

SUMMIT LIVING

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Togetherness Trail

"When Linked Together, Something Bigger and Stronger Is Formed"

YOUR STORIES. YOUR PHOTOS. YOUR COMMUNITY.

On the Cover

Anthony Rubino
Artist Sarah Langsam
Abigail Rubino
Danielle Rubino
Susan Rubino
Dr. Robert Rubino, Park Line
President
Jay Cho, artist assistant and
Park Line volunteer

Togetherness

Trail

cover feature

Photography provided by Sarah Langsam and Jonathan Fisher
Cover photo provided by Jigs Habaradas.

“When Linked Together, Something Bigger and Stronger Is Formed”

Your name: Sarah Langsam

Website: www.sarahlangsam.com;
www.facebook.com/SarahLangsamArtist;
www.instagram.com/sarahlangsam/

How long have you been an artist?

I've been a fine artist for 10 years but have always been a creative person. I grew up in South Orange, where a lot of emphasis is put on the arts. My father is an architect, so I was always around creative activities growing up.

Do you have a role model or artist that help shaped your art?

My father and my uncle, who is a woodworker and forester, are the two people who have helped shape me most. They've taught me a ton from their wealth of knowledge and are continually helping me to think through projects and look at obstacles from different perspectives. My sculptor professor at the University of Delaware, David Meyer, has been a huge mentor, and I credit

him with turning me into a fine artist. I became friends with artist Risa Puno while doing a residency at Franconia Sculpture Park in 2014. She is a great role model and someone I really look up to. And of course, I have favorite artists who I watch from afar and aspire to be like such as Ursula Von Rydingsvard, Teresita Fernandez, and Yayoi Kusama, just to name a few.

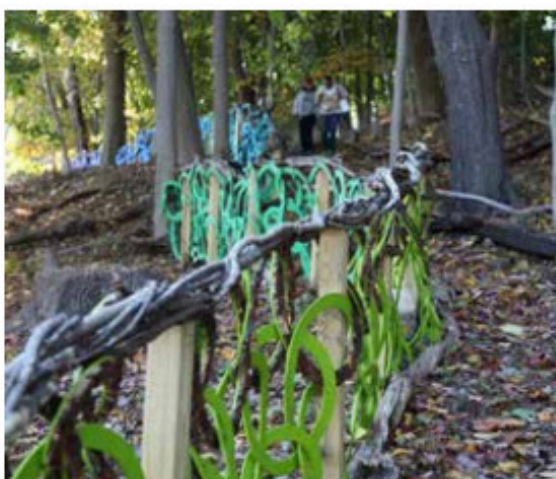
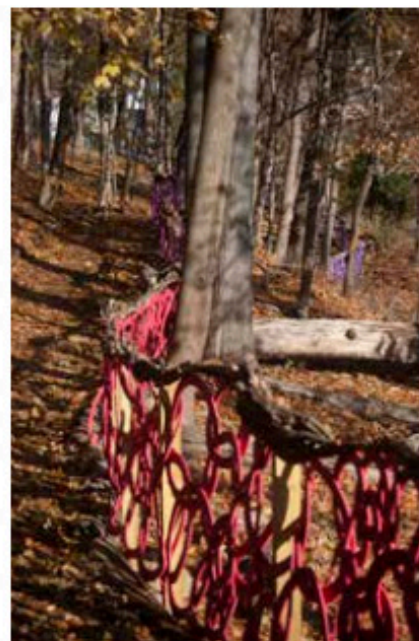
Describe what kind of art you do?

I'm a sculptor and installation artist who works mainly in found and repurposed wood. Regardless of the overriding themes of a specific project, there's always the underlying context of recycling and creating beauty from something that has died.

I'm curious about the similarities and differences in natural life forms and humans. Specifically, the similarity between the rings of a tree and the human fingerprint, both markers of identity. Often my work utilizes circles and ring shapes. I generally work additively, amassing small pieces of materials to build the larger whole.



Photographed from left to right is, on the first line, Assembly woman Nancy Munoz, SPA Art Selection Co-Chair Debi Schwarzmann, SPA committee member and Togetherness Trail project liaison Vicki Lederman, artist Sarah Langsam, Summit Park Line President Dr. Robert Rubino. On the second line from left to right is Mayor Nora Radest, SPA co-chair Estelle Fournier, and SPA committee member Ellen de Havilland. In upper right with the bright yellow is Park Line volunteer Jeffrey Hankinson.



I'm a fan of art that is an experience rather than just something to look at, and I aspire for my art to take on that form. Incorporating collaborative art-making into my practice, allows people to form a relationship with the artwork, helping to facilitate this experience.

Tell us about your current project in Summit.

Togetherness Trail is a 600-foot, site-specific, public art installation. It runs along the Parkline hiking trail and is visible from Morris Avenue. The top portion of the installation is made from repurposed fallen tree branches. Hanging from these are plywood rings, both painted and decorated with wooden mosaics. The mosaic rings were created by the local community at workshops that I led throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

What inspired you to produce your part of the Park Line?

I was connected with Summit Public Art (SPA) thanks to my friend and fellow artist Jenny Reinhardt. She shared my work

with her friend and SPA co-chair Estelle Fournier. SPA and Summit Park Line Foundation then reached out to me to propose a project specifically for the first phase of the Park Line.

When I visited the location, the dirt trail really spoke to me. Despite the instant connection I had with it, the site felt unfinished. I was inspired by a few branches that were tacked horizontally to trees on the steepest part of the trail. This inspiration and the abundance of fallen branches I saw around me birthed the concept of the branch railing.

I also loved the idea of bringing attention to this hidden natural passageway through the woods. This was one of the reasons I used brightly colored paint on the backside of all the rings.

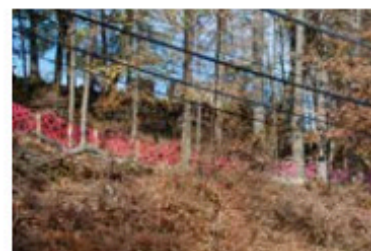
What gave you the idea to involve the community? What exactly did the community do?

I originally decided to work collaboratively during my artist

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Taken on May 19, 2019, at the Summit Farmers' Market



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residency in 2014. While fabricating a piece outside in a public sculpture park, people kept asking to help put it together. It made me realize that this process I had developed would lend itself well to participatory artwork.

I had installed three collaborative projects prior to creating Togetherness Trail, each utilizing rings to create a chainlike structure. I felt something similar would fit well within the landscape and would aid in fulfilling Summit Public Art's mission to have people experience public art.

Beginning in May, I held workshops in various locations around Summit, including the pool, farmers' market, Pride and Community Nights, and town summer camp. In addition, I held weekly workshops for clients of

Jespy House, who puzzled about half of the rings in the piece.

How is this installation similar or different to past projects you've done?

This is by far the largest project I have installed. The utilization of the ring shape and the incorporation of my puzzling process are elements that make this piece similar to ones I have exhibited in the past. Other aspects, such as the use of color, paint, and branches are either fairly or completely new to my practice.

How long did it take you to create the installation?

It took two to three months to create, submit, and get approvals for the proposal. After that initial stage it took 900 hours over six months to fabricate and install Togetherness Trail.

And that's just my time. I owe a huge thank you to Vince Novellino, owner of Birch Hill Landscaping,

who installed the posts, and to my two assistants, Jay Cho and Michelle Melnick. Additional thanks to SPA and Summit Parkline Foundation who spent a lot of time helping to organize and navigate things, especially Vicki Lederman, Debi Schwartzmann, and Robert Rubino. There were Park Line volunteers who cleared around the installation, friends who collected branches, lent tools, or puzzled rings, and the list goes on. Bringing this project to fruition really was a community effort, and I sincerely thank everyone who spent time helping to make Togetherness Trail a success.

Is there a greater symbolism or meaning behind Togetherness Trail?

The installation celebrates the themes of togetherness and unity



Taken on August 23, 2019 at Jespy House in South Orange



Taken on May 19, 2019, at the Summit Farmers' Market



Taken July 16, 2019, at Summit Community Night on the Village Green



while also championing individuality. The puzzled rings made by the community are each unique and representative of those individuals who made it; however, when linked together, something bigger and stronger is formed, with each single element contributing to support the entirety.

The same is true of the intertwined branches. Thousands of fallen branches from the adjacent woods are repurposed and intertwined together to create something sturdy and beautiful. The rings are painted and arranged to form a rainbow, which has become a symbol of diversity and acceptance in our society. This installation aims to speak out against the hate and division we see around us, and strives to promote love and togetherness.

The entrance to The Park Line and Togetherness Trail is on the corner of Lower Overlook Road and Morris Avenue. Parking is available on Morris Avenue, William Street, and Sayre Street.



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