Creative Capital

A dedicated young arts community is bringing new growth to Raleigh

by

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Clockwise from top left: The Greek Revival facade of the North Carolina Capitol building; Bida Manda's sister-and-brother team, Vanvisa and Vangara Nolintha; cocktails at the Stanbury bar; Raleigh Denim Workshop owners Victor Lytwynenko and Sarah Yarborough; women's clothing designer Catherine Fain.
RLOTTE HAS ITS BANKS, ASHEVILLE, ITS BEER; DURHAM, ITS BULLS.
Raleigh's thing, its calling card, has been tougher to pinpoint. At first glance,
the bustling legislative city. The Greek Revival capitol building and various state and
local government offices occupy ample chunks of the concentrated downtown—and the state is still the city's largest employer. But half a mile southwest, on U.S. Highway 70, you'll find a less buttoned-up identity emerging. Situated in the Warehouse District, a rising creative class is dominating local

Now the company produces a full line of men'swear, made in the United States, with a flagship store in Person Street Plaza—a stretch of small businesses located a few blocks northeast of the district. Nearby, international clothier Peter Millar staffs a large studio and design center at the restored Pilot Cotton Mill. "It's a domino effect," says Catherine Fain, who launched her women's clothing line, Ramey Rhodes, in 2013. "I've lived here all my life, but it's only been in the last few years that I've seen the growth and change to support this kind of field."

Proof that one type of artistic energy feeds another, CAM Raleigh, the buzzed-about contemporary art museum, opened in 2011 around the corner from Raleigh Denim Workshop and has quickly become a North Star for the aesthetically inclined. The
Oak City Innovators
FROM JEWELRY AND JEANS TO ABSTRACT ART AND GLOBAL CUISINE, A SAMPLING OF RALEIGH'S INVENTIVE SIDE

Eat + Drink

BIDAMANDA
Laotian cuisine has a proper temple in downtown Raleigh with this serene restaurant and bar. Within the bamboo-covered walls, the menu channels the flavors that the owners, siblings Vansana and Vanvisa Nolintha, remember from their childhood: pork belly swimming in a creamy curried coconut broth, crispy rice salad tucked into lettuce wraps, and a beef tripe larb that'll really make you sweat. bidamanda.com

BOULTED BREAD
Three men and a mill: That's the foundation for Raleigh's newest artisan bakeshop, where Tar Heel natives Fulton Fordie, Sam Kirkpatrick, and Joshua Belamy employ house-milled flours to produce the crusty baguettes, tangy French country breads, and seasonal pastries that have locals lining up. boul tedbread.com

FOUNDERATION BAR
Hardly more than a crawl space before architect Vincent Whitehurst and contractor Will Alphin went to work on it, this subterranean bar had to be excavated by hand. Since it opened, bartenders have set about transforming the city's cocktail culture one hand-made drink at a time. There's a solid whiskey list, too, and a recently added kitchen that turns out a rotation of seasonal themed menus. foundationnc.com

STANBURY
The playful, genre-bending cuisine of chef Drew Maykuth, formerly of the Admiral in Asheville, keeps this neighborhood place perennially packed. A fixin' on the menu, the pig's head (don't worry; it's mostly jowl) croquette topped with a
"In Raleigh, design is viewed in broad terms," says Hopscotch's organizer, Matthew Muñoz, "giving people space to experiment, to try things out."

People like Luke Buchanam. A painter by day, bartender by night, Buchanam has no trouble finding local outlets for his talents. He has painted murals such as the one for chef Ashley Christensen's upcoming restaurant, Death & Taxes, as part of the Raleigh Murals Project, a grassroots effort to give the blank walls of the city's industrial buildings a needed face-lift. He is also one of the organizers behind the recently launched Peregrine Projects, a collective of artists who set up roving events across the city. "We operate like a gallery without a brick-and-mortar," Buchanam says. "Instead of moving somewhere with a bigger art scene, we're building the community here."

Raleigh's young creatives aren't starting with a blank canvas. It's a reinvigoration of a tradition with deep roots in the city, planted by North Carolina State University's School of Architecture and Landscape Design. The School of Design, as it became known, was founded in 1948; its first dean, Henry Kampshoeiner, famously lured such architects as Frank Lloyd Wright and Buckminster Fuller to town, establishing new ideas about a modern Southern aesthetic. The school continues to attract talented art, design, and architecture students. The difference is, where they would once have departed for San Francisco or Chicago, more and more are staying put.

Joshua Gajownik, a graphic designer and NCSU design school graduate, is one of those who stayed. Last year, he participated in Rebrand Raleigh, a social-media-based project hosted by a local advertising agency to come up with a new city logo. Every two weeks, a different Raleigh artist took the helm of a dedicated Instagram account, documenting his or her creative process before unveiling a final design. Gajownik's logo, built around sketches of oaks and pines, is a crescendo of green shapes that form the city skyline. Eleven local artists participated. Although the city hasn't commissioned one for official use (yet), Gajownik, for one, is excited to see the arts community engaged in Raleigh's future.

"There are still needs here," he says. "In a town of Raleigh's size, you have the ability to influence."
THE CURATORY
Raleigh Denim Workshop's locally crafted jeans are sold in high-end boutiques all over the world, but it's worth visiting the flagship to see where raw North Carolina-sourced denim becomes the best-fitting pair of blue jeans you'll ever own. Stocked with every make and fit of the brand's offerings as well as goods from other like-minded makers such as Raleigh jeweler Kaitlin Ryan, the carefully curated store overlooks the workshop, where a sea of sewing machines whir with activity. raleighworkshop.com

FURBISH STUDIO
Jamie Meares isn't afraid to break the rules. Steered by her impeccable taste, she has made a name for herself as a stylist and interior designer, pairing unlikely patterns, bold colors, and mismatched genres. Meares's signature color-lrenched aesthetic is on full display in her Warehouse District home: gooods store, where, among many other items, vintage kilim rugs mingle with abstract Southern art and bamboo butler-tray tables. furblishstudio.com

GABRIELLE JEWELRY
Using bits of old lace—often heirlooms supplied by customers—jeweler Gabe Bratton designs one-of-a-kind wearable art. Bratton coats the antique lace remnants in wax before casting them in metals such as bronze or gold. The delicate yet edgy results, formed into bracelets, earrings, necklaces, and cuff links, come with a beautiful patina of history. gabriellejewelry.com

NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF ART
In 2010, this Raleigh institution received an elaborate makeover, with the construction of a new 127,000-square-foot light-filled gallery space to house the museum's permanent collection, plus a hundred new works, including twenty-nine Rodin sculptures. It also added a sleek fine-dining restaurant, Iris, which spills out onto the 164-acre outdoor campus—the largest museum park in the country. ncaramuseum.org

THE UMSTEAD HOTEL AND SPA
Nine miles from downtown in the Raleigh suburb of Cary, this romantic property is the area's most luxurious retreat. When you're not exploring the city, indulge in a treatment at the 16,000-square-foot spa or relax poolside. Most hotel lobbies are predictably uniform, but this one doubles as a gallery, displaying a rotating number of the hotel's collection, including works from such regional artists as potter Ben Owen II and Asheville painter Scott Upton. theumstead.com—K.G.

ART AND SOUL
From far left: The modern gallery space at CAM Raleigh; jewelry designer Gabe Bratton wearing one of her wax-cast lace designs; patrons squeeze in at the bar at Bida Manda; stylist Jamie Meares in red hot; metalsmith Lucas House stokes the fires at Antfarm Studios in the Warehouse District.

VERMILION
Whether you're after a date-night dress or just want to step up your street style, this North Hills boutique has become Raleigh's go-to source for high-end fashion. Owner Ashley Harris carries an edited collection of such classic labels as Balenciaga and Proenza Schouler, plus Southern designers such as Wes Gordon and Lela Rose. vermilionstyle.com

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