

## Newport Art Proposal

To the City of Newport,

I am proposing an installation entitled “Education Empowers”: a hybrid piece consisting of ceramic relief sculptures, mosaic tile, and stucco. This mural would be nine feet long by six feet tall and reside on the north wall of the Steinhauser Printing Building, facing the Southgate Street School.

The people in the mural represent the students and teachers of Southgate Street School, the all-black school in Newport that opened after the Civil War and proudly educated its children until integration in 1955. The history of segregation is complex and serious; I wish to celebrate the positive impact this school had on its students while still making evident that these events were a part of the past. To accomplish this, I chose to depict the students and classroom in a monochrome sepia, like an old photograph. The desks are modeled after the actual desks from the school, which now reside in the Newport History Museum. The blips of color, which were inspired by jazz-related artwork of Newport’s bustling Sin City era, represent the values and confidence that this school planted within its students, catalyzing the spread of social change and awareness within our community. We still have a long way to go, but educating our children is the first step in creating a better future.

Through Northern Kentucky University’s departments of History and Art, I was able to personally meet former students of the Southgate Street School and learn about their experiences. I was moved by their stories of their dedicated teachers, strong sense of community, and education that led them to a life of success and abundance despite racial tensions. I aim to accurately convey their passion and untethered hope through this public artwork. I also wish to bring the community together in both the appreciation and the making of this piece by inviting current students from public schools in Newport to have a hand in the creation of this artwork.

There are possibilities for the remaining six panels if the project would continue: the theme of education would flow throughout the historical timeline, beginning with the early elusive private tutors of Newport’s wealthy class to a future of equal education and empowerment for all. As the timeline progresses, the colors would grow larger and more vibrant—like a seed of hope that will bloom over time, so long as it is nourished.

The Southgate Street School deserves to be honored with the gravity that it honored hundreds of black children, giving them the character and courage to progress our society further. This school is a quintessential turning point in American history, instilling the seeds of hope into its children and for our children to come.

Sincerely,  
Gina Erardi

**Gina Erardi**  
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## **Education**

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2016- Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, KY  
2015-16 University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH  
2011-15 Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, KY

## **Professional Experience**

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2019 Newport Mural Dedication Speech, Newport, KY  
2018- Assistant Sculptor, *National Baseball Hall of Fame and Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame* bronze reliefs, Tom Tsuchiya Sculptor, Cincinnati, OH  
2016 Student Instructor, University of Cincinnati DAAP Camp, Cincinnati, OH  
2015 Senior Apprentice, *Ezzard Charles Mural*, ArtWorks, Cincinnati, OH

## **Scholarships and Awards**

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2019 Jerry Bollen Remembrance Award, Summerfair, Cincinnati, OH  
2018 Northern Kentucky University School of the Arts scholarship recipient, KY  
2018 3 Arts Scholarship Fund recipient, Cincinnati, OH  
2014 Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts, Visual Arts, Danville, KY

## **Exhibitions and Installations**

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2018 *Recycling Phoenix*, Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park, Cincinnati, OH  
2018 *Recycling Phoenix*, Armstrong Student Center, Miami University, Oxford, OH

## **GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

2019 *Emerging Artists*, Summerfair Cincinnati, Clifton Cultural Arts Center, OH  
2018 *Northern Kentucky University Student Juried Show*, Main Gallery, KY



*Original Prototype*

Gina Erardi  
Artist's Statement

I am interested in both individual and social identity, their relationship to one another, and how they intertwine to create a unique human experience. My point of departure is the human figure, inspired by the raw expression conveyed through face and body language. Humans are social creatures, so my work examines this interdependency between both the figures and the observer. Although my style procures a sense of realism for means of familiarity, still I synthesize imagination with observation, strengthening my visual language and striving to conceive art that can be universally understood and true.

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Newport Art Proposal Budget  
(Does not include installation expenses)

Clay:	12 (50lb) boxes x \$28.00/e (with tax)=	\$ 356
Underglazes:	15 pints x \$20.00/e (with tax) =	\$ 318
Clear Glaze:	10 pints x \$16.00/e (with tax) =	\$ 170
Labor:	275 hrs x \$18/e =	\$ 4,950
Background Stucco Work:		\$ 1,000
Misc. Tools:		\$ 200
Total =		\$ 6,994