

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Dan Armstrong
(847) 749-9675
darmstrong@njhumanities.org

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NJCH Announces Commissions for Visualizing Democracy Initiative

(Camden, NJ) – The New Jersey Council for the Humanities has announced two project commissions within its *Visualizing Democracy: Contemporary Conversations* initiative. Each commission is for \$5,000. The commissions follow a request for proposals for digital projects that will explore, curate, and visualize a recently created [conversation archive](#) on the state of democracy within New Jersey and beyond. The initiative is an outgrowth of NJCH's [Democracy Conversation Project](#).

Commissioned Projects

April Merl will create an animated short video to visualize different themes within the "What does it mean to be a good citizen?" Democracy Conversation Project responses. Merl intends to analyze how these themes may vary by age, urban vs. non-urban areas, and other points of comparison. Voice-over artist Katharine Houston-Voss will narrate the video, which will be housed on Vimeo. Merl also hopes to submit the video to NJ film festivals. Merl is a filmmaker based in South Orange, NJ.

Melody Marshall will create a digital interactive newspaper drawing from Democracy Conversation Project responses related to misinformation as a challenge to democracy. The newspaper will include crosswords, articles, filmed interviews with media professionals, political cartoons, and other features to convey these conversations within the archive. Marshall intends to use part of her award funds to commission artists for pieces that will be displayed in the digital newspaper. Marshall is an artist and educator based in Woodbury, NJ.

About The Democracy Conversation Project

Since 2021, DCP has facilitated discourse about the state of our democracy among New Jersey residents. The project has included a series of virtual conversations with public figures hosted by eight New Jersey community colleges, a tour of the Smithsonian traveling exhibit *Voices & Votes: Democracy in America*, and the "Community Conversations" effort, which collected responses from New Jerseyans via "Storyboxes" at 17 locations across the state and the [program's website](#).