



Mock-up of "Project Daring" mural featuring Zora Neale Hurston, author of "Their Eyes Were Watching God," Betty Mae Jumper, the first female chief of the Seminole Tribe, and Marjorie Harris Carr, a celebrated environmentalist. OLIVIA BARATTINI

Three Florida muses

Junior League celebrates 60 years with 'Project Daring' mural

Amanda Sieradzki Special to Tallahassee Democrat
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"All serious daring starts from within," said Eudora Welty, Pulitzer Prize winner and former Junior League of Jackson, Mississippi, volunteer. Artists Olivia Barattini and Savannah Salinas agree. * "I admire Savannah's openness and that she is game to try new things," says Barattini. "I admire artists who aren't necessarily married to any one media or idea. You can go farther with people who are adventurous."



Salinas

"I really like seeing what Olivia's working on because she's always experimenting," adds Salinas. "We both dabble in media that the other hasn't really messed with so it's fun to talk about the challenges and what's exciting about those medias."

Barattini and Salinas are the daring artists behind the Junior League of Tallahassee's new "Project Daring" mural which will feature Welty's quote within the design.

JLT commissioned the mural to transform the outside wall of the Lumen Technologies building at the intersection of Calhoun Street

and Park Avenue. The project has garnered support from the Florida Department of State and Tallahassee Downtown Improvement Authority.

Celebrating distinguished women

JLT wanted to commemorate their 60-year anniversary by visually celebrating female trailblazers. Tallahassee natives Barattini and Salinas stepped up to the challenge, integrating three distinguished women, all of whom have been inducted into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame.

They will paint a collage of portraits of Zora Neale Hurston, author of "Their Eyes Were Watching God," Betty Mae Jumper, the first

female chief of the Seminole Tribe, and Marjorie Harris Carr, a celebrated environmentalist.

"For me, as a woman of color, I really wanted to include women of color that I found really inspiring," says Salinas. "I've always admired Hurston and think it's super cool that she's from one of the first established Black cities in Florida. We both wanted to include people that we found inspiring and cared about similar issues that we cared about."

Salinas' primary media is in ceramics and printmaking. This will be her first mural. Salinas met Barattini at Florida State University when they were both studio art students. Now, they work at Omnia, an art auction company in

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Indya Watercolor And Ink 2021 by Savannah Salinas TALLAHASSEE

Mural

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town. “Project Daring” will be their first creative endeavor together. Barattini, who focuses on drawing, painting and digital art, completed her first mural in 2017.

“A friend of mine, Sarah Painter, was putting together a project to design the side of a building and it was something I’d never done before,” recalls Barattini.

“The idea behind this JLT pitch was coming up with something adjacent to the three muses using women in areas of important interests. So, we have the Author, the Leader, and the Steward of the Environment.”

Combining history and photoshop

Both Barattini and Salinas share a love for history. They spend their days cataloging and researching historical and timeless pieces of art and photography. Stylistically, they first sketched out these women’s portraits in a daguerreotype style, an old-type of 1800s photography, which is something they handle on a semi-regular basis. Instead, they decided to keep the figures in the mural monochrome in the style of Greek sculptures and have the textiles they’re wearing pop with a variety of colors.

Salinas created the illustrations for these figures’ clothing, and incorporated imagery that alludes to what each woman is historically known for. Carr sports a shirt of stylized leaves, Hurston’s outfit is a blinking cacophony of eyes, and Jumper is swathed in traditional Seminole textiles. The Welty quote encircles Jumper’s chest.

“We were so struck by that quote because it’s so fitting for these powerful women,” says Salinas. “These women are inspirations, and they are muses. You can aspire to be like them.”

“It undulates between all the figures and, if nothing else, it reads like a man-

tra,” adds Barattini. “As people look at this, they can put all the elements together and this mantra can translate into all sorts of experiences for people who need that extra kick.”

Barattini is constantly struck by art’s ability to present opportunities for creative problem solving. It’s what motivates her to keep pushing her boundaries as an artist.

When it came to plotting out the design for “Project Daring,” she used photoshop to compose the figures and then projected the image on the wall to ascertain scale. This process allowed her and Salinas to “sketch” in real-time as they began the preliminary steps for completing the mural.

Unveiling in the works

With the final unveiling still in the works, Barattini is curious what passersby may take away from her and Salinas’ composition. She is hopeful that these women will inspire them to look within and imagine what their own power and strength can achieve.

“Not everyone has time to unpack all the information inside the work, but art can be that package that delivers either a feeling, a message or an emotion of some sort,” says Barattini.

“Art is vital because it’s in every aspect of our lives,” adds Salinas. “It’s the street signs, the architecture, the cars we drive, the advertisements we see. It’s in every facet and it’s what makes everything so beautiful. For me, making art and making it loud and where people can see it and can understand why it’s important, that’s why it matters to me. There’s so much magic in the world you can’t help but be inspired by it.”

For more information on the Tallahassee Junior League or the “Project Daring” mural, visit jltallahassee.org.

Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area’s umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).