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**MURAL ARTS PHILADELPHIA, ARTISTS MICHELE TREMBLAY AND POLLY APFELBAUM BRING BEAUTY TO THOSE FIGHTING CANCER
Artists Will Hold Free Online Discussion About *Floating Dogwood***

PHILADELPHIA – January 8, 2021 – Mural Arts Philadelphia announces a new mural project by artists **Michele Tremblay and Polly Apfelbaum** inspired by Michele's time fighting cancer as a way to encourage others. *Floating Dogwood* is being installed this week on the wall above Milkboy, 1102 Chestnut Street, with the best view being from inside the oncology wing at Jefferson Hospital. The two artists will have a free online discussion on January 12 to talk about how the project came to be.

When artist Michele Tremblay was diagnosed with leukemia, she was hospitalized at Jefferson Hospital, staring at the one



window that looked out on a blank wall. Her friend, Christina Morin Graham, would often come visit, and she put the idea in Michele's head of creating a mural on the dreary wall once she was out of the hospital. Michele initially dismissed the idea. However, when she was released from the hospital, she strove to give something back to all the people who took care of her as well as to the other patients who have to spend their time in an uninspiring space while receiving treatment. Christina and her husband Steve agreed to support the project and raised other funds to bring it to fruition.

Michele has long used flowers in her art, and that was her main focus for this project. Those on the oncology wing are not allowed flowers, so the artists wanted to provide beauty to them in a different way. The mural includes ladybugs hidden throughout as a way to continually engage those who are in the hospital long-term; they can discover new images in it as they look at it daily. She paired with Polly Abfelbaum, her friend from her days as a student at Tyler School of Art. This project was created in conjunction with Jefferson Hospital, Jefferson Hospital Oncology, and Roe Fabricators.

Inspiration Behind the Art: Michele Tremblay and Polly Apfelbaum: Free online event where artists Michele Tremblay and Polly Apfelbaum discuss the story behind their new mural, *January 12, 2021, 12 noon.* Hear artists Michele Tremblay and Polly Apfelbaum discuss the story behind *Floating Dogwood* that can now be viewed from the oncology wing of Jefferson Hospital. The mural is a culmination of Michele's desire to give something back to the hospital that helped her make it through her own time as a patient in oncology. Her only view outside her window was a blank, dreary wall, and a friend motivated her to pursue a mural once she was released. Michele partnered with long-time friend and fellow artist (and Tyler School of Art graduate) Polly Apfelbaum to create a beautiful floral design. Michele uses flowers in her own work, and she wanted to provide the view for the patients (and their families) who aren't allowed to have flowers on the oncology floor. Megan Voeller, Director of Humanities at Thomas Jefferson University, whose interest is in the intersection of art and health, will moderate this conversation between the two friends. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/inspiration-behind-the-art-michele-tremblay-and-polly-apfelbaum-tickets-132438104937>

“Michele Tremblay's story is truly inspiring,” said **Jane Golden, Executive Director of Mural Arts Philadelphia**. “Here is someone who, in her darkest days, found a way for art to light the way. At Mural Arts Philadelphia, we know that art can lift us up and are grateful to the *Floating Dogwood* artists and funders for using their talent to encourage others.”

Michele Tremblay is a Philadelphia sculptor and painter. Her work is a result of her interactions with nature and flowers in particular. She strives to delight and inspire joy for the viewer by connecting them to their relationship to the natural world. Michele graduated from The Tyler School of Art and also studied at PAFA. Her sculptures have been exhibited in Philadelphia at various galleries and venues as well as the Philadelphia International Airport. Her work has also been selected for shows at The Noyes Gallery, Stockton College, The Delaware Center for Contemporary Art in Wilmington, Delaware and a private showing in Washington, D.C. Her work is also found in many private collections. You can usually find Michele in her studio, but often can also find her taking photos with her iPhone, catching up on international soccer matches with her three sons, or wine tasting with her husband.

Polly Apfelbaum has been showing consistently in New York and abroad since her first one-person show in New York in 1986. Apfelbaum's work is both painting and sculpture, and perhaps photography and fashion and formless material process as well. A major mid-career survey of her work opened in 2003 at the Institute for Contemporary Art in Philadelphia. Her work is in the collections of The Museum of Modern of Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of Art of American Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; and many others. The artist has received important grants and awards, including the Rome Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a Richard Diebenkorn Fellowship, among others.

Floating Dogwood is funded by Christina Morin Graham and Steve Graham, Rubenstein Foundation, Candace Roberts, Marie Bender-Muir, Denise Fike, Create! Magazine, and City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services. Project partners are Jefferson Hospital and Jefferson Hospital Oncology.

Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For more than 35 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative and equitable process, creating nearly 4,000 artworks that have transformed public spaces and individual lives. Mural Arts aims to empower people, stimulate dialogue, and build bridges to understanding with projects that attract artists from Philadelphia and around the world, and programs that focus on youth education, restorative justice, mental health and wellness, and public art and its preservation. Popular mural tours offer a firsthand glimpse into the inspiring stories behind Mural Arts' iconic and unparalleled collection, which has earned Philadelphia worldwide recognition as the "City of Murals." For more information, call 215-685-0750 or visit muralarts.org. Follow along on social media: @muralarts on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), and @MuralArtsPhiladelphia on Facebook, and [phillymuralarts](#) on YouTube.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: high-resolution images are available in the Mural Arts Philadelphia press room at <http://bit.ly/MuralArtsPressKit>.