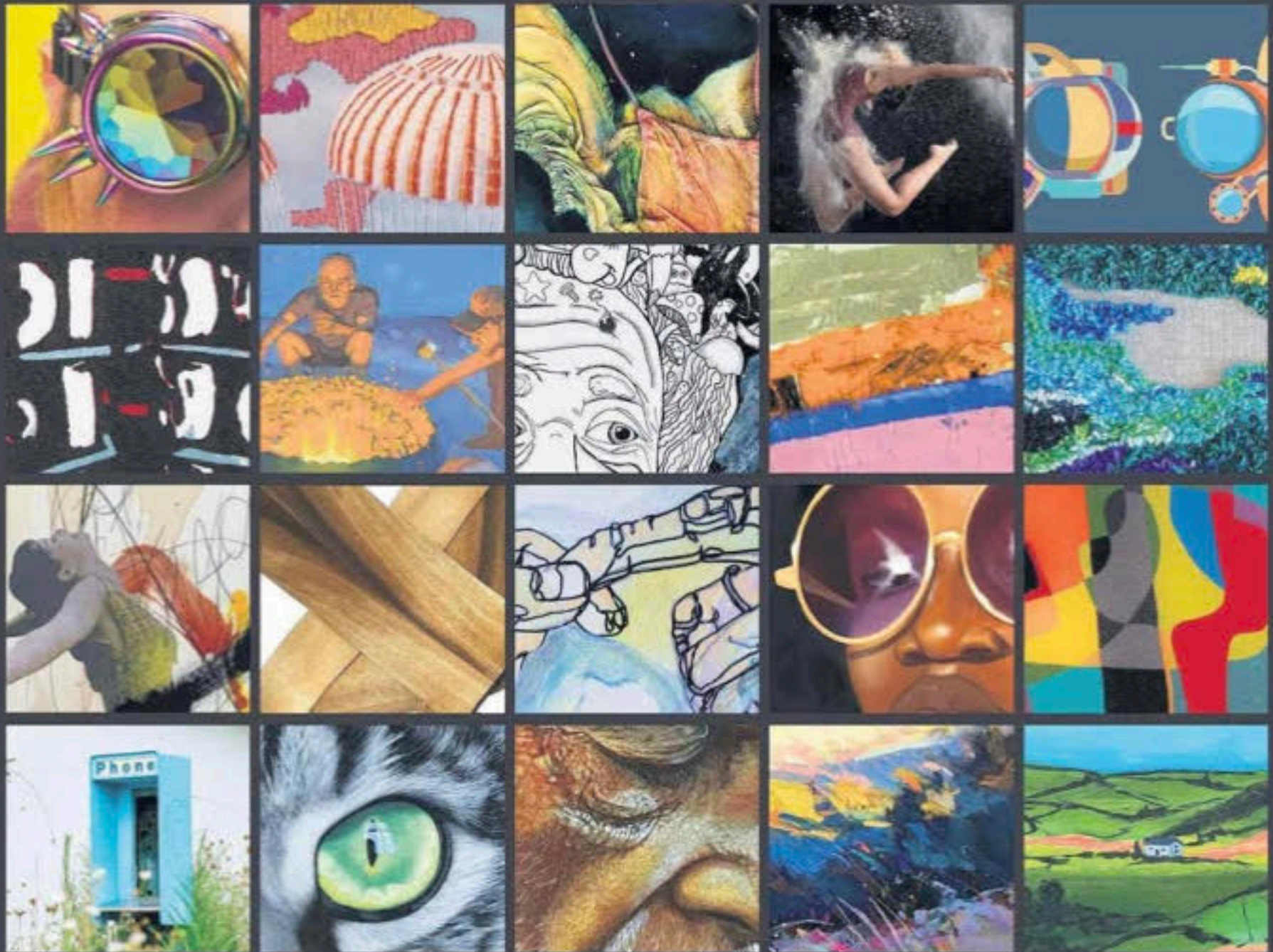


Carolina Living

INSIDE CHARLOTTE ARTS



Courtesy of ArtPop

A collage of artwork showcases the talent of the 2021 ArtPop class.

Coming to a billboard near you: ArtPop announces class of 2021

BY LAURIE LARSH
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What do a teacher (Molly Partyka), a black belt in tae kwon do (Sara Simmons) and someone who is color blind (Tim Petrinec) all have in common? They are some of the 20 local artists selected for ArtPop Street Gallery's class of 2021.

From a 30-year Met Museum veteran (Mikel Frank) to a Southern Living Idea Home artist (Mary Zio), the group's art will be featured on billboards, newsstands and displays throughout Charlotte next year.

"ArtPop has and continues to bring fine art to so many in an uncanny way — at 70 mph," 2021 artist Christina Cobb said. "I am a connector at my core. ArtPop and I share this

attribute and because of it, gates are being opened for internal and external conversations with viewers who might never mingle with art."

ArtPop is a nonprofit that gives communities greater access to art by supporting the artists who create it. Each year, the organization sorts through applications of artists across disciplines and selects 19 local artists and one student artist for the program.

Their work is displayed across \$3.3 million in donated ad space around the city — from billboards donated by Adams Outdoor Advertising, newsstand space donated by Charlotte Center City Partners, digital spectaculars donated by Awedience Media and overhead and charging station displays at Charlotte Douglas International Airport that were donated anonymously.

In addition to the ad space,

each artist selected as part of the class of 2021 is invited to attend a free, two-day Artist University Class, and the student participant is awarded a nominal scholarship to continue their art studies in college, all made possible by FOARE.

"ArtPop could not be more proud of or grateful for the community we serve and the outpouring of support to make

SEE ARTPOP 2021, 2C



The 2021 ArtPop class includes, top row, Aletha Buck, Joanna Henry, Jesse Carkin, Adam Jochim and Mary Zio; middle row, Cat Babbie; bottom row, Dylan Bannister, Ella Mackinson, Ashley Proctor, Greg Barnes and Mikel Frank.

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it all possible for 20 artists to be seen and known for the eighth year in the Charlotte area," said Wendy Hickey, Executive Director of ArtPop Street Gallery. "These 20 artists join the 130 previously juried in since 2014, and we can't wait for you to meet them all."

STORIES OF LOSS

Artist David Bulfin said for him, "Making art is akin to breathing." He found this outlet particularly helpful as he processed the death of his son last year — just four days after he was born.

"The illustration selected for ArtPop was particularly important for me to share," Bulfin said. "I started the piece the day after William died as a way to cope with the void. I suddenly found myself

in. The image of the astronaut and the diver is a brave and hopeful one. They are equipped for darkness and armored for the potentially hostile unknown. It's what I hope for myself and for others who have experienced traumatic loss."

Loss is also a driver behind the work of Caroline Rust, who used a technique that combines garments and painting to create her *Into Each Other* piece, part of her "Voices that Skip Towards Night" series.

"I felt an urgency to reflect upon the importance of relationships, bonds, remembrances of loved ones and places of respite. These paintings employ clothing as a veneer to suggest figures and memory," Rust said.

She drew from her own

introspection on her late brother to create the series. "This work's focus is built upon a fantasy that spirits of loved ones surround us at night," Rust said.

STORIES OF CONNECTION

For other ArtPop 2021 artists, connection with the past and their own identity is the impetus behind their creations. "I started drawing when I was 5 years old simply because I fell in love with the Shoney's Bear," Jessie Carkin said.

"We'd usually go to my grandfather's on Sunday mornings after church, and he would treat us to a meal at Shoney's. I often couldn't count on three meals a day, and this was the best meal that I would have all week. The Shoney's Bear captured the joy and sentiment of those moments, and I decided that I wanted to carry it in a very vivid way in my

mind and took up drawing in order to do so."

Carkin produces what he calls doodle fusions — art that is playful on the surface with an underlying serious and deeply meaningful story.

For fiber artist Ashley Proctor, the art of embroidery on photographs, postcards, fabric and paper started because of the lack of old photographs that exist from her childhood. Proctor began searching for discarded photographs at antique and thrift stores and added colors with fiber to bring them back to life.

Each February, Proctor focuses her art on Black leaders, artists, actors and musicians. "Being biracial, it has helped me learn more about Black history and that side of my family's history," Proctor said.

This year, in the wake of George Floyd's death and the Black Lives Matter movement, Proctor re-

quested donations of \$25 or more to a national Black organization for her February pieces. In addition, she donated 25% of her overall sales for the remainder of 2020. "I can't give as much as I would like with the loss of my side job as a bartender, so I wanted to help out where I could and decided my art sales could help with that," Proctor said.

Molly Partyka not only uses her artistic talents to teach the next generation as an art teacher at The Fletcher School, she also uses her art to reflect on her past.

"All of the maps used with my art are family maps that my late father used when traveling for work or our family vacations," Partyka said. "The landscapes are based on my photos from my 2008 trip to Ireland, a trip I had been dreaming of since I was 16. Integrating pieces of my past into my art and weaving them into my

present art feels like life completing the circle."

STORIES OF LEARNING

Across town, fellow artist, Katherine Heilig is a high school senior at Gaston Day School. She was selected as the student artist after being inspired to submit her work by her art teacher, Holt Harris — a current ArtPop class of 2020 artist.

"Applying to ArtPop 2020 was a shot in the dark for me. I did some research and loved the purpose," Harris said. "Katherine was working on one of her complicated seven-color reduction linoleum prints and was excited and interested, so she applied. She is an excellent artist — her work is of the highest quality and I am so proud of her."

"It's important for students to see teachers doing what they love and taking risks. It's also important for them to know they have support and artist communities like ArtPop Street Gallery out in the real world. Of course, everyone needs a Fairy Art Mother like Wendy," Harris said.

Heilig's family has been in textiles for three generations, and the business has been a major influence on her artwork. "I have grown up learning about textiles and traveling to different mills across the country and abroad," Heilig said. Her company, KLH Designs, has been featured at Art on the Beach in Charleston, South Carolina, Girl Tribe Co. in Charlotte and Scott's Antique Market in Atlanta.

Some teachers inspired this year's ArtPop artists in a more round about way. "I remember learning the word 'aptitude' at an early age when my second grade art teacher wrote it on my report card regarding a sketch I did of

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Charles Schultz's character Snoopy," Robb Webb said. "That same report card had given me an unsatisfactory in the behavior category because Snoopy was flipping-off the viewer. I tried explaining that he was holding a popsicle, but that didn't fly as well as Snoopy's bird."

Webb has gone on to illustrate book covers, create a whimsical coloring book, design artist journals and switch gears to his current artistic passion — photography.

SOME PIVOTING REQUIRED

As with all things 2020, the annual gala to reveal the 2021 artists will not look like it normally does due to COVID-19. Instead, this year's gala will be on

a (very relatable) Zoom call, with hopes of a celebration at Red Salt in Le Meridien when it is safe to do so.

ArtPop is funded purely by donations. Opportunities to donate as well as to volunteer can be found on the ArtPop Street Gallery website. For those interested in acquiring some ArtPop art to display in their home, ready-to-hang canvases and prints of select work are also available for purchase on ShopArtPop.com. All proceeds from these sales go directly to fund ArtPop.

The ArtPop class of 2021 includes:

- Adam Jochim: @pitch-andburl
- Aletha Buck: @ajb-photostudio
- Ashley Proctor: @robotmuseart

- Caroline Rust: @caroline_rust_art

- Cat Babbie: @catb-makes

- Christina Cobb: @christinacobbart

- David Bulfin: @bulfin
- Dylan Bannister: @dylanbannisterart

- Ella Mackinson: @el-laraewyn

- Greg Barnes: @gbar-nesstudios

- Jessie Carlin: @Carkinarts

- Joanna Henry: @jhen-rystudio

- Katherine Heilig: @klhdesigns

- Kenny Nguyen: @KennyNguyenCLT

- Mary Zio: @mzioartist
- Mikel Frank: @mikelf-ranksart

- Molly Partyka: @partykamolly

- Robb Webb: @webb_robb

- Sara Simmons: @sara-simmons.art

- Tim Petrinec: @tim-petrinec

Obama reveals his 2020 favorites

BY NANCY DILLON

New York Daily News

Capping a year filled with horrendous headlines, former President Barack Obama is sharing his annual list of favorite films and TV shows offering inspiration — or just a desperately needed escape.

Obama first introduced the list while still in the White House.

"Like everyone else, we were stuck inside a lot this year, and with streaming further blurring the lines between theatrical movies and television features, I've expanded the list to include visual storytelling that I've enjoyed this year, regardless of format," Obama wrote in the intro to this year's list posted on social media.

He topped his seemingly unranked list of 14 fa-

vorite movies with George C. Wolfe's "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," now streaming on Netflix.

The movie adaptation of playwright August Wilson's classic stars Viola Davis and features the final performance of Chadwick Boseman, the beloved "Black Panther" actor who died in August.

His list also included Chloe Zhao's film festival favorite "Nomadland," starring Frances McDormand, and Bradley Garrett's acclaimed documentary "Time," about the family impact of incarceration (Amazon).

Not surprisingly, Obama also loved the inspiring youth-driven documentaries "Crip Camp," from his Higher Camp Productions (Netflix), and "Boys State" (Apple).

"Bacurau," a sociopolitical drama set in Brazil,

and Steve McQueen's "Lovers Rock," an ode to British reggae (Amazon), also make the list.

In the TV genre, the former president known for his pop culture savvy upset some fans by not adding Disney's "The Mandalorian" or the Emmy-winning sitcom "Schitt's Creek" to his more abbreviated list of 10 favorites.

Instead, he recommended the long-running "Breaking Bad" spinoff "Better Call Saul" (AMC) and the Netflix mega hit "The Queen's Gambit."

The HBO comedy-drama "I May Destroy You," the Amazon superheroes show "The Boys," the Showtime historical drama miniseries "The Good Lord Bird," and the NBC fantasy-comedy "The Good Place" also made the list.