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December 2023 Newsletter

It has now been a decade since the NEON District went from dream to reality, from a spark to fire, from abandoned storefronts to renovated historic buildings, and from a few lone creative folks in the neighborhood to a community of artists, makers, small business owners and arts professionals. Ten years in, we continue to push forward, still in need of physical improvements, more investment, and most all, places to make and show art. That drive is more important than ever – the small businesses who call NEON home need you, and us, to keep the lights on. Keep buying art, take a mural tour, attend a performance, go to brunch, buy a baguette, or make a donation to propel the NEON District forward another ten years.

Before moving into a new year in NEON, take a look back at where we've been:

- The Chrysler Museum of Art's **Zinnia Café** opened last January. Formerly Wisteria, the café offers a full-service dining experience, interior and exterior dining, private rentals and ticketed events. The menu features modern, regional cuisine, serving local and seasonal ingredients in unique and innovative ways.

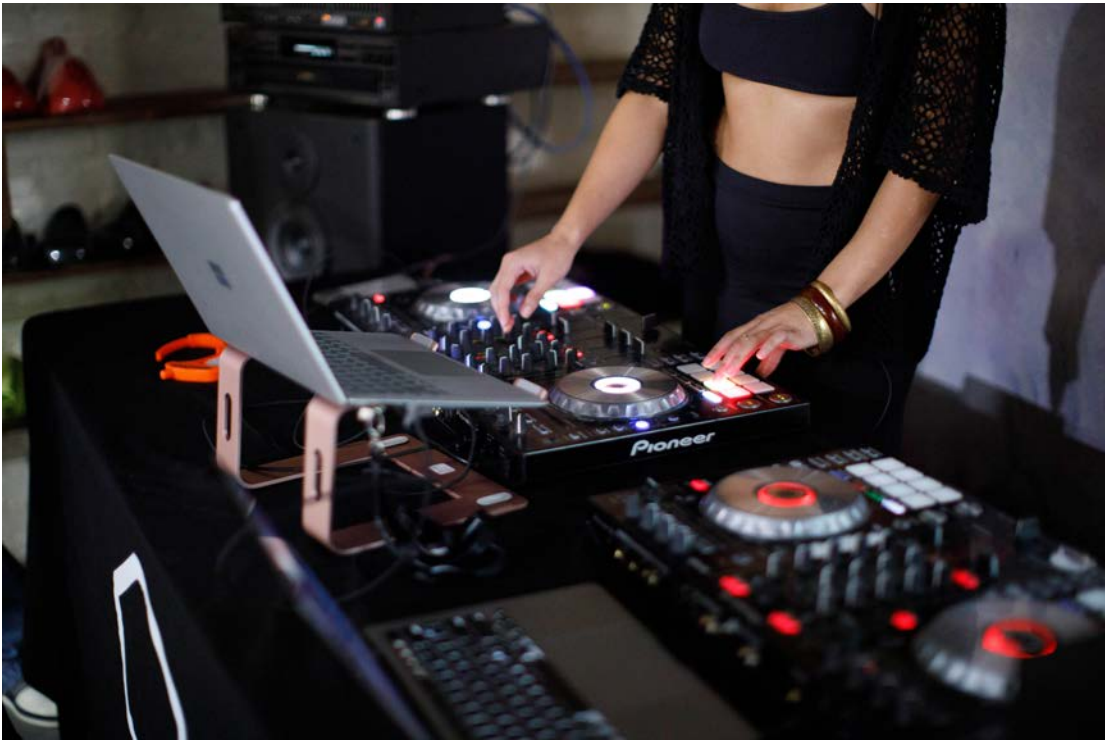
- Thanks to 25 volunteers, **the Plot** received a spring cleaning in April to beautify the space and a fall refresh in October to prepare for the 8th Annual NEON Festival.
- **GypSea Roots Collective** opened in March as a haven of self-discovery and healing, offering an art gallery, art therapy room, infrared sauna, massages, and more
- In April, **Shark City Naturals** set up shop in NEON, offering all-natural beauty, cosmetic and personal care products.
- NEON District and Norfolk Tour Company partnered to offer new **NEON District Art Tours** highlighting the vibrant contributions of Black artists and artists of color, showcasing their diverse talents and enriching the culture of NEON.
- In March, the Chrysler Museum Glass Studio broke ground on its **18,000-square-foot expansion**, doubling the Museum's educational and programmatic offerings, and will house three hot shops, dedicated classrooms for each glassmaking technique, and a performance theater seating 200.
- Owner Kisha Moore chatted about her humbling experiences crafting sweet fare while indulging in macarons and a decadent banoffee tart in the NEON District with ultimate foodie Nomarama on an episode of **City with a Bite!**
- LGBTQ+ owned and operated **Tender Heart Tattoo** was a prime destination during Pride Month in June.
- **The Plot** continues to thrive as a community and event space. This year's event lineup included yoga and Zumba classes, Mermaid Mingling with the City of Norfolk's Department of Parks and Recreation, The Concert Truck in partnership with the Virginia Arts Festival, and Bike Month initiatives like Glow Ride and Bike to Work Day.
- **Fusion at NEON** is starting to come to life! Construction is still underway, but when finished, the apartment complex will boast a 24-hour fitness facility, a rooftop clubroom and terrace, billiards room, swimming pool, and dog park.
- Opened this year, the historic **Duke Grace Building** was renovated to offer 30 luxury apartment units across the street from Chrysler Museum and Glass Studio.
- The Virginia Opera's **Wind Down Wednesdays** on the lawn at the Harrison Opera House were the perfect opportunity for friends, coworkers, and even the whole family to enjoy a mid-week break and sneak peek at talent for the upcoming season.
- Just as delicious as a cookie sandwich, Virginia Beach artist Tessa Hall's **Sweet Treats**, a confectionery wonderland found in Magazine Alley behind Hummingbird Dessert Boutique, was hand painted and blends vivid, cheerful hues onto its dreamy canvas.
- Located at the gateway to the NEON District and Downtown Norfolk, Philadelphia artist Kyle Confehr was inspired by Norfolk's positive and encouraging community, weaving iconic symbols of Norfolk into his one-of-a-kind masterpiece, titled ***The Kindness of Strangers***.
- Students from the Governor's School for the Arts continued to give the NEON District new personality throughout the year. Since 2018, visual arts students have added new **mural squares** on sidewalks. Young Governor's School for the Arts visual artist Aspen Knight's designed and painted ***Anatomy of NEON***. The Magazine Lane "rug" received its biennial refresh; this year's piece is titled ***Walking on Water*** by GSA student artist lolanna Nuzzo. For the holidays, lead student artist Zach Ellis transformed NEON Stars into a ***Baker's Disaster***.
- Over two days, one dry and one soggy, more than 7,000 people attended the 8th Annual NEON Festival, turning the NEON District into an immersive experience, featuring art installations, performances, and exhibitions by local and international artists. **See more about the event here.**

- During the 2023 NEON Festival, all-women street artists and graffiti writers from internationally-known Few and Far Women tagged **NEON WALLS**, a graffiti gallery expanding more than 300 feet of fencing in Magazine Lane behind Cardinal Skate Shop and Virginia Furniture Company.
- A refreshed **801 Window Gallery** featured 44 artworks by Norfolk Public School elementary students, curated by local teacher and artist Sarah Harrington.
- **The Renova Center** has a new look! Vivian Davis from the d'Art Center and countless volunteers are in progress with a new mural which celebrates military service members, veterans and first responders, as well as healing, growth and community in an ode to the Renova's wellness mission.
- In November, **The SoulFull Vegan Market** came to the Plot for the first time. The event was well-attended and despite a chilly day, many vendors sold out!
- This year's **NEON Holiday Market** in December at the Plot boasted nearly 50 vendors, live music, food and drinks, handmade goods, local art, and an all-new beer garden with Smartmouth Brewing Company.
- **Cardinal Skate Shop** hosted its 20th Anniversary event in collaboration with Xchange Norfolk to celebrate trailblazing skateboarding culture in Hampton Roads. The event included a photography gallery, and two-versus-two basketball, vendors, and skateboarding at Cofer Lot.



Art Law Seminar

Artists, start the new year off right with an education opportunity from d'Art Center. Take advantage of a completely free lecture on art law to ensure your art practices are leveling up in 2024. A local Norfolk attorney, Butch Bracknell, will cover the basics of contracts, commissions, intellectual property protections and more on Thursday, January 25, 5:30-6:30pm at d'Art Center. By the end of the session, artists should be well-versed in copyright, the need for written contracts, how to ship and deliver artworks and how to protect you and your creative hustle. RSVP [here](#).



Neighborhood News

Xchange's street culture empire is expanding. As the sneaker and clothing shop continues to corner the market on streetwear resale, new neighbor **VirVa Entertainment Studios** is taking over 810 and 812 Granby Street. VirVa owners collab regularly with Xchange, creating podcasts, short films, digital content and more. Watch for a grand opening in the space this January and more creative partnerships to come!

Programs and Events

- **Disney On Ice Presents Mickey's Search Party**, Scope Arena, January 1
- **First Thursdays**, Chrysler Museum of Art, January 4
- **Colin Mochrie & Brad Sherwood**, Chrysler Hall, January 5
- **Artist Mixer**, d'Art Center, January 6
- **Church Street Jazz Series Presents Gerald Albright**, Harrison Opera House, January 6
- **Art of the Arts Exhibition Opening**, d'Art Center, January 11
- **Second Saturdays Art Pop-Up**, Chrysler Museum of Art, January 13
- **Glass After Dark**, Perry Glass Studio, January 18
- **The Failed Resolutions Comedy Show**, Generic Theater, January 20
- **The Norfolk Forum: Amanda Knox**, Chrysler Hall, January 23
- **Norfolk Society of Arts Lecture: Mark Rothko**, Chrysler Museum of Art, January 24
- **Art Law Seminar**, d'Art Center, January 25
- **IgNITE: Fan-da-Mania**, Chrysler Museum of Art, January 26

See all upcoming events in and around the NEON District [here!](#)

Recently in NEON

Exhibitions & Performances

A Shared Vision: The Macon and Joan Brock Collection of American Art, Chrysler Museum of Art

Charles Atlas: Selected Videos 1987–2015, Chrysler Museum of Art

Jaime Guerrero: Dendrolatry, Chrysler Museum of Art

Paul McCartney Photographs 1963–64: Eyes of The Storm, Chrysler Museum of Art

Art of the Arts: A Juried Exhibition of Artworks Highlighting the Other Arts, d'Art Center

Shen Yun, Chrysler Hall

Sanctuary Road, Harrison Opera House

To Kill a Mockingbird, Chrysler Hall

Press

[NEON district in downtown Norfolk hosts holiday market](#), 13NewsNow

[Small shops, rebounding from COVID, hopeful for strong holiday shopping season](#), WTKR 3

[Photos: Chrysler prepares Paul McCartney exhibit](#), The Virginia-Pilot

[Norfolk Chrysler Museum holds 5th annual Bake Off](#), WTKR 3

[Paul McCartney's new photo exhibit making U.S. debut in Norfolk](#), The Virginia-Pilot

[Fun to Do: 'Beetlejuice' the musical, menorah lighting in Virginia Beach, 'Elf' in concert and more](#), The Virginia-Pilot

[McCartney's Gift of Photography](#), VEER Magazine

[The Local Nutcrackers](#), VEER Magazine



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