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GreenHill starts new public art initiative with mural

Dawn Kane
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Tape installation by Heather Gordon at the Rubenstein Art Center, Duke University, "Unless" from "The Lorax."

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GREENSBORO — A new mural will be installed on the window of the downtown gallery of GreenHill Center for North Carolina Art as part of a public art installation series.

Knightdale artist Heather Gordon will create a nine-foot mural on the large exterior window of the gallery at 200 N. Davie St.

It is expected to be completed in late September.

She drew inspiration from the “One Love” street mural that local artist Phillip Marsh and others created in June on Davie Street outside the gallery.

The mural will become part of GreenHill's new "Shift Happens" art installation series.

Commissioned by GreenHill, Gordon's tape design will resemble an abstract map based on a system developed by the artist to translate words and numbers into origami “folding patterns” whose lines are created in tape.

The map for the phrase “One Love” will be realized in tape on the exterior side GreenHill's front gallery.

“In my work, I use numbers, geometry and algorithms to create shapes about specific stories I want to tell,” Gordon said in a news release.

"Personally, I think artists seek to tell a story of the human condition through their work," Gordon said. "It makes sense to attempt to bring representative stories from all parts of that human experience.”

Gordon became inspired during a visit to GreenHill to discuss a site-specific installation in the gallery. She was moved by the street mural and suggested a response, said Barbara Richter, GreenHill director.

"We enthusiastically embraced the idea as another form of public engagement," Richter said.

Gordon's previous installations on exterior windows include notable projects such as “Cinnabar” at the North Carolina Museum of Art and “Unless,” based on a phrase by the Dr. Seuss character The Lorax at Duke University's Rubenstein Art Center.

Her GreenHill installation is the first of a group of works by Gordon that GreenHill will present to explore art engagement at a time of social distancing.

“Rarely have we experienced a time where art exhibitions and programming require such a high degree of re-imagining,” Richter said in the news release.

"Through 'Shift Happens' – 'One Love,' GreenHill is moving an immersive physical exhibition into a public space and inviting viewers to contemplate its message of hope and reconciliation," Richter said.

Additional Shift Happens installations are expected in the fall and after GreenHill's Winter Show in 2021.

“In recent months, data has been at the forefront of world news as global patterns and trends are closely analyzed in an attempt to better understand the path of a deadly pandemic,” Edie Carpenter, GreenHill curator, said in the news release.

"Gordon’s scientific approach to art-making translates data into striking visual representations that stir curiosity," Carpenter said. "Viewers are inspired by patterns full of precision, surprise and beauty.”

Marsh, creative director of Rockers Print Shop downtown, led the effort to create the city's first street mural. The city started the street mural program after the May 25 death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the resulting protests in downtown Greensboro.

“We at Rockers Print Shop are always committed to moving the creative discussion forward for our community,” Marsh said.

"In this summer, filled with creative hope and angst, it is always an honor when professional creatives take inspiration from work that is created in these moments," Marsh said. "On behalf of the creative volunteers who assisted in making this work happen for the greater community, and the national discussion it was a part of; we look forward to the continued evolution of the creative conversation as it progresses to this next step.”

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