

WFAEats

3:23PM TUE JANUARY 28, 2014

### The Friday Arts Project Will Delight – And 'Dazzle'

By [AMY ROGERS](#)



2013 conference.  
Credit Sara McAllister

Listen up, all you lovers of truth, goodness, and beauty. You have a rare opportunity coming up to drink deeply from a wellspring of art, culture, and culinary delights.

“Dazzle Gradually: The Allure of Poetic Truth-Bearing” is taking place January 31 – February 1 in Rock Hill, S.C. It’s the third annual gathering hosted by the [Friday Arts Project](#), a group of area artists and upstarts who are steadily attracting support for the flourishing creative community in their town.

Picture an event that’s part conference and part block party, then add music, merriment – and food.

Artist Stephen Crotts is one of the project’s founders. The Laurens, S.C., native attended Winthrop University, and back in 2006 began gravitating toward liked-minded creatives, both within in the school and in the surrounding community.

A group started to coalesce. They began meeting informally to discuss the challenges they faced as artists who were striving to uphold high ideals in the context of their work. Naturally, those meetings included food.

“We started around a table. To us, whether it’s an art opening or just getting together at each other’s homes, whatever we’re doing, we’ll have good food,” Crotts explains. The Friday Arts Project was born and began to grow, with programming and outreach.

Kirk Irwin is executive director of the project. He and Crotts met while working in New York. Irwin was ultimately drawn to relocate to Rock Hill, a town he commends for its “vital

group of artists.” Others who have labored to bring the Friday Arts Project to life hail from varied disciplines. Courtney Blake is a chef; Dominique Verechia, a painter; Cameron Bunce, a photographer. Carlee Lingerfelt is an illustrator and seamstress; Christopher Doehling is an animator; Sara McAllister, a graphic designer; Laura Zellmer, an art educator. Sarah Irwin is the group’s creative director.



A potluck gathering  
*Credit Sara McAllister*

Whenever you have good food, you appeal to people who appreciate it. Even if the notions of truth, goodness, and beauty don’t entice you, Dazzle Gradually will satisfy your appetite with daytime and evening “feasts” during the two-day event.

Presenters include Sandra McCracken, Maurice Manning, Tommy Tomlinson, Dori Sanders, Paul Matheny, Aaron Belz, Dan Huntley, Jon Prichard, and Hunter Holmes.

As Kirk Irwin promises, “There will be good conversation, ‘meaty’ content, and good food.”

You can still get tickets if you hurry. For more details, visit [fridayartsproject.org](http://fridayartsproject.org).

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