GEORGIA COLLEGE
GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

This Week

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Georgia College art professor creates mural in downtown Macon

For Abraham Abebe, creativity runs through his veins. With his skills, he can take a blank canvas and turn it into something both beautiful and meaningful.

From mid-December to mid-January, he worked most days from sun-up to sun-down installing a mural on Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority's Historic Terminal Station. Abebe braved the cold and wind working through both Christmas and New Year to complete "The Spirit of Macon."

"I started on Dec. 18. Then, from there, I just continued working every day–except two days in between there was rain, so I couldn't work," Abebe said. "I would go in the morning and finish when it got dark."

He scheduled the work between his semesters of teaching at Georgia College. Abebe is an associate professor of art and graphic design. This semester he's teaching Graphic Design, Studio II, Graphic Design Studio III and Special Topics in Design.

"This was a great opportunity for me to have this kind of experience so that I can teach the techniques, the process and the ups and the downs of creating a mural for my students," he said. "I hope they will be able to learn from my experience and also do things like this in the future when they get the opportunity."

Abebe created four murals–two indoors and two outdoors– while living in Las Vegas. This is, however, the largest he's completed.

"I saw the announcement from the Macon-Bibb Transit Authority (MTA). Then I created and submitted two different proposals," Abebe said. "The committee selected one of my proposals, and that's how I was chosen to do this."

He based the design on the connection between the MTA and the community.

"I tried to develop the mural to magnify the significant service and contribution the MTA provides for the citizens and community in Macon," Abebe said. "At the same time, I tried to reflect the diversity within the community as well. I used the power of the color in the warm energy just to show the harmony and unity in the diverse community."


Abraham Abebe works on the mural. (Photo from MTA)

Along one side, the mural features an MTA bus with recognizable historical and modern buildings in Macon. It turns the corner to include several birds, a mosaic and sun.

"The MTA bus is a central element to bring the community together. I used it as a symbol to highlight its significant contribution," said Abebe. "I also used birds as a conceptual element to reflect service of excellence, progress and achievement."

"Macon is rich in history and culture. Therefore, the historical buildings were used to represent the historical significance of the city and the modern buildings were used to magnify the change and progress," he said.

MTA was awarded funds for this project through a Downtown Challenge Grant, 2.0 from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Peyton Anderson Foundation.

"My exact words on the grant proposal were 'the goal is to inject the dreary corner of Fifth and Poplar Streets with a bold injection of art,'" said Jami Gaudet, public information officer for MTA. "It was one of the most depressing corners–just awful–and now it's alive with color."

Gaudet led the process to have the mural installed. From writing the original grant proposal to having a committee review the 12 applicants, she personally wanted something created that everyone could enjoy.



"These buses–every day we operate, multiple times a day–they all come past that corner," Gaudet said. "I thought, wouldn't it be amazing for our bus operators and for our riders to see something beautiful, electric and inspiring."

Although he faced some challenges along the way, Gaudet said Abebe aced the design and execution. Now the MTA drivers, riders and the community have something beautiful to enjoy.

"One day it was wind, and one day it was rain. One day, it was ice that melted," Gaudet said. "Every day he's had a challenge, but he's unflappable. He never is cross about anything. He's just been delightful to work with."

Proud to bring color and hopefully happiness to those who pass it, Abebe is grateful for the opportunity to share his work.

"It's a great feeling that I'm contributing something that's visual because 1000s of people every year pass through that station," Abebe said. "They will be able to see this work and appreciate it because the wall was empty. There wasn't any kind of attraction. Now there's something they can see and appreciate."

For more information on the mural and to see a day-by-day documentation of the process, visit facebook.com/maconbibb.transit.

Did you know?

Homecoming is Feb. 25-26. Registration for Alumni Homecoming events like tailgate at Tent City, basketball games and Taste of Milledgeville is online only this year. Please register by Feb.17. More details and registration information is available at gcsu.edu/alumni/homecoming.

If you have any questions, please contact Tre' Johnson at trejuan.johnson@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-8665.



Guest artist performance today

Daniel Bolshoy will perform Tuesday, Feb. 1 at 7:30 p.m. in Max Noah Recital Hall for our guest artist recital.

The guitarist's program will include lyrical and romantic guitar music by Schubert, Ponce, Guastavino and more.

All the pieces are closely connected to art songs, from the greatest song masters (Schubert) to homages to them from around the Latin world.

A $5 donation is encouraged. All proceeds benefit music scholarships or the Music Department through the GCSU Foundation, Inc.

For more information, please email music@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-8289.



Regional Science and Engineering Fair for grades 6-12

The 45th Annual Regional Science and Engineering Fair for grades 6 through 12 will be Friday, Feb. 4, at Georgia College's Centennial Center.

The fair will be a hybrid competition this year, offering virtual judging Feb. 1-3 for students unable to travel to campus due to illness or quarantine. The in-person exhibit and judging will be Feb. 4 for on-campus attendees.

"Even before the seismic disruption of the pandemic, state data showed students from our region lagged behind with large racial and economic achievement gaps. Science is tough enough face-to-face but asking teachers and students to do it at home behind a computer screen with limited resources was an even bigger obstacle," said Dr. Catrena Lisse, director of Georgia College's Science Education Center.

"Now that most schools have returned to in-person or at least hybrid classes, we're seeing our numbers increase with numerous projects focusing on healthcare topics," she said. "The pandemic definitely made students aware of their health and the health of their loved ones."

Some projects this year include:

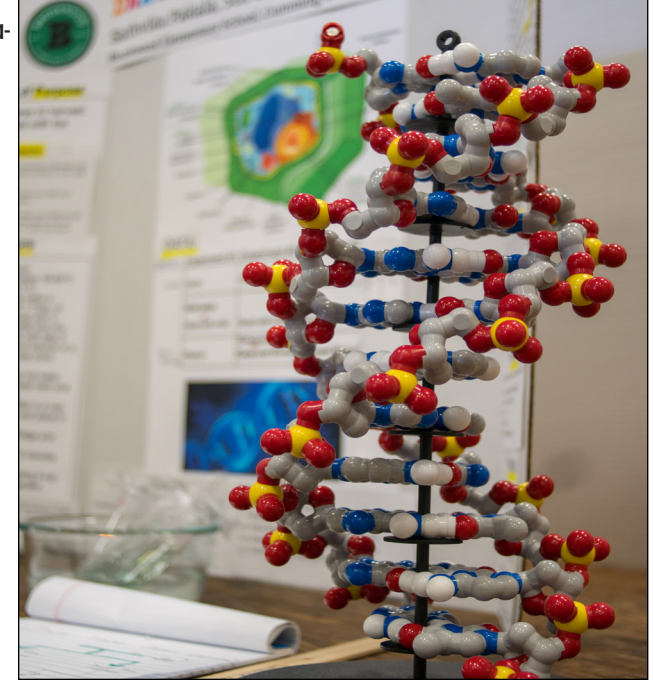
- An investigation of how blue light, emitting from electronic devices, affects eyes.
- The antibacterial effects of honey.
- The creation of a novel artificial intelligence learning model, using MRI images and genomic data to better diagnose neurological diseases.

"It is our hope this curiosity leads to new discoveries," Lisse said, "because this is the next generation of doctors and scientists."

The in-person event Feb. 4 opens at 8:30 a.m. for set up. Competitors will be judged between 10 a.m. and noon, at which time the fair is closed to the public.

Exhibits will be open to the public from 2 to 4 p.m. There'll be a STEM exhibit and Webb Telescope design challenge. Competitor teams can participate in STEM challenges from 1:30 to 3 p.m. These include Rube Goldberg designs and a flying fish obstacle course.

The awards ceremony will be at 5 p.m. in the Arts and Sciences Auditorium.



What's going on in Bobcat Territory?

Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/calendar

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 7:30 p.m.- Guest artist recital with Daniel Bolshoy, guitarist, in the in Max Noah Recital Hall.	2 9:30 a.m.- GC Women's Basketball vs. Flagler. 11:30 a.m.- GC Men's Basketball vs. Flagler.	3	4 8:30 a.m.- Regioanl Science nd Engineering Fair for grades 6-12 in Centennial Center. 4 p.m.- GC Softball vs. Florida Tech. 5 p.m.- GC Baseball vs. #1 Tampa.	5 1 p.m.- GC Softball vs. Emmanuel. 1:30 p.m.- GC Women's Basketball vs. Augusta. 2 p.m.- GC Baseball vs. #1 Tampa. 3:30 p.m.- GC Men's Basketball vs. Augusta. 5 p.m.- GC Softball vs. Carson Newman.