

## PRESS INQUIRIES

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## **Art Center Sarasota Announces Artist for Mural Project**

*Artist Annie Dong, a New College student and muralist, was selected to create the mural for this biennial initiative, a collaboration between Art Center Sarasota and the Boys & Girls Club of Manatee County.*

(December 12, 2022) Art Center Sarasota (ACS) has selected an artist to design a mural for a collaborative initiative it recently launched with the Boys & Girls Club of Manatee County. Annie Dong, a student at New College of Florida, will design the wall mural and outline the major details of the design. Youth who attend the Boys & Girls Club of Manatee County will then paint the mural, with supervision, over the course of four days in January.

“This project fulfills two Art Center imperatives,” said Kinsey Robb, executive director of Art Center Sarasota. “To engage young people in the process of creating art and to foster public art. This initiative with the Boys and Girls Club, made possible through the generosity of Gwen and Joe Ziomek, offers a rare opportunity for young people to become intimately involved in an art project from conception to completion. The kids will get to learn how to paint a mural as well as learn about what conceptually inspired Annie’s design. Visible from The Bay’s “Mangrove Path,” this collaborative creation will be on public display to the many park and art center visitors for two years.”

Robb envisions this project as a biennial event that demonstrates the important role art plays in childhood development and engagement. “This project is a perfect example of what can happen when organizations come together to inspire and support our youth.”

“I’m extremely excited at the opportunity for our teens to engage in a self-expressive project that all can see,” says Catrese Estes Allen, vice president of program services at Manatee’s Boys & Girls Club. “Teens are quite expressive and this opportunity to work with an artist opens up another avenue of communicating their perspectives. We are so grateful to Joe and Gwen Zoimek, who are enthusiastic supporters of the arts and the Boys & Girls Club.”

“It is an honor to be selected as the muralist for this project,” says Annie Dong, a self-taught artist who studies psychology and art at New College of Florida. “I am very grateful for this amazing opportunity to be able to bring my creative vision to life in collaboration with the youth participants and the community.”

Dong has created two murals on campus and a third at the Kung Fu Tea Café in St. Petersburg and believes art has always been a vital outlet for her mental health and wellbeing. She hopes to get involved with public art projects after finishing her education.

“Annie is an incredibly motivated and diligent young student artist, undoubtedly deserving of this opportunity,” says Kim Anderson, her art professor at New College. “She shares a resounding passion for both art and community engagement, which is synthesized beautifully in this project. Recognizing the power of art to galvanize a

community, Annie has engaged in numerous public art opportunities and I sense that she has a strong future in this arena.”

Mary David Wallace, senior planner and lead of the office of Public Art at City of Sarasota, lauds the project. “Art Center Sarasota, artist Annie Dong, and The Boys and Girls Club of Manatee County are partnering to bring joy to the participants, our community, and all who visit our city. We look forward to celebrating the new work soon and congratulate all involved in such a special collaboration.”

The mural will be painted on the west wall of Art Center Sarasota’s building and will be visible from The Bay’s Mangrove Path. Additionally, Dong has been working on a large campus mural at New College as part of a mural course. The 20 feet by 40 feet campus mural features colorful interpretations of dancing cranes and blooming chrysanthemums as a way to celebrate and share her Chinese heritage on campus.

## **Important Dates**

- Artist to outline the Mural: December 15-22
- B&G Club Paint Mural: Wednesday, January 4, 5, 6, 9
- Artist to retouch the mural: January 10-13
- Ribbon Cutting Ceremony: January 19, 4 p.m.

*Art Center Sarasota, 707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. For information, visit [www.artsarasota.org](http://www.artsarasota.org) or call 941-365-2032.*

## **About the Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County:**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County’s mission is “to enable all young people, especially

those that need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.” In operation since 1946, Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County currently provides afterschool and summer programs for over 1,300 young people at six locations (2 traditional Clubs and 4 school-based Clubs). The Clubs offer a safe place to learn and grow, where members experience both life-enhancing and character-building programs focused on academic success, healthy lifestyles, and good character and leadership. For more information, call 941-761-2582 or visit [www.bgcmanatee.org](http://www.bgcmanatee.org) or [www.facebook.com/BoysGirlsClubsManatee](https://www.facebook.com/BoysGirlsClubsManatee).

### **About Art Center Sarasota**

Art Center Sarasota was the first arts and cultural institution in Sarasota. Founded in 1926 as the “Sarasota Art Association” by Marcia Rader, the art supervisor for the Sarasota County schools district, the Association was later incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in 1943 and has been in its current location in the Sarasota Bayfront Cultural District since 1949. Art Center Sarasota is a member-supported organization that offers curated and juried exhibitions, adult and youth education programs, outreach initiatives for underserved youth, and culturally related public programming. Art Center Sarasota is admission-free and open to all public; its mission is to inspire individual creative expression, nurture artistic talent and provide the community with accessible and diverse visual art opportunities.

### **Art Center Sarasota**

707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34236

Phone: 941-365-2032

[www.artsarasota.org](http://www.artsarasota.org)

### **Gallery Hours**

Monday-Friday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Saturday: Noon-5 p.m.