

January 15, 2024  
Voyageur Media Group, Inc.  
Artwork Commission



## **Artist's Renderings: Request for Proposals** **Greater Cincinnati's Early Photographic History (1839-1869)**

Voyageur Media Group, Inc. is producing a one-hour documentary, "Capturing Life" (1839-1869), the first episode in our three-hour series *The Big Picture: A History of Photography in Greater Cincinnati*. The production team seeks an artist to create a series of color artist's renderings depicting seven scenes of early photography in Greater Cincinnati from 1839 to 1869. Voyageur is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the creation of public media about science, history and culture. The production team has commissioned artworks for several documentary projects, including *The Ancient Ohio Art Series*, and *Ancient Fires at Cliff Palace Pond*, *Davis Bottom: Rare History Valuable Lives* and *Creelsboro and the Cumberland: A Living History* in historical scenes for the Kentucky Archaeological and Heritage Series. The deadline for proposals is **February 26, 2024** by 5:00 pm. Project website: <https://voyageurmedia.org/projects/the-big-picture-a-history-of-photography-in-greater-cincinnati-home/>

**Commission:** Voyageur is commissioning the creation of seven artist's renderings for \$3,500 or \$500 per scene. Half of the commission will be paid up front and half upon final delivery. Voyageur will also provide the artist with detailed descriptions and archival images of the people (photographers and subjects), cameras and studio gear, sets, period dress, studios, and settings to be depicted in each scene (see pages two and three).

**Size/Style/Medium:** The artwork needs to at least 24' x 16" (horizontal) for use in the documentary (16 x 9 HD TV aspect ratio), as well as display in exhibits. The artist may choose his or her style and medium for the artist's renderings, which may include pencil sketches commonly used in lithographs during the 1840s-1860s, or paintings in watercolor, acrylic or oil. The final artwork is to be delivered as a matt (before any varnish or finish) for high-resolution photography.

**Proposals:** Please provide a one-page proposal by February 26 with: A) a one-page cover letter highlighting your experience and your recommended style and medium for the artworks, B) a one-page resume, and C) three samples of related artworks (JPG image files). Send your proposal via email to: Tom Law, Project Director, Voyageur Media Group, Inc. Email: [contactus@voyageurmedia.org](mailto:contactus@voyageurmedia.org) Voyageur will acknowledge your submission has been received. Please email with any questions.

### **Commission Timeline:**

February 26, 2024: Proposal deadline.

March 11, 2024: Artist selection and notifications.

March 12-15, 2024: Artwork meeting (in person or Zoom) with Voyageur Project Director, delivery of half commission and background materials (images, documents, descriptions).

April 8, 2024: Review #1: Artworks rough sketches.

May 6, 2024: Review #2: Artworks first draft.

June 4, 2024: Review #3: Artworks second draft.

June 18, 2024: Final delivery, second half commission.

## Artist's Renderings: Request for Proposals

### Greater Cincinnati's Early Photographic History (1839-1869)

#### Illustration 1: Display of First Experimental Photographs (Spring of 1839).

This illustration captures the moment when residents in Greater Cincinnati first viewed what would come to be known as a photograph. In the spring of 1839, Dr. John Locke, a professor of chemistry at the Ohio Medical College, experimented with a process known as "photogenic drawings" developed by William Henry Fox Talbot in England. Dr. John Locke may have been the first person in America to create and display a photograph. From historical records, we know Locke's experimental images were displayed in the bookstore of Alexander Flash on Third Street in downtown Cincinnati. The scene shows a crowd of five to seven people who are looking in the bookstore window as Alexander Flash places the final of five experimental photogenic drawings into a display. Some in the crowd turn to show varying expressions from amazement to dismissal. Dr. John Locke (portrait available) is seen standing inside the bookstore with a calm expression of satisfaction. Until this moment, no one in Greater Cincinnati had ever seen what would come to be known as a photograph.



Image: John Locke portrait, date unknown, from "Biographical Sketch of Dr. John Locke," by Louis A. Bauer, *Scientific Monthly*, June 1924.

#### Illustration 2: "Gallery of Cincinnati Pioneers." (1845)

Ezekiel Hawkins is shown discussing one of the twelve to twenty Daguerreotype portraits in his "Gallery of the Pioneers of this City..." an exhibit in Hawkins & Faris Studio in Cincinnati in 1845. Standing near Hawkins are several of the living pioneers (men and women), reporters and dignitaries during a grand opening for this landmark exhibit. A wall of Daguerreotypes depicting other pioneer men and women (representational) stretches down two sides of the gallery with visitors closely admiring the photographs.



Image: Ezekiel Hawkins, portrait *Ohio archaeological and historical quarterly*, Volume 6, 1898.

Reference Images: While its unknown if any of the surviving daguerreotypes attributed to Hawkins were in this gallery, here are two from the 1840s for use as references. *Pioneer Woman*, Hawkins portrait, Ohio History Connection. Ethan Stone, Hawkins, mid 1840s, Cincinnati Art Museum.



#### Illustration 3: "1848 Cincinnati Panorama." (September 24, 1848)

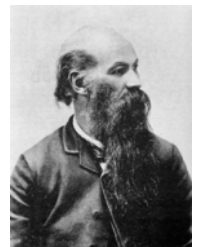
On September 24, 1848, photographers Charles H. Fontayne and William Southgate Porter stood on the roof of a two-story building in Newport, Kentucky to photograph an eight-plate panorama of Cincinnati, which is on exhibit at the Cincinnati Public Library. We need an illustration of this 1848 event, but from a reverse perspective that shows Charles Fontayne (no known image) and William Porter (image available) taking the daguerreotypes using an 1848 style camera, daguerreotype plates and a tripod with a panorama bracket. The background shows a series of rooftops, steeples and distant hills looking south. 1848 Cincinnati Panorama: <https://1848.cincinnati.library.org/>



Image: William S. Porter, daguerreotype, Cincinnati Public Library.

#### Illustration 4: James Ball's workshop (1854/1855)

The illustration shows the studio workshop on the third floor of James P. Ball "Great Daguerreian Gallery of the West" at No. 28 West Fourth Street in downtown Cincinnati. Ball's studio was comprised of three floors. The second floor was his Great Daguerreian Gallery, for which we have a color engraving. The fourth floor was Ball's photographic studio (see Illustration 5). Illustration 4 depicts activities in Ball's workshop on the third floor. The workshop shows James P. Ball, Elizabeth Ball (his sister), Alexander S. Thomas (his son-in-law), Thomas Ball (his brother), artist Robert S. Duncanson and several other staff members working on the final fixing of daguerreotype plates, placing daguerreotypes



in cases, Duncanson hand tinting a daguerreotype, and an artist painting a local scene on canvas for Ball's "Mammoth Pictorial" panorama.

Image: *James P. Ball, portrait, Seattle's Black Victorians, 1852-1901*, by Esther Hall Mumford, Ananse Press, Seattle.

Image (left): *Alexander Thomas, portrait, undated*, Cincinnati Art Museum.

Image (right): *Robert S. Duncanson portrait, 1864*, McCord Museum.



#### **Illustration 5: James Ball's studio, (1862, Underground Railroad photograph)**

In September of 1862, James P. Ball took a clandestine photograph at his studio in Cincinnati. The surviving carte-de-visite documents a rare moment in time along the Underground Railroad route of Levi Coffin. The illustration will feature the moment J.P. Ball photographed an unidentified African American woman who was secreted out of Kentucky by two Union soldiers (dressed in civilian clothes) from the Wisconsin 22 Regiment. Ball is joined by an assistant who is handling a daguerreotype plate, and a few abolitionist leaders who are helping the young woman find freedom.



Image: African American woman and two Union soldiers, 1862, Library of Congress.

#### **Illustration 6: Mammoth Cave. (July - August, 1866)**

In the summer of 1866, Charles Waldack led a photography expedition to use magnesium flash to photograph inside Mammoth Cave. Waldack's images, "Magnesium Light Views in Mammoth Cave," are the first photographs ever taken underground in the world. The illustration's POV is from behind Waldack's stereoscopic camera as he and his crew of four prepare to take a photograph of two cave guides (used for scale) near the bridge at "Reveler's Hall" in front of the "Bottomless Pit." The resulting image was labeled "Beyond the Bridge of Sighs." The focus of the illustration is to show the difficulty Waldack's team faced using dozens of magnesium tapers, reflectors and glass plates in a damp environment (waterfall, dripping formations) to illuminate the pitch-black void. We only see a medium shot of the two guides. The illustration shows the massive space surrounding the site and the gear and coordination need to produce this one image.



Image: "Beyond the Bridge of Sighs," Magnesium Light Views in Mammoth Cave," Charles Waldack, 1866, Library of Congress.

#### **Illustration 7: Roebling Bridge panorama (c.1866 )**

The illustration depicts John Wildman Winder as he and an assistant set up their camera on the top of the south tower to take a famous panorama of the John A. Roebling Suspension bridge during construction. The illustration focuses on Winder's camera crew on the south tower amidst construction workers who are mounting the suspension cables across the span. The illustration will lead into a reveal of the actual Winder panorama. Winder took another panoramic series from Devou Park that shows the south tower in the distance for context.

Image: *View of Cincinnati*, John W. Winder, c. 1866, Library of Congress.

