



B L O M

BY STRATHMORE

EXPANDING ACCESS TO THE ARTS

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Bloom captures the essence of Strathmore’s role in the community—helping the arts to thrive and making sure that everyone has the opportunity to experience them. We do this by providing free and low-cost events, extending our resources throughout the county, and collaborating with partners who make a positive impact.

The intention behind Bloom has been a part of Strathmore’s mission since its founding. Numerous programs, such as our Step Up program in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), have been in place for many years.

In 2016, we expanded our commitment to taking the arts beyond our walls, particularly in the eastern part of Montgomery County—we briefly called that expansion the “East County Initiative.”

As community programming and school initiatives grew, we needed to create an umbrella for our work specifically focused on expanding access to participating in the arts, and Bloom was born.

Since expanding access to the arts is our top priority, seventy percent of Bloom programs take place out in our community, and nearly all include creative partnerships with local organizations, schools, and artists. Through conversations, surveys, and a close network of community partners, Strathmore has developed programs in response to what the community has expressed it wants and needs most.

ARTS THROUGH SCHOOLS



In collaboration with MCPS, Strathmore is able to remove financial, transportation, and other barriers that may otherwise prohibit children from experiencing the power of the arts. We achieve this through:

- **Field Trips & Performances for Students**
Every MCPS student gets the opportunity to visit Strathmore's venues for curriculum-enhancing performances during their early years.
- **Tuition-Free Arts Enrichment**
From strings to step, Strathmore brings tuition-free after-school arts enrichment to students. These programs include East County Strings, Latin Strings and Percussion, Step Up East County, and more.
- **School Partnerships & Artist Residencies**
Strathmore works with educators and master teaching artists to create custom performances, workshops, camps, and demonstrations throughout the year. These programs are concentrated in schools where a high percentage of students qualify for free or reduced-cost meals and are provided free of charge to both the school and students.

ARTS THROUGH SCHOOLS PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- **Student Concerts at Strathmore**
20,000+ children annually experience the wonder of live performance at Strathmore. We produce and present free concerts for every MCPS 2nd and 5th grader focusing on classical music and the blues.
- **East County Strings**
Hundreds of middle school students receive tuition-free after-school coaching from professional instrumentalists and participate in a large-scale public performance.
- **Latin Strings and Percussion**
Middle and high school students in upper Montgomery County learn Latin American music for strings and percussion and perform for the community—all at no charge.
- **Sing Out**
A free after-school choral program for schools without a chorus class option. Our goal is to build interest and resources to create permanent choral music programs.
- **Step Up East County**
Students receive free after-school instruction from our artistic partner Step Afrika!. Strathmore brings students to see a professional step performance at the Music Center and produces a culminating student showcase performance.
- **Think Big Café**
A fee-free, creative, multi-disciplinary, year-long artistic adventure for MCPS students.
- **School Partnerships, Artist Residencies & More**
Each year Strathmore designs and produces dozens of custom arts education experiences in partnership with artists and educators where need is greatest. These include artist residencies, camps, workshops, and more.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

LATIN STRINGS AND PERCUSSION

Over 100 middle and high school students learn Latin American music for strings and percussion and have an opportunity to perform for the community.

Siril Stephen was a self-taught percussionist when he participated in Latin Strings and Percussion. Of his experience he said, “This program opened my eyes to music I hadn’t explored before. I learned different techniques and styles of playing that I would have never otherwise learned.”

Siril’s talent and passion for percussion earned him scholarships for Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras’ Philharmonic and private lessons.

“Many of our students have a desire to make great music but do not have access to private lessons. For our more impacted students, master music-making can sometimes seem out of reach. I believe the Latin Strings and Percussion program helped to humanize what it is to make great music for our students.”

Mary Lee Young,
Instrumental Music Director,
Redland Middle School

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS & PUBLIC EVENTS

Strathmore has created strategic community partnerships to help bring accessible arts programs to every corner of our community. Some of these collaborations include:

- **Free Concerts & Community Festivals**

Music lovers of all ages can enjoy free concerts presented on Strathmore's campus, at Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center in eastern Montgomery County, and at numerous local festivals with our Bloom Pop-Up Stage.

- **Classes & Camps**

Through partnerships with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation and other community organizations, Strathmore is able to offer multi-disciplinary arts classes and camps with no or reduced tuition fees.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS & PUBLIC EVENTS INCLUDE:

- **Free Concerts at Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center**
Strathmore offers free performances in eastern Montgomery County throughout the spring and summer.
- **Free Summer Concerts at Strathmore**
Live from the Lawn, a tradition that welcomes thousands of local residents each summer, has been running since long before the Music Center at Strathmore opened!
- **Sensory Friendly Programming**
Working with national experts, Strathmore continues to increase the scope of programming for children with sensory sensitivities—including backstage tours, rehearsals, concerts, and story sessions.
- **Classes at Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center**
Strathmore worked with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation to make this new center arts friendly and offer low-fee classes in a variety of arts disciplines.
- **Corridor Concerts**
Each year, over 300 community members perform alongside professional artists in free concerts that celebrate culture and bring people together.
- **Community Festivals**
Strathmore works closely with community leaders to produce diverse performances at existing local festivals with our Bloom Pop-Up Stage.
- **Arts Sessions at Montgomery County Recreation Free Summer Camps**
In collaboration with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation and Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington, Strathmore provides multi-disciplinary arts sessions as part of a free seven-week summer camp which serves more than 450 children.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

ARTS PROGRAMS AT GOOD HOPE NEIGHBORHOOD RECREATION CENTER

“Strathmore’s partnership with the Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center has exposed our community and surrounding neighborhoods to art forms they may have not otherwise encountered. From the amazing musicians that perform free concerts and introduce our community to diverse genres of music to the Step Up program which engages students, I believe the association with Strathmore has given our community new and creative ways to express themselves.”

Ma’Lisa Easterling
Recreation Specialist, Good Hope
Neighborhood Recreation Center



“This partnership has given our kids the opportunity to learn the art of stepping while teaching the principles of teamwork, commitment, and discipline. It also allows the community to experience a different type of activity that wasn’t offered before. They learn and apply skills that transfer into real life and help prepare them for success.”

Jennifer Boston,
Step Up parent liaison



SUPPORT

Strathmore believes in creating a vibrant arts community that welcomes everyone. Contributions from generous donors and sponsors make it possible for us to launch, maintain, and grow these programs and experiences. Your investment allows us to ensure that no one is denied the opportunity to engage in the arts. For more information, please contact us at donors@strathmore.org.

To make a fully tax-deductible contribution, please visit

[STRATHMORE.ORG/BLOOM](https://strathmore.org/bloom)

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

PARTNERS

Montgomery County Department of Recreation

Montgomery County Public Schools

Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington

Baila4Life: After School Dance Fund

Bmore Houseful

Burtonsville Day

Community Building Art Works

Glenstone

Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center

Scrap Arts Music

Step Afrika!

Thriving Germantown

Wheaton Arts Parade

YMCA Youth & Family Services

SUPPORTERS

Bloom is made possible in part through support from the following institutions:

AARP

Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

GEICO

Jordan Kitt's Music

Lockheed Martin Corporation

Maryland State Arts Council

The Nora Roberts Foundation

Paul M. Angell Family Foundation

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STRATHMORE

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STRATHMORE NEWS

FALL
WINTER
20-21

MONUMENTS

Innovative outdoor exhibition
celebrates artists this October.

MUSIC IN THE MANSION CONCERTS ANNOUNCED!

Tickets go on sale September 9.

THE ART OF PAPER

Artists elevate paper to a
new level in playful and poignant
exhibition.

STRATHMORE

CREATIVE FORC

Outdoor art installation honors artists shaping our community.

By Mary Murdock

Picture this: as dusk falls, you walk onto the rolling green of the Strathmore grounds to see the moving, luminescent faces of boundary-pushing artists looking back at you from the trees. This October, Strathmore welcomes you back to our campus with an outdoor art installation that highlights artists' essential work as contributors to the community. Australian artist Craig Walsh's *Monuments: Creative Forces* will feature moving portraits of artists projected into the night sky, transforming trees into sculptural monuments and honoring the transformative work of the artists themselves.

REDEFINING MONUMENTS

When we think of a monument, many picture a marble statue of a man from another time or, perhaps, a pillar. Walsh's *Monuments* challenges that mental picture, expanding it to celebrate living members of our community, and swapping out chiseled marble for an ethereal face in the leaves of a tree. "The conversation around monuments is front and center right now and while an essential dialogue about the appropriateness of many monuments continues, visitors to the DC area also know first-hand the power of visiting installations that reminds us of our better angels," remarks Strathmore Artistic Director Joi Brown.

Monuments leads us to question who gets honored in our public spaces and what kind of work is viewed as worthy of being honored with a public monument. Walsh uses the installation to tell "the sort of stories that won't be turned into permanent monuments, given the political, economic, and social

status that enables those permanent monuments to exist." Every day, people make contributions to our community that will never be recognized by a marble statue in a city center but that nevertheless are the bedrock of our society. Local artists, for example, may have their work celebrated in a gallery, but rarely do they get publicly uplifted. "Let's tell their story," says Walsh, "Let's make monuments to those people."

At Strathmore, *Monuments* will pay tribute to six artists whose work is changing the shape of our community in fundamental and essential ways. "A 'Force of Nature' can change the shape of the world," says Brown. "We celebrate artists who improve and transform the world around them through artistic and community endeavors." The artists featured will be chosen through a nomination and selection process in which a diverse panel of community and arts leaders will evaluate artists' work as a contribution to transformation, unity, equity, and social imperatives within the community. Their portraits will be monumentalized as video projections created by Walsh. Through the installation, visitors will get to know the artists as humans first and foremost, preceding the art and achievements that have shaken the ground beneath them.

RECONNECTING WITH OUR SPACES

"How does the environment relate to the human condition?" This is a question that Walsh asked himself early on in the process of developing *Monuments*, which premiered in 2014 at Australia's White Night Festival. It sparked a traveling installation, temporarily monumentalizing the unsung heroes of communities around the world. "All my work is temporal," notes Walsh, "and part of the objective of making it temporal is to avoid the politics defining public work and public spaces." This temporality, combined with Walsh's dedication to site-responsive work, makes the installation completely unique to each community that it's built in during a specific moment in time.



Australian artist Craig Walsh creates living monuments

ES OF NATURE

Though *Monuments* has been years in the making, it is particularly resonant within our current cultural and historical moment. “By projecting these portraits . . . we can learn a lot about our relationship to [public] spaces,” says Walsh. This is a relationship that has changed quite markedly over the last few months, during which public spaces have been altered or even shut down to prevent the spread of disease. Strathmore’s campus has been one such space, and *Monuments* is a significant step in reimagining how the nonprofit arts venue can continue to pursue the mission of creating dynamic arts experiences that cultivate connections within the community. Walsh

Strathmore Presents

MONUMENTS CREATIVE FORCES CRAIG WALSH

Thu, Oct 1–Sun, Oct 25, starts daily at sunset

Moving images transform trees into sculptural monuments and pay homage to regional artists whose work and artistic endeavors are changing the shape of our community in fundamental ways.

OUTDOOR

[STRATHMORE.ORG/MONUMENTS](https://strathmore.org/monuments)

Timed tickets go on sale September 9.
Strathmore Stars get presale access!



Monuments honors everyday individuals in Breckenridge, Colorado, transforming the natural environment into works of art.

MONUMENTS

remarks on the fact that *Monuments* may be an ideal arts experience for this time, saying that “In a big public space, you can [physically distance] quite easily.” The nature of the installation is also such that “you can be in different parts of the space and have different experiences,” allowing visitors to move about the venue while engaging with the art in an ideal way.

“This moment has taken us back to some important basics—among them, time with loved ones, time in nature, and artistic sources of individual inspiration,” Brown says. “As we navigate this time, we want Strathmore’s campus to be a place of healing and inspiration.” Through *Monuments*, not only will the Strathmore campus become a space for safe connection between members of our community, but also a space for the veneration of community itself, and the essential role of art within it.




The White Night Festival in Australia highlights individuals left out of its selective history.


Craig Sillice Photography

Plan Your Visit

GET YOUR TIMED TICKETS!

- Presale to Circles Members, 2 Stars, and above: Aug 31 at 10am.
- Presale to all Stars Members: Sept 2 at 10am.
- On sale to the public: Sept 9 at 10am.
- Free tickets are available, please pay what you can to support this activity and the arts in your community.

 Starts daily at sunset. Allow approximately 1 hour to enjoy the exhibition.

 **METRO** On the Red Line, Grosvenor-Strathmore station.

 **PARKING** in the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro garage is \$5.20 during the week, free on weekends.

 **FACE COVERINGS** must be worn while visiting Strathmore.

 **WEATHER** This event is rain or shine.

Support for *Monuments*:
Creative Forces
provided by



To learn about the steps we’re taking to protect our patrons, staff, and volunteers and how you can help, visit www.strathmore.org/welcomeback.

The trees have eyes in Strathmore's mesmerizing art installation 'Monuments'

By **Kelsey Ables**

Oct. 15, 2020 at 7:00 a.m. EDT

A soldier's elevated chin. A statesman's puffed up chest. A colonizer's raised arm.

Traditional monuments often tell stories of triumph through body gestures. But what if we decided to monumentalize subtler expressions? What might the crevices of a wrinkled-up nose tell us? Where might lips stretched into a hesitant smile lead?

While many monuments capture famous figures in postures that convey heroism, the six people depicted by Australian artist Craig Walsh in "Monuments: Creative Forces" — on outdoor view, after dark, at Strathmore — strike a different tone. Made by projecting black-and-white portraits of local artists, writers, and musicians onto trees in eight-minute video loops, the close-cropped faces cycle through forgettable behaviors and quiet emotions: disinterest, sadness, delight. They smile. They yawn. They fall asleep.

The works are a part of an ongoing series, begun in 2014, in which Walsh partners with local communities around the world to memorialize living heroes — from bicycling enthusiasts to green-energy activists — in spectral forms.

At first, it sounds creepy, like some arboreal horror movie: "The Trees Have Eyes." (The off-putting [promotional photos](#) don't help). But in person, it is surprisingly easy to connect with the video portraits. At tree-size, the faces simulate the kind of close-up interaction with a stranger that many of us probably haven't experienced in months. You might find yourself absorbed in the subjects' expressions or mesmerized by laugh lines and smiles, as if they were features of unfamiliar landscape seen out the window of a train.

The six artists and creators recognized in the Strathmore iteration of "Monuments" were selected by a panel, based on their impact in the local community. The installation has been in the works for years, but present circumstances have made the endeavor particularly meaningful as ongoing crises have left many artists struggling. The first monument in the show depicts singer-songwriter and filmmaker Be Steadwell, whose "queer pop" focuses on the Black and LGBTQ+ experience. The artist occupies a poignant position in the installation: looking out over the now emptied Music Center. When Steadwell closes her eyes — as many of the subjects do — she seems to be both resting and — like so many performing artists forced out of work by the pandemic — waiting.

At a far remove from the Music Center — as well from all the other monuments — is a projection of Daryl Davis, a Black pianist known for meeting with and converting members of the Ku Klux Klan. Seen from across a wide field, with the sky and grass all to himself, Davis appears — literally and figuratively — above the fray.

Closer to the footpath that winds its way through the grounds of the arts complex, the two youngest artists selected —

poet Marjan Naderi and visual artist Terron Cooper Sorrells — swap glances from neighboring trees that were chosen to match the shape of their faces. Beside a gazebo, Step Afrika! founder C. Brian Williams blinks, while Yoko K. Sen, a sound alchemist and electronic musician, gazes meditatively from atop a hill.

By calling these works monuments, Walsh positions the luminescent faces in the fraught, timely debate over whom we should honor in public space — and how. Physically, the works resist what we think of when we think of monuments. Made of light, the diaphanous compositions are practically immaterial and as fleeting as the autumn foliage that holds them. Captured on video, the subjects are in constant motion. Even the smallest shifts in expression, rippling over hundreds of leaves, feel weighty.

Projection art has long been used by artist-activists as a way of engaging the public. Over the summer, Hank Willis Thomas projected the words of prison inmates onto the Department of Justice building. And artist Robin Bell has made a name for himself projecting provocative statements onto symbolic structures, as he did recently with such phrases as “Trump is infecting you” on Trump International Hotel.

In Walsh’s work, however, the impermanence of the image is not a means to an end — raising awareness, for example — but an end in and of itself. The transience is the message.

The works, which Walsh calls “monuments without the baggage,” lack permanence, even as you experience them. If you don’t stand in the precise right viewing spot — midway between the projector and the tree — the face becomes indiscernible. As you walk away, the form is lost as quickly as it appeared.

But the monuments also lack the baggage of expectation that comes with glorious figures cast in stone. Strathmore’s monuments often gaze up at the sky. In so doing, they appear curious, deferential, maybe even a little bit confused. It’s as if they are wondering, “How did I get here? Why me?”

At one point in the show, two monuments seem in sync: Davis yawns, and then so does Naderi. Yawning, which typically conveys boredom or fatigue, is a strange, unflattering thing to include in a memorial. But one evolutionary theory suggest that yawns, which increase blood flow to the brain, spread from one person to another to create a collective, heightened state of awareness. In that regard, a yawn is a call to action, and perhaps not so different from the raised hoofs of the District’s many equestrian statues.

And yet, the yawning monuments might be better at pulling you under their influence. While no one passing through Logan Circle would feel compelled to start trotting alongside General John Logan, looking at these monuments, you might just catch yourself yawning too, and not out of boredom.

Monuments: Creative Forces

On the grounds of Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. strathmore.org. Face coverings are required for ages 6 and older, and recommended for ages 2-5.

Dates: Daily, beginning at sunset, through Oct. 31 (subject to weather). Allow 30 to 60 minutes to experience the

installation.

Admission: Timed, pay-what-you-can tickets are available online. Free tickets are available Sundays-Thursdays. Parking in the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro garage is \$5.20 during the week, and free on weekends.

Public program: On Monday at 7 p.m., there will be a Zoom panel discussion with artists Craig Walsh, Daryl Davis and C. Brian Williams, moderated by artist and educator Ada Pinkston. Marjan Naderi will perform original poems to open and close the session. Register for pay-what-you-can tickets at strathmore.org/events-and-tickets/monuments-panel-discussion.
