

The Visual Arts Scene: Homegrown and Beyond

In July 1949 local artists formed the Durham Art Guild to foster an artistic community, encourage high standards, and provide opportunities and space for local artists to show their work.

During the 1990s, artists increasingly created their own places for work and display—the Venable Building, Artsplace, Artomatic, and the inimitable Modern Museum (combination salon and experimental-art gallery), to name a few.



Established in 1972 as Durham’s first art gallery, Somerhill recently moved from Chapel Hill back to Durham. Its 9,600 square feet showcase contemporary paintings, sculpture, photography, studio jewelry, fine art craft, and glass. (courtesy Somerhill Gallery)

North Carolina Central University Museum of Art, which opened in 1977, has built a broad collection of 19th- and 20th-century works by African Americans. Duke’s Nasher Museum of Art opened in 2005 with a focus on contemporary art. These institutions give Durhamites a chance to experience a variety of art from throughout the country and around the world.



The George Watts Hill Pavilion features two intricate forged bronze gates, this one designed by Vega Metals. The pavilion, designed by Frank DePasquale, houses Liberty Arts, a bronze casting facility. (courtesy Amanda van Scoyoc and Eli Van Zoeren)

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