

Mike Gentry

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – The College of Visual and Performing Arts has a new Director of the Winthrop University Galleries, Mike Gentry. His appointment began on May 16, 2023.

An artist and innovator originally from Charleston, SC, Mike earned his bachelor's in fine arts in Sculpture from Winthrop in 2008. His early artistic journey was shaped by a transformative semester studying abroad in Imatra, Finland, at South Karelia Polytechnic.

Upon his graduation from Winthrop, Mike began to serve a pivotal role in the development of the downtown Rock Hill arts scene as the Gallery Manager at the Arts Council of York County, where he immersed himself in every aspect of the exhibition process, from practical installation to strategic planning and promotion of related events. With twelve successful years under his belt, Mike's incredible talent and leadership skills were recognized when he was promoted to the position of Gallery and Facilities Manager in 2021. In that new role, he not only continued his former duties, but also became responsible for overseeing essential facility services, including the coordination of capital upgrades, building improvements, and other essential facility services, as well as soliciting community support for the Arts Council's annual fund. Through his expanded position, Mike has successfully built upon his longstanding relationships with artists and cultural leaders throughout the region, helping to spearhead the cultural renaissance now at the heart of Rock Hill's transformation as a regional center for the arts.

Of further note is Mike's service as a leading force in the local music scene through his creation and ongoing management of "Concerts at the Courtroom", a series of concert events established in 2010 that highlights regional musical acts, and also supports the development of newer musical talent.

Another exciting recent highlight was his management of a major exhibition of works by the internationally-recognized artist Shepard Fairey during the fall of 2021, organized to coincide with the creation of two original wall murals by Fairey at the headquarters of The Mercantile in downtown Rock Hill. The larger outdoor mural now serves as a highlight of York County's "Mural Mile" and has become a major attraction in the region.

Mike's artistic passion and unwavering commitment to his community have cemented his place as a true trailblazer in the arts world, and we look forward with great anticipation to seeing his vision for Winthrop University's Galleries unfold in his new directorship role.