something fixed, but as evolving and requiring participation. To this end, artists invite their communities to engage with the exhibition as an imaginative act in a civic space, meant for all.

OUR FOUR GOALS.

01

Expand the Collection.....

We are looking to add up to 20 new sculptures to our current collection of 30. We are eager to include more perspectives from Asian, Pacific Islander, Indigenous, and Arab artists....

02

Build the Storytelling Platform.....

Working with community-based partners, artistic communities and research-based outreach, we will invite a carefully curated community of participants to create videos that tell their story in response to the prompts. Additionally, we are creating a platform for ANYONE to share their stories in response to our narrative themes.....

03

Visit New Host Cities.....

We have active conversations with cities across the country about commissioning new sculptures and exhibiting the collection....

04

Grow Our Audience.....

We are looking to scale through our digital platform expansion and grow our online audience to 50K.....

Questions? Comments? Feedback?
Please reach out at annie@thestoriesofus.org

PARTNERSHIPS AND PEOPLE.

Funders:



Leonard C Hanna Jr Cleveland Mall Beautification Fund



Commissioned Artists:

Ackeem Salmon
Alanis Forde
Alicia Vasquez
Alyssa Lizzini
Annie Moran
Ashley Teamer
Ayo Scott
Brandon Graves
Cailyn Dawson
Darius Baber
Da'Shaunae Marisa
DeAnn Wiley
Donald Black Jr.
Francks Deceus
Gina Washington
Hubert Massey

Isaiah Williams (Starbeing)
Jerome T. White
Juniper Jones
Khary Mason
Laolu
Leasho Johnson
Leigh Brooklyn
Marryam Moma
Monique Lorden
Nathalie Bermudez
Nicole Macdonald
Peter Daniel Bernal
Senghor Reid
Shirley Woodson
Teneille Prosper

Partners:



Thank you to the extraordinary community of people who have contributed to The Stories of Us!

Special thanks to our

Advisory Board members:

Carrie Mae Weems, Chris Ofili, Dennis Marcus, Justin Hansford, Michael McAfee, and Paul Farber