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# Arts InFocus

**NOVEMBER 2019**

Each month, ArtsGreensboro brings you stories about artists, arts organizations, and individuals whose lives are infused with creativity. Join us in celebrating our vibrant city.

ArtsGreensboro is dedicated to elevating the arts by creating awareness and promoting the vibrancy of our city; amplifying the impact the arts have in building strong and thriving communities for all citizens; and supporting arts organizations, artists, and teachers through grants, shared services, and technical assistance. For more information visit [artsgreensboro.org](http://artsgreensboro.org)





# ARTIST IN FOCUS

BY GINA FRANCO

Born in 1981, Gina Elizabeth Franco is a self-taught artist living and working in North Carolina. Franco works predominantly in the medium of spray paint to create murals, installations and paintings. From a very young age she drew on any and everything. It wasn't until 2012 when this obsession with drawing evolved into her picking up a can of spray paint and expressing herself on walls.



Franco's art varies from project to project. These days she spends less time in her studio and more time interacting with the public. Some of her recent public art pieces has been place-making projects that activate underused spaces. The goal of these projects have been to encourage residents and visitors to interact with the space and share their experience via social media.

Aside from her featured works in her hometown of Greensboro, NC, Franco has recently been awarded public art commissions for the Atlanta Beltline, Raleigh, NC and the city of Denver Colorado.





# ARTS HAPPENING

BY PHILLIP MARSH

Many people ask why I do what I do; it is simple, it is to make art more accessible to the community-art is beautiful and everyone deserves an opportunity to experience it. I am energized by seeing a little kids light up whenever they are exposed to my current creative passion, murals. Why murals? In Greensboro, this was a creative space that was underrepresented until I came along with other creatives, sponsors, volunteers, and artists to push it over the goal line. I view my job as a creative convener, but also the one who will do the coffee run, get supplies, work with partners and supporters, and be there to help an artist fully express themselves by providing critique and advice.

A mural is more than just paint. A mural is a creative conversation. It is a part of the artist's creative soul they leave behind in our community. No one else can give you what that artist is giving you. It cannot be replicated city after city, it is unique and it becomes ours. Some people choose to focus on the local story a mural work can tell, I choose to focus on the global creative conversation. This is why so many of the artists I bring to Greensboro are recognized internationally; who produce work in our community speaks to the larger creative conversation. Equity, commerce, identity, history, connection—topics that are discussed locally, nationally, internationally. The artists I bring to Greensboro have international stature and we can learn from the caliber of their artistry, their creative process, and their worldview.

There are great examples of cities harnessing the power of murals and public art to position themselves as international destinations for art. SHINE on St. Pete mural festival is driving tourism and economic development in St. Petersburg, FL. Muralists helped turn blighted Detroit around where the arts are drivers for tourism and economic development. Nashville is not just music, it is mural art telling the international story of music. This can be Greensboro but we need to bring in world-class artists and nurture and inspire Greensboro artists to venture out to start their creative conversations locally, nationally, internationally. A perfect example is the work by an emerging artist like Jeks (Brian). He shows us that this community can cultivate an artist that is capable of performing at an international standard.

Take a drive around Greensboro. You will see incredible murals; each one is telling you a story. Make it your own by spending a little time taking it all in.





# AG MAKING IT WORK

ART DOES A PUBLIC GOOD – 2020 ARTS FUND CAMPAIGN BY CATENA BERGEVIN

On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, ArtsGreensboro launched the 2020 ArtsFund Campaign to raise \$1 million in support of the arts in our city. Through the generosity of our community, every dollar raised is invested to ELEVATE the arts by promoting when, where, and how they are happening so everyone can participate; AMPLIFY their impact in building a strong and vibrant community for all citizens; and SUPPORT artists and arts organizations through financial resources, technical services, marketing and promotional efforts.

As our President & CEO Laura Way points out, “Art is a public good, and it is our job to help each member of our community feel as if they have access to, and are included in, the vibrant art scene that is Greensboro.”



**A donation to the ArtsFund, in whatever amount is right for you, impacts thousands of our citizens each year.** Why is that? Your annual contribution to the ArtsFund has a ripple effect. With your help, inspiring arts experiences can happen for every citizen in every neighborhood, school, community center, and public space. In addition, the arts have a powerful impact on our children. **A student involved in the arts is four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, and low-income students who are highly engaged in the arts are twice as likely to graduate college as their peers with no arts education.**

Since 1962, and because of art lovers like you, ArtsGreensboro has distributed over \$22 million to the arts. Your gift to the ArtsFund is a gift to a vibrant and thriving Greensboro. The arts also make business sense. The collective impact of organizations receiving a portion of their funding through our 2018 Mission and Project Grant Programs resulted in:

- \$41.7 MILLION IN ECONOMIC IMPACT
- 1,347 JOBS SUPPORTED
- \$29.4 MILLION TO HOUSEHOLD INCOMES
- \$1.2 MILLION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUES
- \$2.5 MILLION TO STATE GOVERNMENT REVENUES

Many thanks to those who have already made their 2020 ArtsFund gift. Together we will make a difference. **Show your support for the arts in Greensboro.** Here's how:

- Donate online at [www.artsgreensboro.org/donate](http://www.artsgreensboro.org/donate)
- Use your phone to text ARTSGSO to 44-321
- Call our office at 336.373.7523 and make a pledge or payment

This year's ArtsFund Honorary Campaign Chairs are Chip and Kay Hagan. Our heartfelt condolences to the Hagan Family in remembrance of Kay Hagan, a true champion to the City of Greensboro and the State of North Carolina.

Special thanks to Dance Project for hosting the ArtsFund Campaign Kickoff.

**On behalf of the arts organizations, artists, and teachers who make Greensboro *the* place for the arts, we thank you for annual support of the ArtsFund.**



# MY ART STORY

BY NASHA MCCRAY

As a child, writing poetry was something I truly enjoyed. I also grew up playing the piano and clarinet. I even made All-County Band in middle school! While I may have gotten away from the actual art of writing poetry or playing an instrument, I have never lost my appreciation for it and art in our community and my own personal life. Art is a universal language that bridges everyone together. It benefits all backgrounds, cultures, and ages. As Director of Greensboro Parks and Recreation, we see art every day in our programs, facilities, and activities. We offer unique spaces and programs that help enhance and expand the arts in Greensboro. From murals, such as the new one at Windsor Recreation Center honoring the community heroes that participated in and supported the civil rights movement right here in our community, to programs like the Mali Project at the Barber Park Event Center, where I was able to create mud paintings with my daughter Journee, all while learning about art in another culture. Through the arts, not only am I able to tap into my creative side, but I am able to encourage my daughter to express herself and expand her imagination through the art. It is widely known that participation in the arts plays a critical part in a young child's visual, motor, and social development.

Greensboro Parks and Recreation strives to make all our spaces welcoming, accessible, and creative spaces for the entire community. We connect with residents through programs, facilities, and opportunities available to everyone. We encourage people to tap into their creative self and experience the arts through Parks and Recreation! To learn more and to come create with us, visit [www.gsoparksandrec.com](http://www.gsoparksandrec.com).



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