

Charlotte

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2021

# HOMIE

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*PLUS:*  
WOMEN ARTISTS

A STYLE HUNTRESS'  
TREASURE TROVE





**LEFT:** Artists Carla Aaron-Lopez, Lo'Vonnia Parks, and Windy O'Connor come together in O'Connor's home to display their collaborative work.

# BEAUTY *in* *the* BREAKDOWN

OPENING UP THEIR HOMES, THEIR EXPERIENCES, AND THEIR TALENTS, FOUR WOMEN FIND JOY IN COLLABORATION.

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There it was, hiding in plain sight. All throughout the unavoidable darkness of 2020, it illuminated previously sleepy street corners, unveiled itself in quiet moments of reflection, and breezily slipped its way into our homes.

Joy.

Yes, joy. And nowhere does the thread of joy run more seamlessly than through the homes of Carla Aaron-Lopez, Erin Comerford Miller, Windy O'Connor, and Lo'Vonnia Parks.

But for each woman, "home" reaches far beyond craftsmanship and design.

Joy is the backbone of Parks' artwork, and quiet is her unexpected home. The professional caricaturist was forced to explore joy differently during the pandemic. Rather than creating live drawings at one social event after another, Parks' hectic schedule halted. She turned inward. The pause resulted in reflections of joy: yoga poses sketched in charcoal on wood, colorful



**TOP LEFT:** Hand lettering and language are integral to kingcarla's art, which is seen in her sketchbooks.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Created on polypropylene paper with acrylic, ink, salt, pencil, and marker, the collaborative piece between artists kingcarla and O'Connor was passed back and forth over a few weeks during the summer of 2020.

**TOP RIGHT:** Kingcarla poses with art made as a birthday celebration, which included gathering with a few other artists to create this work on paper.

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PERSON JOY.”

—KINGCARLA



## spotlight

**TOP:** When Lo'Vonnia Parks' weekly live model drawing sessions were canceled due to COVID-19, Parks borrowed an illustrated book of yoga poses and started experimenting.

**BOTTOM:** Accustomed to making figure studies with charcoal on paper, Parks experimented with charcoal on wood to get a raw effect. The octagonal wooden panels were built by a woodworker friend.

expressions on public murals, and a painted rocking chair inspired by Maya Angelou. "Joy crosses barriers," Parks says.

Carla Aaron-Lopez, an artist, teacher, writer, and photographer known as "kingcarla," finds home anywhere she can collaborate. Even with its limitations, restrictions, and unpredictability, 2020 provided kingcarla extraordinary opportunities for joyful collaboration that literally brightened Charlotte's streets—murals, paintings with friends, public art projects. "If you really listen and pay attention to other people, you will never lack for inspiration," she reflects.

"Life is a pursuit of creating something that can bring another person joy," the artist and designer believes.

O'Connor's Camp North End neighbor is kingcarla, and the friendship between the two creative dynamos led to a photoshoot in O'Connor's home with photographer Erin Comerford Miller. Miller's home is curiosity—behind the camera, in exploring the unfamiliar, in telling stories. Her work photographing artists in 2020 led to unexpected relationships, personal exploration, and an art exhibition opening in September 2021 at Elder Gallery of Contemporary Art. The show, featuring work by kingcarla, Parks, O'Connor, and Miller, will take a deep dive into relationships, collaboration, and the transformative power of coming together.

And when they come together, pure joy is unveiled. ♦

