

## 'You Are Here' | 3 Dots' latest mural shares message of belonging in State College

Colton Lucas | The Daily Collegian  
Oct. 14, 2021



The mural outside of 3 Dots Downtown on Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2021 in State College, Pa.  
Ariana Kommis

"You Are Here."

This is the title for one of State College's newest murals, prominently displayed on the ceiling of the patio at 3 Dots Downtown, and the artwork boasts a bright array of colors and intricate shapes.

Exploring the topography of the local area and the movement of people, artist Ann Tarantino's mural marks a collaborative effort with 3 Dots. Tarantino said she was inspired by various elements of maps and the ways people navigate their environments, especially in the local community.

"During the pandemic, I learned more about people in our community, where people are from, the fact that we have a pretty sizable refugee community," Tarantino said. "Some of the linear imagery in the mural comes from the topography of the place but also the movement of people across space and time — who's coming here and how do people find their way here?"

After discussions started in July on how to bring the project to life, Tarantino said the majority of the designing process was done digitally, a format she said isn't her "strongest suit." Over the course of creating the mural, Tarantino said she discovered several methods to incorporate multiple aspects of her work into one piece, ultimately creating a collage of different artistic processes.

From the layering of different travel routes to pulling colors from other works, Tarantino said the mural was a unique opportunity to create a work of public art within the State College community.

As for the installation process, Tarantino said the piece came in 12 separate sheets of polytab, a special fabric often used in mural projects. With the help of a friend, Mark Risso, Tarantino said it took nearly 10 hours to fully install the mural.

Risso, a shop technician in the Penn State School of Visual Arts, said getting involved with the installation of the mural was a series of firsts for him, which included materials and technology he had never used before.

With a range of experiences working with drywall, wallpaper and painting, Risso said while he had never been involved in a project quite like this, he worked with Tarantino to figure out the best methods to put the mural together.

Risso said the pieces of the mural were precise and even, but the surface of the ceiling wasn't. With cracks and bumps present in many outdoor ceilings, Risso said this added a level of complexity to the puzzle, but the duo was able to come together to find the best solutions to install the mural.

"I've worked with Ann on some projects in the past, and I really enjoy her work," Risso said. "It was exciting to get to use this new product and technology that I hadn't ever worked with previously... It was great to work on the installation of an art piece that will be seen by many."

After stepping into the role of executive director of 3 Dots in April, Erica Quinn said "You Are Here" is her first experience with mural installation.

Having worked at Penn State in SoVA, Quinn said she has always been captivated by Tarantino's work. Quinn said she knew she wanted to bring that work into the downtown space and shine a light on public art done by women.

With a majority of 3 Dots programming during the pandemic outside on its patio, Quinn said the space is an energetic and lively area. Having the mural placed right above the entrance to the interior space "helps to root that sense of place and belonging," Quinn said.

Quinn said she believes Tarantino has a unique perspective in her work, and the way she understands the specificity of place adds to the impact of "You Are Here."

The project was made possible with donations from central Pennsylvania-based Organic Climbing, USA and an anonymous donor. Quinn said it is through the community's contributions and support that public art is able to thrive downtown.

"3 Dots exists for the community, by the community," Quinn said. "That kind of support — whether it's volunteers or donors or people who come to our events — it's so crucial to how we operate and stay open. Those kinds of gifts can make these things possible."