

Heart of Brevard Artist Spotlight Series

**Creating Meaning in an Abstract World with Ann DerGara:
An Abstract Expressionist in the Heart of Brevard**

By John Harris

“You hear the expression starving artist, which is totally wrong because the art business is enormous,” said Ann DerGara. DerGara is an abstract expressionist, owner of Twin Willows Studio and co-owner of Red Wolf Gallery with her husband Tom Cabe. Her artwork in printmaking and painting has gained international attention. Her art pieces have been exhibited in world shows including Art Miami and Art Basel, featured on shows such as Seinfeld and L.A. Law and have added beauty to many places especially the Heart of Brevard. “I learned this from living in Atlanta.... every wall and every building has a piece of art on it. ‘Where does it come from?’” she wondered as an art student.



DerGara has used numerous printmaking techniques over the years, with collagraph becoming one of her trademarks. Collagraphy consists of creating a base for the printer, and then glueing a variety of materials on top, similar to a collage. Her printmaking however has more functions than just being visually appealing. They are also a photo album of her experiences throughout her life, sculpted with tools and paint. As DerGara put it, “My art is my psychiatrist.” By observing the titles, choice of color, shapes and images used in these art pieces a clear



message can be distinguished. Although her printmaking contributed to her rising notoriety, she has chosen at this point in her career to focus on painting and operating Red Wolf Gallery.

DerGara's creativity runs in the family on her Mother's side. With their roots in Norway, she comes from a long line of artists and designers. The artistic touch hasn't stopped with DerGara, it continues with her daughter and son's shared appreciation for the arts. Adding to the family legacy, her grandchildren have shown an interest in creating art and could very well be the next world renowned artists in the family.

Just as her mother's side contributed to her appreciation of art, through her father's heritage she developed an endearment for Brevard. The Whitmire family has been a part of Brevard history for generations. Growing up, DerGara would visit her grandmother during the summer which allowed her to explore the area. With the memories she created, she felt drawn to move here and continue her career. With her decision to relocate, she was inspired by the local wildlife and began to paint them. Among them was the endangered red wolf, which has been the focus of many of many works. Through her involvement in fundraising and her desire to create awareness through her art, she has contributed to the revitalization of the dying breed, which is still in need of support.

With her love of the community, DerGara desired to contribute to the economic development of the Heart of Brevard. She explained, "I knew from going to Santa Fe, New Mexico that art can save a community." DerGara called together several artists to craft animals, indigenous to North Carolina, that would be carefully placed within the Heart of Brevard and beyond. For her work on the project, she was awarded the title "Mainstreet Champion" by the Heart of Brevard Executive Committee in April of 2020. In addition to raising funds to bring the project to life, DerGara sculpted a piece of her own. Seen scavenging outside the Hollingsworth building's parking lot on Main Street, there are two raccoons lovingly modeled by DerGara. She continues to pay the models for this piece when the masked creatures still visit her house anticipating food. She doesn't mind. Speaking of masks, Dergara encourages residents to be safe and enjoy the beauty of Brevard by doing their part and wearing a mask.

If you would like to learn more about Ann DerGara and Red Wolf Gallery you can explore this website through this link: <http://www.redwolfgallerync.com/redwolfgalleryhome.html>

DerGara's full story as well as other local artists' spotlights will be showcased in the Heart of Brevard's e-Newsletter, social media and in an online gallery. The gallery includes each artist's interview, video and selected works. The gallery can be viewed here, www.brevardnc.org/artistspotlight



The series is open to artists of all genres and mediums located within the Heart of Brevard. If you would like to be featured in this series, please reach to info@brevardnc.org to schedule your interview.

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Heart of Brevard 501(c)(3) is a North Carolina Main Street Community, designated by the NC Department of Commerce and Main Street & Rural Planning Center. Heart of Brevard is a recognized leading program among the national network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities who share both a commitment to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. All Main Street America™ Accredited programs meet a set of National Accreditation Standards of Performance as outlined by the National Main Street Center.

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