

A call for art: City unveils artist banners

Tyler Juranovich Kokomo Tribune Dec 23, 2020 Updated Dec 25, 2020

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Hanan Pruitt and Andrew Bergin from Clifford Signs clip one of the giant banners of public art to the guide wire on the newest parking garage, across from the city building, on Dec. 11, 2020. Tim Bath | Kokomo Tribune

Tim Bath

The 12 artists

Tom Griffithe (Anaheim Hills, California)

"Gears"

Website: tom-griffithe.pixels.com

Sarah Swoverland (Kokomo, Indiana)

"Some Good on Earth: Freedom"

Website: sarahswoverland.com

Lou Patrou (Poughkeepsie, New York)

"Robot Heads"

Website: http://patrou.com/intro.htm

Ashley Rose (Ferndale, California)

"Nickel Plate"

Website: wescover.com/creator/ashley-rose

Kirk Seese (Lutherville, Maryland)

"What Dreams May Come"

Website: https://www.bbmurals.com/

Donald Starr (Henderson, Nevada)

"Learning our History"

Website: www.artsy.net/artist/donald-corpier-starr

Kylin Brown (Plainfield, Indiana)

"Artist Alley"

Website: http://www.kylinbrown.com/

Sandra Encaoua (Miami, Florida)

"Someday"

Website: www.encaweb.com

Sarah Ghanooni (Bellevue, Washington)

"Life in Highland Park"

Website: http://www.sarahghanooni.com/

Joseph Cavalieri (New York, New York)

"Human Source"

Website: https://www.instagram.com/joseph_cavalieri_glass/

Tori Gilstrap (Kokomo, Indiana)

"A Day at the Field"

Website: https://toriscustomart.com

Shan Michael Evans (Las Vegas, Nevada)

"Kokomo Has a Crush on You"

Website: www.instagram.com/shan.michael.evans



While browsing Call for Entry, a website where governments and organizations can make calls for art, the word "Kokomo" caught the eye of artist Sarah Ghanooni.

"I had no idea that there actually was a place called Kokomo," she told the Tribune.

Ghanooni, who lives in the Pacific Northwest, had only heard of the word Kokomo through the Beach Boys' hit song. But while she's never visited Kokomo, one of her artworks is now on display in the city.

Ghanooni and 11 other artists' work are featured on banners currently hanging from the city's new parking garage, at the intersection of Superior and Union streets. The banners are the product of the city's most recent downtown art project.

Ghanooni's submission is a painted picture of Kokomo's Vermont Covered Bridge, located in Highland Park. She draws inspiration from famous Impressionist painters, such as Monet and Van Gogh, and it's obvious in her piece, entitled "Life in Highland Park," which depicts the covered bridge on a calm, fall day.

"I like the combination of focusing on architecture and history but also with a focus on nature, so combining both of my loves into one piece of artwork was something I gravitated toward," she said about her piece.

She plans to make a trip to Kokomo in the spring, if it's safe to do so, to visit the city and its parks.

"I looked at a lot of the parks, the farmer's market and a lot of the little areas of town that seem full of life and so welcoming," Ghanooni said. "That's what I could tell – that's a place that has positive vibes."

"I was glad to be a part of something that isn't local, to do something different and go outside of my community. I feel it's beneficial for all artists to use their artwork and spread it all over the world if they can."

In total, the city received submissions from 48 artists. A panel of people from the city, the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance, Indiana University Kokomo and Howard County Historical Society chose 24 finalists before choosing the final 12.

In July, the city publicized the contest, asking artists to submit artwork that showcased the city's "vibrant community," and/or "Kokomo's rich automotive, industrial and innovative heritage."

Kokomo Mayor Tyler Moore said the plan was to choose a diverse set of artists to create 12 unique banners. In that regard, he called the call-for-art campaign a success as each piece of artwork has its own style.

Out of the 12 artists, just three are from Indiana (two from Kokomo and one from Plainfield). The nine others are based all over the country – from Florida, New York and Nevada.

"We wanted the banners to be as diverse as the community is, not only in culture and population but also in expression," Moore said.

Sarah Swoverland is one of the Kokomo residents whose art was chosen for one of the banners. Her piece "Some Good on Earth: Freedom" shows a bald eagle in front of a colorful stained glass background.

The eagle represents freedom and living in the "greatest country in the world," Swoverland said, while the stained glass represents Kokomo Opalescent Glass Works, the oldest manufacturer of opalescent glass in the world and a tourist destination for people across the country.

Swoverland said she was driving downtown after eating lunch at The Foxes Trail when she saw the banner showcasing her artwork being put up on the parking garage.

"I looked up, and I screamed 'Oh my God! That's me, I did that,'" she said. "I was with my friend, and we pulled over and took pictures. It was really exciting."

All 12 banners are now hanging from the top of the new downtown parking garage. A window display of the banners and artist bios are also on display at the Indiana University Kokomo Downtown Gallery, located on Main Street next to Cook McDoogal's.