



Office of the Director & CEO

MEDIA RELEASE

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Alpha - Romeo - Tango (ART) Program

*Engaging Art Classes for the Stark County Military Community,
Focused on Creative Self-Expression and Community Connection*



Canton Museum of Art Awarded Community Engagement Grant from Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network *Engaging Art Classes for the Stark County Military Community, Focused on Creative Self-Expression and Community Connection*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (June 25, 2025, Canton, OH) — The Canton Museum of Art (CMA) is proud to announce that it is one of 48 organizations across the U.S. that were awarded a Creative Forces Community Engagement Grant, part of the Creative Forces®: NEA Military Healing Arts Network. The grant supports community-based arts projects that aim to address the experiences, challenges, and strengths of our military communities at all levels – active duty to veteran.

CMA's Community Engagement Grant will support the Museum's Alpha-Romeo-Tango (ART) Program, now in its second year providing healing, engaging benefits of art-making to the Stark County military community. Led by artist/teaching artist and military spouse, Susan Mentrak, the ART Program is offered free and in collaboration with allied

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artistic programming from the Military and First Responders Center at Pegasus Farm, a local military-serving nonprofit. This is CMA's second Creative Forces grant.

The focus of ART is a 10-week series of art classes, both Fall and Winter sessions, for hand-building clay creations and culminating in a community celebration at the Museum. Participants get to experiment and express themselves through their own art, share their stories, and connect with each other and the greater community – with the benefits of increasing well-being and building resilience.

Related programming with Pegasus Farm's Military and First Responders Center (M&FRC) will include "Day of Clay" workshops, as well as "Art & Creative Writing" and "Art & Music" events, in which participants of all ages can express themselves creatively. These are presented in collaboration with M&FRC, Mentrak, and CMA's Education Director, Amanda Crowe.

CMA Director & CEO Max Barton II said, "The ART Program aligns directly with our mission to make art and its inspiration accessible and meaningful for all. The program uses the creative process for participants to be inspired, relax, create, and have a finished work of art to reflect upon with pride.

"ART's clay classes allow participants to feel connected, like they belong to a larger community — and through art, to feel like they can share their stories. It's all about self-expression, pride, and connectedness. We are proud to serve those who serve us."

The partnership with artist Mentrak and with the M&FRC creates an impactful new collaboration for CMA, extending the Museum's reach and effectively combining services to provide meaningful experiences of art(s) not previously available for military populations in our local community.

One veteran participant from CMA's 2024-25 ART Program summed it up: "I had no clue on how to construct and make something with clay, I now feel fairly confident with the techniques I learned. I found working with the clay so relaxing and meditative. I have a creative side I love tapping into."

Barton said, "The purpose of our ART Program aligns precisely with the Creative Forces Community Engagement Grant Program objectives to 'promote the health, well-being, and overall quality of life of military-connected individuals by understanding their needs and providing access to community arts experiences.'"

Learn more about CMA's ART Program at: cantonart.org/AlphaRomeoTango

More than \$886,000 in Creative Forces grants were awarded to 48 organizations across the U.S., all to help military-connected communities connect and heal. Learn more at: arts.gov/CreativeForces

About Canton Museum of Art

As one of Ohio's premier art museums, the Canton Museum of Art is recognized for powerful, original exhibitions focused on American art and its influences, hosting more than 50,000 visitors each year and making the exploration of art accessible to all. The

Museum's education outreach programs, School of Art classes, and workshops bring art and creative spark to thousands of students of all ages, while its art therapy program promotes health and well-being across Stark County. CMA's acclaimed Collection focuses on American works on paper, primarily watercolors, and contemporary ceramics. The CMA Shop, featuring curated local and regional artisan made gifts, is open during regular Museum hours. Founded in 1935, CMA is celebrating its 90th Anniversary in 2025, Visit CantonArt.org and follow the Museum on Facebook® and Instagram® for updates.

CMA operating, exhibition, education programs, and marketing support provided in part by: ArtsInStark, The Hoover Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Ohio Arts Council, Ohio Humanities, PNC Foundation, Stark Community Foundation; and Visit Canton.

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