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## **A Long-Awaited Art Scene Arrives in Doraville**

*Doraville Art and Merely Players Presents kick off a new art hub in downtown  
with public open house events this month.*

DORAVILLE, GA - In the culture-rich community of Doraville, the Arts have been glaringly absent. But that will all change this spring when two non-profit arts organizations host their Open Houses on April 30<sup>th</sup> in the city's epicenter.

Merely Players Presents, a community center for the performing arts, will host its Open House Fundraiser on Saturday, April 30 from 7 to 10 p.m. The event will have music, food, beverages, and entertainment throughout the evening. With a goal of raising \$10,000, donations and sponsorships are encouraged to help fund MPP's 2022-23 season.

Merely Players Presents is an artistic haven for performance, writing, and other forms of theatrical expression. "We are excited to be a part of the Doraville community where we feel our mission statement aligns beautifully with Doraville's motto of diversity, vitality, and community," says Joan McElroy, Founder and Producing Artistic Director. MPP has directed past hit performances like *The Fantasticks* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*. And while their upcoming lineup is being held close to the vest, McElroy says their new season promises to deliver on their mission.

The entrance to the new performing arts center will feature a mural designed by Sarah Marks capturing the essence of this diverse community and the role the Arts play in it. Merely Players Presents was formed in 2018 but momentum was halted and their dreams of a permanent residence at the Atlanta Cuban Club were squashed due to the Covid-19 shutdown. The City of Doraville has been a strong supporter of the arts and recently approved a resolution allowing the group to occupy the lower level of the Civic Center at 3770 Central Avenue. "The city has afforded us this amazing opportunity to have a space where artists can create and practice their craft," McElroy stated.

Walking distance to MARTA, Merely Players Presents will be part of a fledgling arts district on the corner of Central and New Peachtree – a perfect intersection to unite the OTP and ITP crowds. This newly formed hub will be joined by Doraville Art, known to the neighborhood as DART. Mayor Joseph Geierman noted "When cities support the arts, they are generating broad economic, civic, and cultural benefits for their residents. I'm pleased that our city council recognizes these benefits and believe that this new art hub is the first step in establishing Doraville's position as an 'Art City' in Metro Atlanta."

DART, formed by residents seeking to fill the artistic void, also got their start at the Atlanta Cuban Club a couple years ago, with an engaging art show that was notably embraced by the community. "We knew we created something magical with that event," says Sarah Marks, President of DART. "Doraville has something entirely novel that formed organically and the new Doraville Art Center is a culmination of that artistic spirit."

In addition to the Merely Players Presents' space at the Doraville Civic Center, the City Council's resolution also gave Doraville Art the opportunity to utilize the main level of the adjacent municipal building at 3774 Central Avenue. The new art center not only plans to hold art classes, but will also feature a gallery spotlighting local artists, bookable studio space (including a wet studio), a full kitchen for hosting cooking classes, and The Green Room – a space designed for quiet crafting and artist meetups.

Doraville Art is currently seeking artists to create murals for the Buford Highway Art Walk. This multi-artist project will eventually span 2.6 miles across the city of Doraville, with the first phase starting at the Pinetree Plaza parking lot on Buford Highway. DART's first foray into public art was unveiled last summer in English Oak Park. The aptly named Dora is a 9-foot steel dinosaur painted by artist Shawn Vincelette. "This was the first public art piece in Doraville's 150-year history and is just the beginning of many more artist opportunities to come," says Mary French, DART Treasurer. Stephe Koontz, City Council Member and active Board Member for DART said "Art is one of the best ways to build community. It transcends language and cultural barriers, to unite people around something that is uniquely human."

DART's Open House will be held concurrently with the Merely Players Presents event on April 30<sup>th</sup> from 7 to 10 p.m. The Atlanta community is invited to tour the space and nourish their artistic curiosity with a display of snacks, celebratory drinks, and interactive art demonstrations. Donations are welcome and attendees can RSVP at <https://fb.me/e/4KL3L8bFU>. Members of the community interested in teaching classes, artist opportunities, or volunteering can visit <https://doravilleart.com/>.

Tickets to the Merely Players Presents event can be reserved by visiting <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/300986477657>. The group is asking for a minimum donation of \$20 to support their upcoming season, which will soon be published at <https://www.merelyplayerspresents.com/>.