



**W**ith SPARK on the Circle in 2022, the artist-led cultural and community organization Big Car Collaborative is teaming up with Downtown Indy and the City of Indianapolis, with support from the Capital Improvement Board, to spark downtown with free, human-scale activities like playing games, enjoying live music, making art, and socializing in a comfortable place. All SPARK activities are free for everyone to enjoy.

## What are we doing?

With arts-based approaches, we're teaming up to add extra energy, fun, and interest at Monument Circle.

**Why?** The Circle is the civic, social, cultural, and historic heart of our city – a place for all of us.

**When?** Monday through Friday 11 am to 2 pm, Wednesday and Friday evenings, and special fall events on weekend days. Through late October.

**Where?** SPARK works all around Monument Circle. We're based out of the southwest quad of the

corner in front of Emmis and next to South Bend Chocolate Company.

**How are we doing this?** With the support of our partners and funders, we're adding temporary furnishings like astro turf and bistro chairs along with free activities like big jenga and ping pong and entertainment like live music and all-ages creative activities.

**Who is it for?** SPARK is for everyone! At Big Car Collaborative, we work to ensure that public spaces and places in our city are welcoming and accessible for everyone. This means making places people can access physically (removing physical barriers and making it safe and easy to access by foot, bike, and public transit) and financially (removing cost burdens that exclude some people).

**Who is doing the work?** Big Car is run by and employs artists. Everything with SPARK, is likewise led and staffed by Indianapolis-based artists with the goal of supporting these artists who are a vital part of our community, culture, and economy.

## What are our goals?

1. **Honor the history and civic importance** of Monument Circle while working to bring vitality to the space today and support a bright future for the Circle.
2. **Help improve the quality of life** of those who enjoy the Circle by supporting a thriving, welcoming, inclusive, comfortable, and fun civic and social space in the center of our city.
3. **Provide enjoyable, memorable, and surprising experiences** for visitors to Indianapolis from across the state, region, country, and globe.
4. **Support Indianapolis artists** working in many genres. Co-leaders in this work, artists are a crucial part of what makes our city unique, creative, connected, innovative, and beautiful.
5. **Spark economic opportunities for local business owners and entrepreneurs** — including artists. SPARK focuses on supporting Downtown businesses on or near Monument Circle.

**Background:** You might remember, in 2015, that Big Car Collaborative teamed up with the City, Downtown Indy, and many others to test — over a stretch of one summer — the big idea of prioritizing Monument Circle for people. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts along with support from CICF and the City, this project (also called SPARK) proved very successful. Check out more about that project here.

What we're doing now — hopefully on an ongoing basis — is very much like what we saw with this first SPARK and the extraordinary cultural experiences and artful infrastructure it brought to Monument Circle.

## What to expect in 2022

### Human scale, daily offerings

**Circle Sounds** — During all open hours Big Car artists are programming Circle Sounds through the Circle's amazing audio speakers. Circle Sounds is a mix of upbeat instrumentals — from jazz to world music to pop — that also includes local musicians. In between batches of songs, we share about SPARK and offer bits of audio projects being created there. This includes poems from visitors, quick thoughts on why they love the Circle, and more. Circle Sounds is also broadcast across the city on our non-commercial radio station WQRT 99.1 FM.

**All weekdays** — A range of pop-up offerings and opportunities to play games, make art, record poems, send free postcards, hang out in a shady spot, and get info from staff artists on site.

**Tuesdays** — Each week at noon we offer Lunchbreak Live featuring local musicians curated by Books — a local musician also working for the Cultural Trail, and Arts Council.

**Wednesdays** — Guided walks about history and culture offered in the evening as well as mellow ambient music and the “playground in a box” available for family visitors to enjoy.

**Thursdays** — Quick-stop artist interactions and hands-on activities ranging from weaving and pottery, to music

making, to numerology, to just talking with an artist or expert, to panel chats.

**Fridays** — Open until 9 pm for people enjoying the Circle and getting started on the weekend.

### Bigger projects

**Circle artist in residence** — Yeabsera Tabb is working on a variety of ideas related to play and exploring the Circle. She's working with us part-time as the Circle artist and will be part of our culminating events noted below, participate in the audio aspects of the work, and be present at the Circle during much of our artist-led programming.

**Circle Anthology** — Working with literary partners (potentially Indiana Humanities and the Writers Center of Indiana), we'll commission two paid poets per week for their poems or flash fiction about the Circle. These will air on WQRT FM during Circle Sounds playing from the Circle speakers when we're open there. Some of the poems will be printed and temporarily added to the Circle area via vinyl. We will also do a live reading on the Circle with this group during our celebration event planned for a weekend day in October. All of the writers will be paid.

**Here Here Hear** — A site-specific event where art is happening everywhere on the Circle during a 4-6 hour window on the weekend. This will include performances and visual art. But every piece will have a sound component. The sounds are collected for airing as an on-air gallery on WQRT and in the Circle Sounds block on the Circle during October. All of the artists and organizations or teams involved will be paid.

**Sound pairings** — Organized by musician and IUPUI professor Jordan Munson, we'll project abstract music videos with instrumental music by local composers. Each will be two minutes or less. We'll pay videographers and composers for use of existing work for this.

## Have ideas or comments?

Reach out to us at [spark@bigcar.org](mailto:spark@bigcar.org), message SPARK or Big Car through social media. Or stop by the SPARK trailer on the southwest quad during our open hours and say hello.