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## STRONGER TOGETHER

The story behind Dilworth's all-female art collective, StudioWorks.

words REAGAN HALL / photos JAMEY PRICE

**I**F YOU FIND YOURSELF WALKING AROUND THE HISTORIC Dilworth neighborhood, StudioWorks Artists Collective and Gallery is a must-see. What looks like a Victorian-style house on the outside is actually home to 11 different local artists and their work across many types of media, all coexisting under a single roof.

StudioWorks was established in September 2019 by Charlotte-based artist Christina Dowdy. Dowdy spent the last 20 years working in her home studio but always

dreamt of working alongside other local artists. Christina grew up in Chapel Hill and attended UNC. After continuing on to earn an MBA, she worked in marketing until taking the leap to become a full time artist in 1994. When her youngest daughter was a senior in high school, Dowdy decided to make her dreams of having her own gallery a reality. She started hunting for a shared studio space and recruited other artists to share the space with her.



After a few initial options fell through and COVID hit, it was actually fellow artist Tammy Langdon who came across the charming home in Dilworth and purchased it to be used as a shared art studio. This is when StudioWorks Artists Collective and Gallery was officially born. Tammy and Christina continue to both work in the space today, in addition to helping operate the collective. Christina hired marketing consultant Christine Dryden to help her with naming, branding, and sign design, and Dryden later joined StudioWorks as an artist/member in 2021.

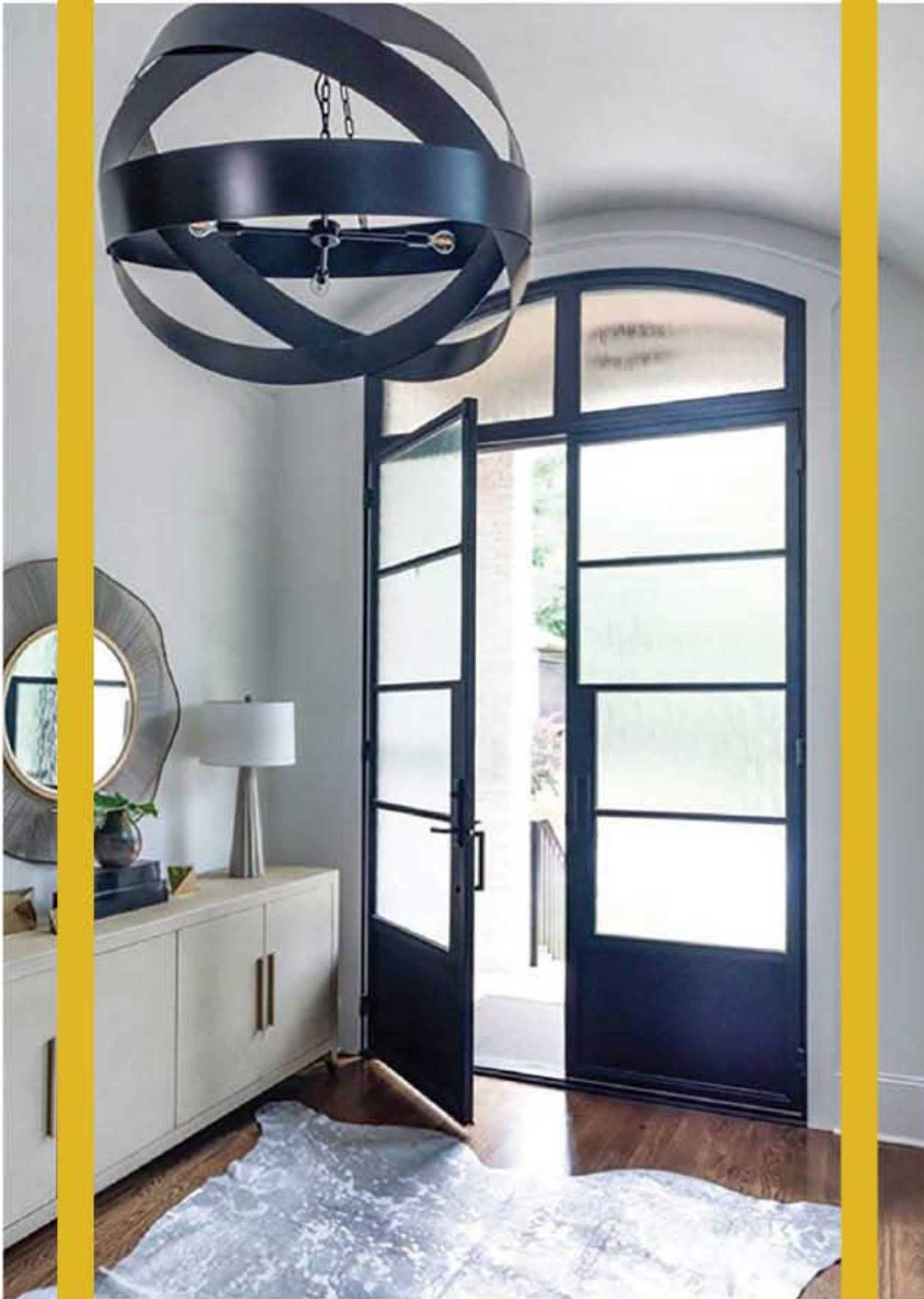
The space, located in the Crutchfield-Bomar-Brem House, is one of the oldest houses on East Blvd. Built in 1903, the house is now an official Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmark. The front yard is also the home to Charlotte's "Free Little Art Gal-

lery," which is a part of a nationwide growing movement of community art exchanges, a bit like how a library operates.

"It is very meaningful to us to occupy this beautiful old building, to feel the history and to be a part of the current buzz of this vibrant neighborhood — our little postage stamp moment in the history of Charlotte and of this house," says Dowdy.

The 11 artists, all female creatives local to the Charlotte area, make up StudioWorks today. Each artist has a different style, from abstract to landscape to still life to figure paintings. Although many artists have backgrounds in other fields (like journalism, marketing, graphic design, education and law), they all share one thing: the love of creating art and sharing it to the local community around them.

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“As a group, we are more powerful and impactful than individuals. And knowing that we are a valuable part of the Charlotte arts community is also motivating, giving us the confidence and purpose to challenge ourselves.”

Dowdy’s intent was to gather a group of artists with compatible personalities who embraced the idea of working as a collective and enjoyed working together. Today, the artists benefit from the camaraderie of being a part of a collective, and they share ideas and resources, all while working together to keep the gallery operating.

“As a group, we are more powerful and impactful than individuals. And knowing that we are a valuable part of the Charlotte arts community is also motivating, giving us the confidence and purpose to challenge ourselves,” says Dowdy.

At StudioWorks, the artists are given a space to create and to showcase their work. Some of the artists are represented at other galleries in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, and even as far as California, as well, but StudioWorks serves as their local gallery, meaning the artists keep 100% of their local sales.

If you’re looking to pay a visit for yourself, you can do so during monthly first-Friday South End Gallery Crawls, periodic gallery events and open studio days. The gallery is also open by appointment.

*info*

[studioworksgallery.com](http://studioworksgallery.com)

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