

Original art work coming to a billboard near you

By Lynn Felder Winston-Salem Journal Jun 26, 2019 Updated Jun 26, 2019



The Four Seasons by Trena McNabb.

Five new original works of art will pop up on the Piedmont Triad landscape throughout the next year.

The Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County announced on Tuesday that it has selected five winners in the ArtPop competition, which provides temporary two-dimensional public art on five billboards in Forsyth, Guilford, Montgomery, Stokes, Davidson, Surry, Davie, Yadkin, Alamance, Randolph, Rockingham and Caswell counties. Artists from the 12 counties were invited to submit work.

Wendy Hickey, the founder of ArtPop Street Gallery, said that three of the five selected artworks will be on billboards today, and the other two will be up by the end of next week. The billboards, supplied by Lamar Outdoor Advertising, are 14-by-48 feet, or 672 square feet.

A visual story-teller, Trena McNabb, won a spot with her acrylic “The Four Seasons.” Her website is www.tmcnabb.com.

“I work big, but to see my work enlarged to billboard size really will be a thrill. And my family will get to see it,” McNabb said. “It can’t hurt for future sales, either, and they are going to provide a marketing workshop for the artists.”

“I spend a lot of time in my garden and alone painting, and that’s very satisfying — endlessly entertaining — but I’m looking forward to meeting the other artists and talking about our future.”

“Celeste the Cosmic Turtle” is by Cara Bevan. A lifelong artist, Bevan lives on her family’s farm and animal-rescue facility in Trinity in Randolph County. She creates whimsical animals from gourds, wire and epoxy. Her website is www.carabevan.com.

“Celeste” is a photograph of a three-dimensional sculpture made of gourds and clay. “Gourds can create anything, because they are hard like wood,” Bevan said. “Celeste” started out as a common box turtle, but Bevan got creative.

“I wanted to put a fantasy spin on her, so I added color, and ‘Celeste’ is a girl’s name for ‘celestial.’ The name ‘Celeste the Cosmic Turtle’ came after I finished her.”

Sarah Frisbie, a recent West Forsyth High School graduate, created the acrylic portrait, “Kiera.” Frisbie will be attending UNC Chapel Hill in the fall to study art and will receive a \$500 scholarship from ArtPop. At the reveal, Randy Eaddy, president and chief executive of the Arts Council, announced that his organization would match the ArtPop scholarship. Her website is <https://sefrisbie.wixsite.com/portfolio>.

“It’s so exciting to be represented among these great artists,” Frisbie said.

Raman Bhardwaj from Greensboro won with his digital art work, “Flight of Fancy.” Bhardwaj is a multi-disciplinary freelance artist. His website is www.artistraman.com.

“It’s really different and exciting,” Bhardwaj said. “I make murals, so I am used to the size, but it will be so great to have it on the highway. It’s huge exposure. Art makes you powerful.”

C.S. “Sam” Young Jr., a photographer from High Point, was selected for his piece, “Sunflower and Bumble Bee Composition.” Young is a photographer who explores multiple genres including natural landscapes, urban landscapes and street photography. His website is www.csyjr.wordpress.com.

“I travel on I-40 for work, and there’s this big sunflower patch,” Young said. “I shot them one morning as the sun came up. And of course they follow the sun.”

“Billboards force you to think about cropping. In fact, it got me thinking about extreme cropping.” He said that his wife, an interior designer, helped him choose his winning submission.

The project provides more than \$300,000 in advertising for the artists, according to the Arts Council.

“I’m amazed that they are giving away such an opportunity for artists,” Bevan said. “I never dreamed I would have a billboard. That certainly would have been beyond my means.”

Lamar, ArtPop and the local Arts Council are partners on the project, the third local ArtPop collaboration since 2016.

For more information on ArtPop Triad, visit www.intothearts.org/artpop. You can see all of the ArtPop winners across the country at www.ArtPopStreetGallery.com.

lfelder@wsjournal.com 336-727-7298 @LynnFelder