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**Midtown Alliance Launches “Heart of the Arts” Program**

*Initiative will bring vacant storefronts to life with vibrant works from emerging artists*

**ATLANTA – December 21, 2020** – Midtown Alliance is bringing art to the forefront of the community with the launch of a new program called Heart of the Arts. The multi-pronged initiative kicks off this month with a series of storefront exhibitions that showcase talents new to the district, support the local arts economy, activate currently vacant retail spaces and energize the street level experience for pedestrians.

Midtown stands out in the region as Atlanta’s hub of visual and performing arts, anchored by world class museums, attractions, and cultural venues concentrated in a 1.2 square mile area. The Heart of the Arts program builds upon Midtown Alliance’s mission to amplify the creative experience in Midtown, making it an essential part of daily urban life that is accessible to all.

For the initial phase of the program, Midtown Alliance staff engaged curator Neda Abghari to deliver the first round of temporary storefront exhibitions. Abghari is the Founder and Executive Director of The Creatives Project, an award-winning artist and residency program which has supported over 70 local talents through residency programs and exhibitions since 2011. Through her guidance and expertise, we are proud to announce the inaugural selection of artists Shanequa Gay, Chiomma Hall, Melissa Huang, Kaye Lee Patton, Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya, Fabian Williams and Kristan Woolford.

“I am so deeply thrilled with Midtown Alliance’s commitment and investment to amplify the voices of our city’s creative talents,” Abghari said. “Although Midtown Alliance has installed public art before, Heart of the Arts seeks to be intentional in the way it supports Atlanta’s arts economy while also enriching the public sphere.”

The artists’ installations will be visible along Peachtree Street between 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets, Peachtree Place, as well as on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, making the open-air experience easy to explore on foot, and even more fun when paired with Midtown Alliance’s colorful holiday lighting vignettes present throughout the district. The works will be on display for approximately the next three months, beginning in late December 2020.

Temporary installations are the springboard for the next phase of Heart of the Arts, which will focus on residencies to give artists a firm foundation to build creative space in Midtown. Workspaces will be provided from six to 18 months and include a component of community engagement in the form of special programming and events featuring their work.

This effort relies on strategic partnerships with commercial properties, businesses, and founding partners, including Atlanta History Center Midtown Campus, Coro Realty Advisors, Madison Marquette, Union Investment Real Estate and Cafe Agora, among others. Host sites enjoy the presence of art on their property and the added visibility that it brings to garner potential commercial leasing inquiries. Midtown Alliance invites property owners seeking opportunities for their available spaces in 2021 to reach out regarding potential partnerships.

“We are lucky to work in a district where supporting creativity is a core value,” said Ginny Kennedy, Midtown Alliance director of urban design. “Now more than ever, art is essential to elevate our mood and open our minds to new ideas. As we reengage with our surroundings in 2021, we invite artists and property owners to join us in amplifying a culture of creativity in Midtown.”

For more about the Heart of the Arts program, storefront exhibitions, artist bios and a behind-the-scenes look at the artists' work, visit [MidtownATL.com/arts](http://MidtownATL.com/arts). Follow Midtown Alliance on Instagram (@Midtown\_ATL), Facebook (@MidtownATL) and Twitter (@MidtownATL) with hashtag #MidtownATL for updates about the program.

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### ***About Midtown Alliance***

[Midtown Alliance](#) is a non-profit membership organization and a coalition of leading business and community leaders – united in our commitment to Midtown as a premier destination for commerce, culture, education and living. Guided by a visionary master plan – Blueprint Midtown – and in partnership with the Midtown Improvement District, our mission is to improve and sustain the quality of life for those who live, work and play here. Midtown Alliance accomplishes this goal through a comprehensive approach to planning and development that includes initiatives to enhance public safety, improve the physical environment, and strengthen the urban amenities which give the area its unique character.

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