A Beacon!

A Look Inside the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture
Our Mission

The Gantt Center’s mission is to **present, preserve** and **celebrate** excellence in the art, history and culture of African-Americans and all people of African descent.

We ignite engagement and conversations that inspire, empower and enlighten all. Through our mission and deep community connections, we seek to affect lasting change in Charlotte, particularly on issues of **equity**.
The Center was founded in 1974…
Founding Mothers

Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey (left) and Dr. Mary Harper (right)
Historic Brooklyn Community (Second Ward)
Historic Brooklyn Community Stats

• Brooklyn covered nearly 50 city blocks in the southeast quadrant of the Uptown Charlotte area

• Charlotte razed 1,480 structures, including 12 churches, and displaced more than 1,000 families

• “Not a single new residential unit was built to replace the 1,480 demolished homes…”

• 216 black-owned businesses closed in Brooklyn, many to never reopen
Shotgun Houses

• Shotgun houses, defined by their clapboard siding and long, narrow design, were once a staple in Black neighborhoods in Uptown Charlotte and throughout the South.

• Most of the shotgun homes in Uptown Charlotte were destroyed in the 1960s and 1970s when city leaders displaced entire Black neighborhoods under the banner of urban renewal.
Shotgun Houses - Historic Brooklyn Community (Second Ward)
Shotgun Houses
Shotgun Houses

• These homes were moved from Bland Street in 1986 and now reside at 228 Norwood Drive

• The Gantt Center deeded both structures to the West Side Community Land Trust, a nonprofit seeking to create “permanently affordable housing” in a part of town that is being rapidly gentrified
Shotgun Houses
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Afro-American Culture and Service Center

…and moved to a new location in 1985.
In 2009, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Afro-American Culture and Service Center was rebranded in honor of Harvey B. Gantt and became Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture.
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Afro-American Culture and Service Center Rebranded
Harvey Bernard Gantt
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Gantt Center Facts

• The museum was designed by renowned architect Phil Freelon (also designed the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC)

• The Center’s design was inspired by Myers Street School and incorporates a Jacob's Ladder interpretation from the biblical narrative in Genesis 28
Gantt Center Facts

Myers Street School – Jacob’s Ladder
• In the late 1940s, Myers Street School was the largest elementary school in North Carolina for Black children

• As part of building expansion, fire escapes were added to the structure. The noticeable pattern of those escapes created a lasting school nickname: The Jacob’s Ladder School (Genesis 28)
Gantt Center Facts

- The four-story 46,490 sq. ft. building is a "modernist structure wrapped in glass and metal"

- Freelon Group won the 2009 *Thomas Jefferson Award for Public Architecture* from the **American Institute of Architects (AIA)** for projects that included the Ganttt Center
Gantt Center Facts
The Gantt Center is the permanent home for the Hewitt Collection. Acquired by **Bank of America** and generously pledged to the Center in 1998, the Hewitt Collection is the cornerstone of the Gantt Center's permanent collection.

“The Bank will give this collection to the Afro-Center when they have a home for it”.

Hugh McColl, former Bank of America CEO
John & Vivian Hewitt Collection of African-American Art
For over a 50-year period, John and Vivian Hewitt collected hundreds of paintings, etchings and sketches.

The Hewitt Collection is comprised of 58 two-dimensional works celebrating the expression and passion of twenty artists & the Hewitts’ relationships with them.
John & Vivian Hewitt Collection of African-American Art

Jonathan Green
b. 1955
John & Vivian Hewitt Collection of African-American Art

Romare Bearden

b. 1911
John & Vivian Hewitt Collection of African-American Art

Elizabeth Catlett

b. 1915
Elizabeth Catlett (American, b. 1915). *Head of a Woman*, 1967. Lithograph. 7.72 x 5.7 in.
The Gantt Center’s vision is to become home to one of the premier contemporary art collections of African-American art in the United States. Our goal is to acquire 100 works of contemporary art over the next 10 years.
Radcliffe Bailey

b. 1968
Jacob Lawrence
b. 1917
Juan Logan
b. 1946
Exhibitions

Stephen Hayes: Cash Crop
Exhibitions

Visual Vanguard: An Exhibition of Contemporary Black Carolina Artists
Exhibitions

Visual Vanguard: An Exhibition of Contemporary Black Carolina Artists

Artists featured in this exhibition are home-grown and hail from cities including Charlotte, Charleston, Greensboro, Durham, Warsaw, Red Springs and Winston-Salem.
Exhibitions

Visual Vanguard: An Exhibition of Contemporary Black Carolina Artists

Exhibitions

Choose Your Weapon: Views from the Front Lines of the War for Black Lives
Exhibitions

Choose Your Weapon: Views from the Front Lines of the War for Black Lives
Initiative for Equity + Innovation (IEI)
The Initiative for Equity + Innovation is a new and ongoing platform for civic discourse and learning, idea generation, and constructive bold action to promote diversity, inclusion and equity across our community.

In response to changing dynamics and a wider horizon of possibilities in Charlotte and beyond, the Gantt Center endeavors to build upon its 44-year legacy, mission and competencies to make IEI a permanent pillar of its program of work.
“We live in a country that faces the inheritance of inequity daily, but has very little sense of how to address it together.”

— Charlotte’s Leading on Opportunity Task Force
While equity is a term everyone seems to understand at a visceral level, few people share the same definition. The Gantt Center’s working definition of equity is: **a condition or circumstance of situational fairness, achieved by applying differential resources to unequal needs.**
The distinction between “equality” and “equity” is illustrated below:
Initiative for Equity + Innovation (IEI)
Initiative for Equity + Innovation (IEI)
The Gantt Center held its inaugural Gantt Teacher Institute in 2019. GTI is a creatively themed program design to assist Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) educators in building equitable classrooms through the power of the arts.
The Institute is supported by CMS administration including Superintendent Earnest Winston and Director of Diversity & Inclusion Chiquitha Lloyd. Over 120 educators participated in this two-day onsite program.
You can’t be emotionally intelligent without being culturally responsive.
Digital Transformation

Expand the reach of the Gantt Center through creation of a robust digital team with a focus on a new approach to programming and community engagement.
Unmasked:
The Digital Divide Leaves Students Offline

#UnmaskedSeries
Unmasked: Healthcare in the Black Community Beyond the Virus

Tuesday, April 21
6pm

#UnmaskedSeries
#BeyondTheVirusCLT

Harvey B. Gantt Center
for African-American Arts + Culture
Open Air: A Conversation
with curator Dexter Wimberly
and artist Chelle Barbour

TUESDAY | APRIL 13 | 7PM
Get Plugged In…

Visit us online at ganttcenter.org to see the very latest in arts + cultural programming, events and other culturally-enriching information. Join our email list to receive exclusive programming and event details.