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## **Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville Announces the Inaugural Class of Periscope: Rural Artist Development**

*Sixteen rural artists selected for new artist entrepreneur training program*

**NASHVILLE, TENN. – March 21, 2022** -- The Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville proudly announces the inaugural class of *Periscope: Rural Artist Development (Periscope RAD)*, an online training and mentorship program uniquely designed to be a transformative experience empowering rural artists with the entrepreneurial skills to help them thrive. Training sessions are led by expert business advisors and small group work is facilitated by arts professionals from across Tennessee. The inaugural *Periscope RAD* cohort was selected from applications submitted by rural artists invited to apply by program partners, and the program is supported by funding from the Tennessee Arts Commission.

### **The Inaugural Class of *Periscope: Rural Artist Development* is:**



#### **Carla-Christina Contreras**

Carla-Christina Contreras started her Film/TV career at three selling Barbie Dolls & Tootsie Rolls; from eleven to sixteen she worked on the series, 'The Waltons'. After receiving a degree in Business Finance, she ventured back to Hollywood to train at The Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute where she discovered her powerful singing voice. Upon an invitation to visit Nashville's Music Row, Carla-Christina fell in love with Tennessee and decided to stay.

She has been a consistent force in helping to grow & prosper the Film/TV community in our state, and currently serves as the Vice President of the SAG-AFTRA Nashville Local (Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists). Carla-Christina recently worked on a feature film with Robert De Niro, recently completed a Live Action Animated Musical series, has developed a situation comedy for network/streaming TV, and is studying to become an Intimacy Coordinator for Film/TV productions.



### **Dina D'Argo**

Somewhere between abstract and representational, Dina D'Argo's paintings are loose, layered, multifaceted images with an organic openness inviting the viewer into the conversation. Her work is an expression of the bond between humanity and nature, reflecting deep reverence for the wild. Influenced by a background in Fashion Design, her sensitive images are stylized and imaginative, with a flair for the dramatic.

Originally from Southern California, while recovering from a serious horseback riding accident D'Argo spent 7 years on the edge of the Hawaii rainforest before relocating to her home in rural Tennessee. D'argo's paintings are found in galleries in Hawaii and mainland USA, as well as online. She was featured in Horses In Art Magazine, and is represented by Third & Wall Art Group, Publishing. An avid horsewoman, when not in the studio Dina enjoys spending time with her animals, volunteering, yoga, meditation, and gazing endlessly at the sky.



### Jenalee Tirpak

Jenalee began her career in art managing a gallery in Tulsa, Oklahoma before leaving to teach high school math for 10 years. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Art and Art History from Sewanee: The University of the South and a Master of Arts in Museum Studies from The University of Oklahoma. After 10 years in the classroom, Jenalee stepped away and re-entered the art world opening her own traveling art studio. She works in large canvas and acrylics as well as public art murals. Her most recent mural “To All The Clever Girls,” is a floral dinosaur themed piece dedicated to all the young women ridiculed for liking

nontraditional things. Jenalee is currently in the process of opening a public studio and gallery space in Tullahoma, Tennessee.

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### Jodi Mitchell Hartman

Jodi is a creative soul. In everything she sees, she finds possibilities, beauty, inspiration and a desire to start one more project. From a landscape, an abstract painting or a new t-shirt design or bumper sticker or even something ugly from an estate sale that can become “something”, the creativity never ends. This creative mind has been held captive for too long and is ready to run free with reckless abandon and share her creative spirit with the world. Brace yourself for what will emerge from this artistic and creative woman.

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### Julie Barrett Cataldo

Julie Barrett Cataldo is an artist based in Bell Buckle, TN. She has a passion for combining reclaimed textiles, sewing, and paint into mixed media paintings and design items.

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### Karis Feezell

Dreams became reality as Karis Feezell launched her business, Ashes 2 Beauty Artistry, at age 15 to leverage her artistic skills to battle human trafficking. Karis approaches the daily challenges of cerebral palsy and malformed hands through focused honing of her art, with favored mediums: acrylics, watercolor pencils, charcoal, and pyrography. Through her art sales she supports Blazing Hope Ranch, a residential program for women survivors of sex trafficking. Teaching since 2016, one of her students became the youngest state winner in the history of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Karis has

now branched into painting murals, producing videos for a local TV station, and has established her own episode series of speed painting and tutorial videos.



### **Lisa Engle**

Lisa Engle is an artist and teacher living in Adamsville, Tennessee. Having painted for more than 40 years, she is best known for her studio landscapes and plein air works. Engle studied painting at Murray State after being awarded the presidential scholarship for visual arts from the university. She went on to graduate from Freed-Hardeman in 1992 with a degree in education. During her 23 years teaching in McNairy County her students have won numerous awards in local and regional competitions. Being passionate about her calling to teach, she acquired more than \$10,000 in grant and award money for her classroom

art programs. Engle is beyond excited to fulfill her life-long dream. She plans to devote her days to painting upon her retirement from teaching in the public schools. Engle will continue to focus on growing her hometown's "plein air" Paint the Town event, now in its fifth year.

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### **Marty McConnaughey**

Marty McConnaughey, is an award-winning sculptural artist, whose passion for natural organic design defines each piece she creates. She gathers raw materials, during walks in the woods, to discover unique embellishments. She works with farmers to find the perfect gourd. She harvests sweet grasses and pine needles, which she deftly combines to create one-of-a-kind works of art. Integrating time-honored coiling techniques, she incorporates her signature style of fluidity and movement into each unique piece. The distinctive and complex nature of Marty's designs has drawn the attention of art collectors. It

has brought her continued recognition, with awards from galleries and museums. She has received numerous accolades in competitions at the state, national and international platforms. Marty has been blessed with three children, six grandchildren and lives with her husband of 46 years, on the most beautiful lake in East Tennessee.

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### **Mary Ann Morrison**

Mary Ann Morrison is retired from the US Air Force and resides in Winchester, Tennessee. Her favored photographic subjects depict reverence for nature and awe of God's Creation. Mary Ann's inspiration comes from a life-long love of hiking, boating, kayaking, camping, gardening, and travel. She finds Central Tennessee to be rich with beautiful, and historical images to capture with her camera.

As a self-taught photographer, Morrison experiments with lighting and its transformative effects on color. Equally, she is enthralled with applying photographic images to supports such as fabric, canvas, ceramic, glass, acrylic and metal. As a mixed media artist, Mary Ann's interest in eco printing was naturally spawned from extensive experience in working with plants. In preserving the shapes and colors that their natural tannins produce on paper, cotton, silk and rayon, she helps others to appreciate them as well.



### Paige Erwin Joyner

Paige Erwin Joyner is a visual artist living in Alamo, Tennessee. She specializes in portraiture of people, pets and places, and her preferred medium is oils. She also regularly does many other “artsy” things in her rural community including sets for musical productions, custom gifts, signage, and whatever else comes up that needs a creative touch. She is married to Brian Joyner, Minister of Music and Youth at First Baptist Church, Alamo and they have two grown sons, Daniel and Benjamin, who are also creatives. She holds a BFA in Graphic Design/Drawing from Mississippi State University and an MFA in Painting from the University of Memphis. She enjoys reading on her Kindle and teaching young people, whether elementary art students in a school setting or young adults at a bible study in her home. She hopes for guidance, accountability and inspiration from participation in the *Periscope RAD* program this year.

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### Rebekah Riggs

Rebekah Riggs is an art educator and ceramics artist living in Oneida, TN. While most of her art consists of colorful ceramics, she also loves to sew and do a variety of other arts and crafts. She received her BFA from Tennessee Tech University, where she fell in love with ceramics, and is originally from Harriman, TN. She has been featured in several art exhibitions, including ArtSource 2021, an art exhibition for Knoxville art educators. Rebekah’s art is an exploration of color and excitement, through the use of saturated colors and fun, childlike drawings.

She is currently teaching art and drama at Oneida High School, and she believes that *Periscope RAD* can help her attain her dream of being a full time ceramicist.

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### Philippa-Alys Browne (Pippa Browne)

Pippa was born and has lived most of her life in Zimbabwe.

She obtained a degree in Fine Art, Psychology and Education from the University of Natal, South Africa; she has taught, traveled and painted ever since.

Barefoot Books of Bath, UK, have published five of her books (African Animals ABC; Gaggle of Geese; Kangaroos have Joeys; Elephants and Emus; Legend of the Chinese Zodiac) and her illustrations have won awards and been exhibited internationally.

Pippa has exhibited her fine art in private galleries in the UK, USA and in Zimbabwe where she also had her work regularly selected for the Annual Exhibition at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe.

Presently she is living and creating in Sewanee, Tennessee.



### Savanna Lyons

Savanna Lyons is a book artist and illustrator specializing in handmade pop-up books, cut paper collage and gouache illustration. Inspired by the natural world, her art explores themes of community, resilience, and adaptation, often with narrative or interactive components. Savanna grew up in a family graphic design business and has made art for most of her life. With the support of the *Periscope RAD* program, Savanna hopes to develop a business plan to hand-manufacture and distribute editions of her pop-up books as assemble-it-yourself kits, and to feature her designs in hands-on book art

workshops that discuss social and environmental issues. In her day jobs, Savanna has worked in community development and anti-poverty advocacy in rural Appalachia for over a decade, and currently manages a trade association of worker-owned cooperatives. She lives on a small farmstead in Greenback TN, in the foothills of the Smokies.

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### Shelley Wieting

Shelley grew up in Texas, the only daughter in a military family. Two older brothers who would suggest she was spoiled. She is retired now, after more than 40 years as a registered nurse. Between her education and her husband's, she has been licensed in 7 states. The last 16 years of her career was as a nurse educator, at two different nursing programs. Her art is mostly fiber and fabric, with crochet items and quilting. Having quilted for more than 40 years, she has made literally dozens of quilts. She is a member of the Cumberland Gap Artists

Co-op and now serves on the board of the co-op.

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### Thomas M. Pituch II

Thomas M. Pituch II was born and raised in Union City, Tennessee, a small town in the upper Northwest corner of the Volunteer State. From an early age, he became fascinated with anything that could be utilized to create, and he soon discovered he had quite the knack for it. From his youth to present day, Thomas has applied his artistic abilities in various fields, both recreationally and academically. With hopes of creating well-renowned works of art for the world to enjoy, he has become even more of a dedicated and passionate individual.

Among his many goals, Thomas wishes to pursue a career that will lead to his works being showcased in galleries and favored in kind with lasting impacts.

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### Val (Valerie) Sloan

After more than 20 years as a Graphic Design Professor, Val Sloan walked away from tenure to pursue life as an artist and art business entrepreneur in rural mid-south Tennessee near Hohenwald. She established an artist/writer residency program and creativity retreat center on the 17 acre natural splendor that she found to establish her new unpaved path. From a young age, her passion has been photography which is primarily a memory tool for documenting life including travels to locales such as Egypt, Ireland, Copenhagen, and Japan. During a trip to Japan in 2017, she participated in a pottery workshop and realized an unknown talent and passion. At the residency retreat center, she is developing a small pottery studio and continuing the photography project as a travel writing and photography blog. Her photography is often documentary in style as well as emphasizing basic design elements and wabi sabi aesthetics.

For more information on *Periscope: Rural Artist Development* and the inaugural cohort, visit [www.abcnashville.org/rad](http://www.abcnashville.org/rad).

#### **About the Arts & Business Council**

The Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville leverages and unites the unique resources of the arts and business communities to create a thriving, sustainable creative culture in Nashville. We accomplish this through six main programs: Education for the Creative Community, Volunteer Lawyers & Professionals for the Arts, Periscope, Arts Board Matching, Fiscal Sponsorship, and Creative Advantage, among many other resources and opportunities.

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