



109 Danforth Street, Portland, ME 04101

Request for Qualifications

Victoria Mansion, a 501c3 non-profit organization, is seeking a BIPOC artist to create an illustration for our *Unwilling Architects Initiative*, which works to uncover the lives of the individuals enslaved in New Orleans by Ruggles and Olive Morse, the first owners of the house. The work is being partially funded by Coffee by Design's Rebel Blend Fund. This work will hang in Victoria Mansion as a long-term to permanent exhibit.

Project Overview

Since 2021, our [Unwilling Architects Initiative](#) has prompted extensive research into the lives of the 27 Black and mixed-race individuals known to have been enslaved in New Orleans by the Morses, the Mansion's first owners. This effort has begun to uncover much about these enslaved persons, whose uncompensated labor in Louisiana contributed to the fortune that built Victoria Mansion. This important work endeavors to shine a light on these individuals' lives and bring their stories into the full human history of this landmark property.

According to Timothy Brosnihan, Executive Director, "Through bringing the individuals enslaved by the Morses back into the story of Victoria Mansion and American history, we are engaging the arts to reach our community in a much deeper way. By sharing works of art to engage visitors we can develop a fuller awareness and understanding of people's lived experience."

Also known as the Morse-Libby House, Victoria Mansion was built between 1858 and 1860 as a summer home for two people, Ruggles Sylvester Morse and his wife Olive. Though both from Maine, the Morse family made their home in New Orleans, Louisiana. Morse made his fortune operating luxury hotels, although he also invested in many side businesses, as well as being an active participant in the slave economy that was so pervasive in New Orleans. This spectacular

summer home was designed by the architect Henry Austin of New Haven, CT, and is widely considered one of the finest examples of the Italian Villa style in America.

Timeline

March 20, 2025 Letter of Interest due

April 15, 2025 Shortlist of artists announced and sample sketch commissioned

June 1, 2025 Sample sketch due

July 1, 2025 Final artist chosen

Fall 2025 Production of artwork and artist reception

Required RFQ Response

To be considered for this commission, please submit a letter of interest by 5PM on March 15, 2025. Include an artist bio, references, and 3-5 examples of your work that most closely illustrate the final scope of work (detailed below).

Your package can be emailed to Staci Hanscom, Director of Education & Public Programs, at shanscom@victoriamansion.org.

Visual References

See below for images of Mansion, location artwork will be displayed, and current exhibition space.

We are seeking a 2-dimensional work in color, with a size of approximately 2'8" w x 3' h.

Explanation of selection process

Based on the submittals from the RFQ, the client will select a shortlist of 2-3 artists for follow-up submissions and a visit to the Mansion to view the space. These artists will be asked for sample sketches for the project.

Outline of Final Scope

The anticipated final work should be:

1. One 2-dimensional work of an approximate size of 2'8" w x 3' h that can be hung on a painted interior wall.
2. The work should be in color.

3. Should visually narrate the lives of the people enslaved by the Morses in New Orleans.

All illustrations are to be based on references and descriptions provided by the client.

For the piece, the artist should provide:

- Pencil sketch.
- Revised sketches based on client input. Expect up to three rounds of revisions.
- Digital files of final art.

A reception for the unveiling of the final artwork will be held after completion. Ideally, the artist will be present at this reception.

The digital art file will be used by Victoria Mansion in online spaces (e.g., museum website and newsletter) and for educational programs (e.g., school programming, lectures relating to the research initiative). Where possible in online spaces, an artist's statement may be included with the visual of the work. The Mansion may also reproduce the artwork for printed materials including but not limited to annual reports, publications, and museum-related merchandise and promotional materials. The artist will be properly attributed in all reproductions of the work; where possible, links to the artist's portfolio, social media, or contact information will also be included at the artist's discretion.

An exhibition label will be crafted by Mansion staff and the artist cooperatively, to be hung alongside the installed artwork.

Compensation

The selected artist will receive a commission stipend of \$3,000.

Visual References



Victoria Mansion Stair Hall, interior reference –
artwork will be exhibited in back hall



Interior painted decoration sample



Interior painted decoration sample



Victoria Mansion exterior