

WHITE PAPER

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# Four Steps to Creating a Cohesive Visual Experience with Integrated Healthcare Art

distinctive art source

Imagine a hospital experience in which art, architecture, design and wayfinding are so well integrated that it is difficult to tell where one discipline ends and other starts. A facility in which artwork is so much more than just pictures on the walls. An environment in which art serves as a positive distraction. Where art supports design directives and helps identify the patient population of a particular floor. Art brings the outdoors inside. It encourages participation. And builds relationships. That is what it feels like when cohesive visual experiences are created through integrated healthcare art.

At Distinctive Art Source, our clients and colleagues recognize the value of an integrated visual experience. They understand the importance of collaboration and multi-disciplinary representation in the process – because they know the result is an extraordinary experience for patients and visitors. While each project we work on is unique, there are a few common threads Distinctive Art Source has identified in creating thoughtful and effective healthcare art programs. The following are four steps we use to create cohesive visual experiences.

## 1. Start by defining goals.

One of the reasons we don't represent individual artists or sell artwork at DAS is because each facility has distinct goals. Rather than selling one product to all clients, we provide the expertise and guidance to identify the appropriate resources based on unique goals and objectives. That's why we begin with the end in mind.

When starting a healthcare art program, first establish goals or design directives. Most facilities form an art committee that guides this process. Together they determine the vision for the art program.

### **Some questions to consider when establishing art program goals include:**

- What concepts, words or images come to mind when you envision the completed project?
- How do you want patients and visitors to feel as they experience the facility?
- Visually, how do you want the hospital to represent itself to the community?
- How do you envision telling the “story” of your hospital or your community through your art program?
- In what ways do you anticipate the art program will continue to grow beyond the initial project scope?

**SOME EXAMPLES OF HEALTHCARE ART PROGRAM GOALS ARE:**

**For a children's hospital:** The art program will be a visual representation of the magic that happens on the inside of the building and must be joyful; embody a sense of whimsy, wonder, discovery and playfulness; reflect a sophisticated branding profile; soften the building exterior; emphasize high touch approach to healthcare; appeal to children of all ages; and create a signature look that is forward thinking.

**For an acute care hospital:** The visually cohesive experience will enhance wellness and reduce patient, visitor and staff stress through the use of natural finishes and the formation of an evidence and patient based art program.

**For a community hospital:** The art program will create pride and ownership by providing a variety of culturally significant healing art mediums inside and outside the facility.



**CHEROKEE INDIAN HOSPITAL:**

The \$82 million Cherokee Indian Hospital was completely planned, constructed and funded by the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians. It truly is a hospital built by the people, for the people. And they captured that sentiment with a theme for the hospital that states, "It Belongs to You." For the Eastern Band of Cherokee, the hospital is not simply a place for medical care, but it's a bastion of culture and its approach to holistic healing. The art program is designed to support this position and to honor and celebrate the Eastern Band of Cherokee culture



## 2. Select healthcare appropriate artwork.

We begin with a solid foundation that helps conceptualize the art program by establishing goals...and we build on that foundation to help clients, visualize and realize their art program. Evidence Based Design as it relates to art selection is the use of published research in selecting and placing artwork in healthcare settings.

### **The overriding result of evidence-based research tells us:**

- Proximity to nature can help patients lower stress resulting in a reduced need for pain medication and improved patient outcomes.
- Viewing familiar surroundings can help reduce stress and build a sense of security and comfort for patients within a health-care facility.

- Expanding the hospital's boundaries into the community through mutually beneficial relationships can offer patients a sense of connection to the community during a hospital stay and reduce feelings of isolation.

Patient based art programs include artwork that is selected based on the unique needs of each patient groups (such as Cancer, Pediatric, Geriatric, Women, Heart, ICU, Rehab and Psychiatric). Patient Based Art helps to deinstitutionalize the clinical setting while illustrating a sensitivity to location and patient demographics. Patient based artwork can also aid in wayfinding by helping to visually identify areas.

“Scientific research has produced limited but convincing evidence that certain types of art can have positive effects on health outcomes. However, inappropriate art (including some critically good art) can negatively affect patients – especially those who feel stressed due to illness or injury.” – Roger Ulrich

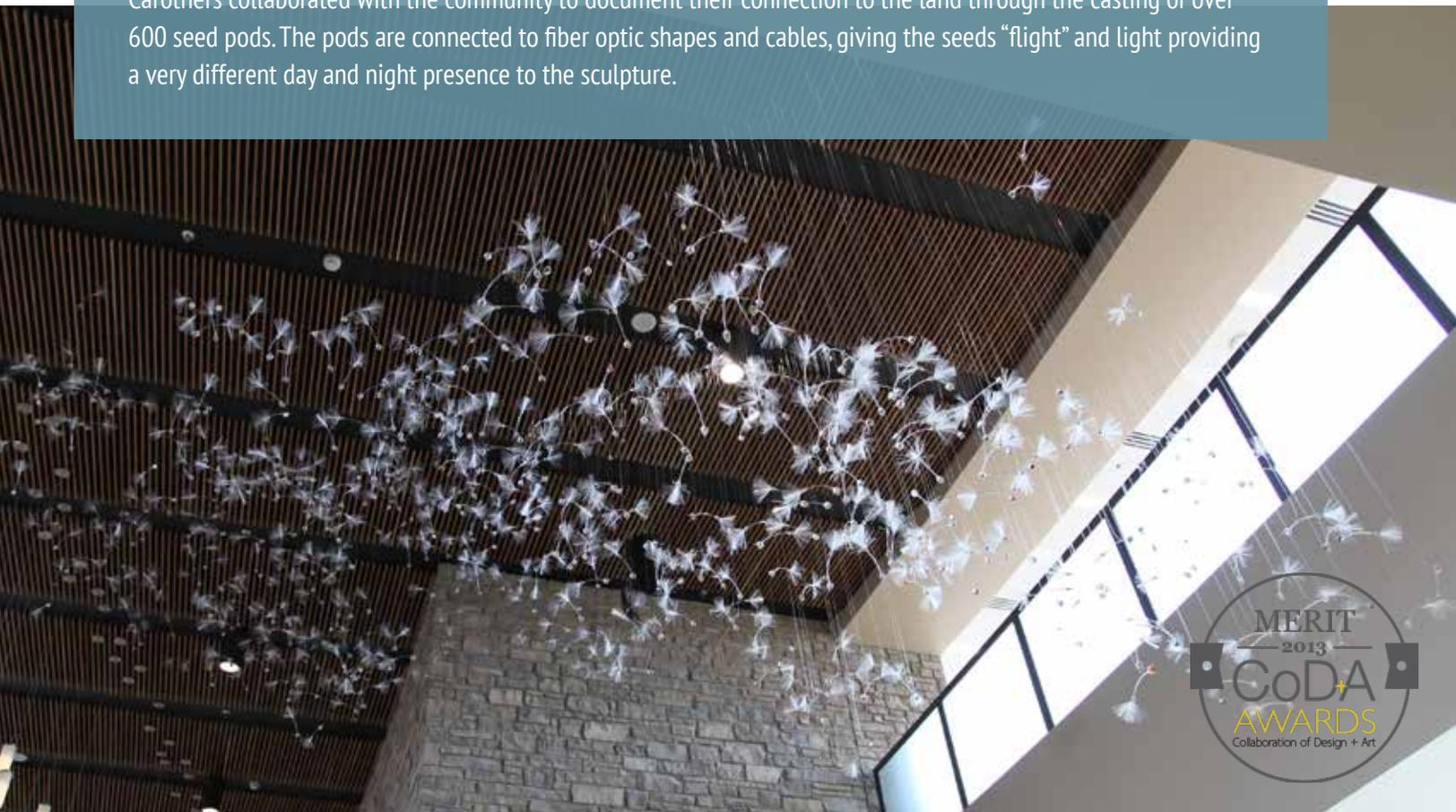
A successful healthcare art program consists of a coordinated series of visual elements placed in public and private spaces throughout the facility. The selection of these elements, as well as their size and placement, is crucial to the success of the program.

Only a decade ago, our job as art consultants was to educate clients and colleagues about the importance of evidence-based art.

Today, most professionals in the industry fully embrace the concept and demand that healthcare art programs be rooted in evidence based design. At DAS, our work is both evidence-based and patient-based and we carefully propose appropriate art for each patient population and location.

For more information about evidence based art, visit our website for resources.

**OWENSBORO HEALTH:** Evidence-based design tells us that viewing familiar surroundings can help lower stress. Owensboro Health's art committee was passionate about reflecting the importance of their land and the history of the community and surrounding counties in the new hospital through the art program. Mary Carothers inspiring "Floating Seeds" sculpture ascends through the 2-story outpatient entry lobby acknowledging the theme of hope and healing as it ties directly to the community, its farmlands and the annual flight pattern of migratory birds. Carothers collaborated with the community to document their connection to the land through the casting of over 600 seed pods. The pods are connected to fiber optic shapes and cables, giving the seeds "flight" and light providing a very different day and night presence to the sculpture.



### 3. Push the boundaries.

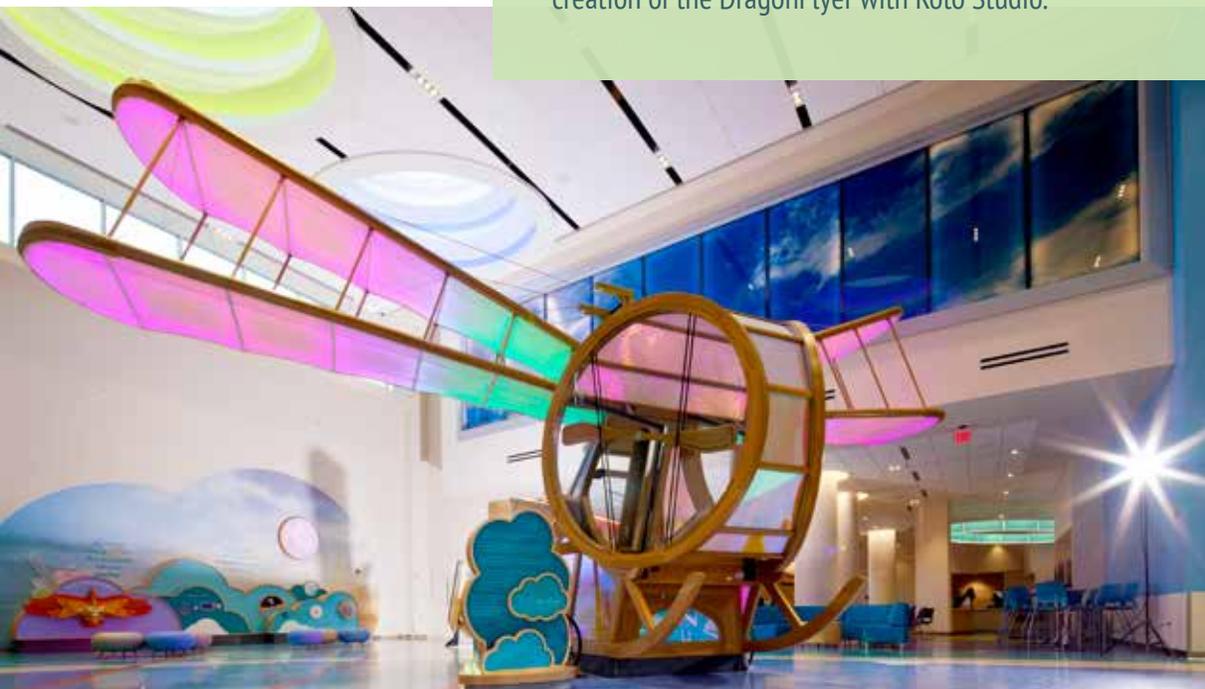
Our core values at DAS direct us to drive innovation, exceed expectations and “be the wow!” This means we continually push the boundaries of the healthcare art programs we help create. When we go beyond the traditional role of the art consultant, we are compelled to explore patient perspectives, encourage participation, introduce the unexpected and create something remarkable.

**When creating healthcare art programs consider how the patient experience can be transformed:**

- How can technology support the art program objectives?

- What mediums would create an unexpected yet positive patient and visitor experience?
- How can we turn the traditional, expected art into a remarkable experience?
- How can we examine the hospital experience from the patient perspective and create artwork designed to surprise and engage the viewer?
- Which locations in the facility present an opportunity to “wow” the patient or visitor with unexpected art?
- How can we utilize art to support architectural and interior design directives?

**DAYTON CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL:** At Dayton Children’s the design theme, “things that fly,” was established to connect the hospital to the Dayton community and their innovative history of flight. This theme also became the guiding directive for art, donor recognition, graphics and patient and family experiences. Through the art program, we were able to push the boundaries of the concept of flight with the creation of the DragonFlyer with Roto Studio.





## 4. Engage the community.

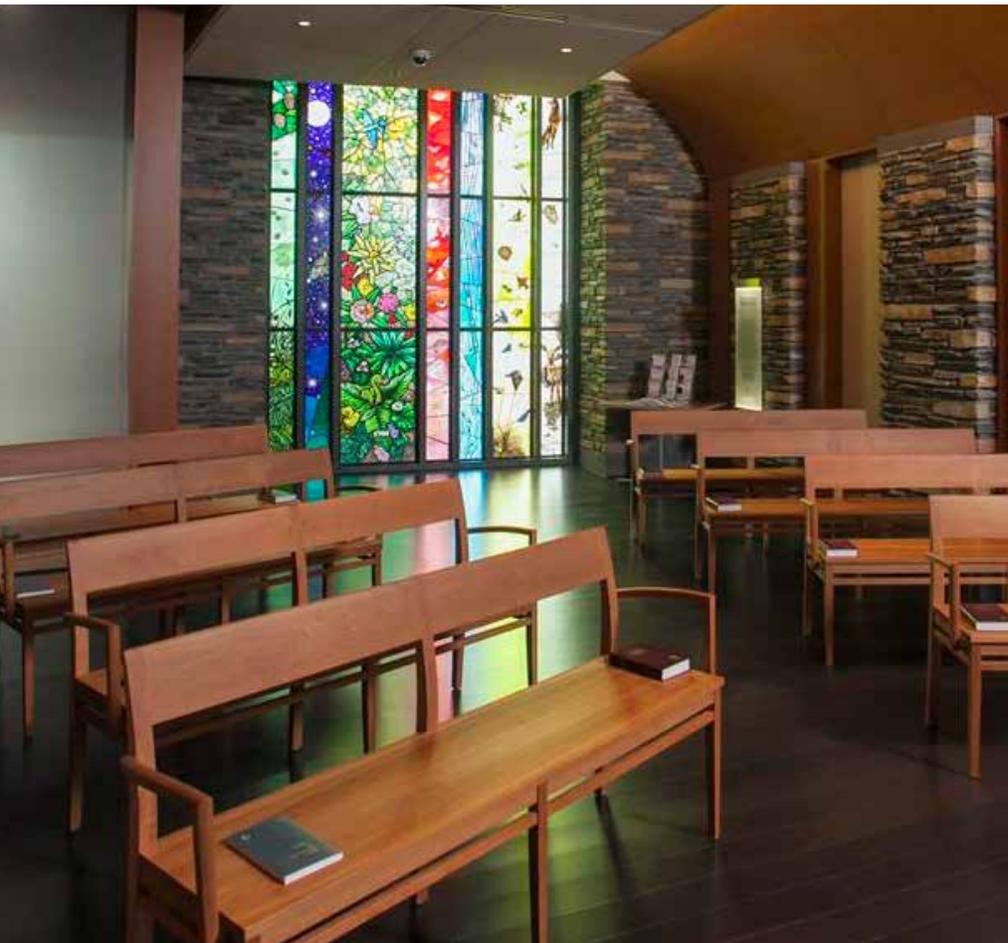
When communities are involved in the creation of healthcare appropriate art, a sense of ownership and pride takes over, creating a heartwarming, special, lasting impression on all members of the community. Before we discuss engaging the community, let's first understand what a community is. Communities can include but are not limited to, internal stakeholders such as physicians, nurses and staff; patients and family members; as well as external audience such as businesses, schools and municipalities in the geographic areas served by the hospital.

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA MEDICAL CENTER BRASELTON:** A long held desire to see a modern, full-service hospital in the region found its fulfillment in Northeast Georgia Medical Center Braselton. Plans for the beautiful chapel offered a perfect opportunity to the Braselton Family to honor Henry Edward Braselton, a founding father. In naming the chapel after their husband, father and grandfather, members of the Braselton family wanted to create a peaceful place of respite that would connect all members of the community while celebrating the values of the man they loved along with rural life and the agricultural connection that tied them together as a community and as good stewards of the earth. Windows left to right are designed to visualize attributes of Henry Edward Braselton, including Illumination, Healing, Industry & Stewardship.

It is important to push your community to think of key elements that make their community special and stand out. This helps support the art program goals to establish a sense of familiarity and comfort. It also helps garner support for new and renovated facilities by fostering a sense of ownership in the facility.

**Some suggestions for encouraging community participation include:**

- Tap into internal resources by soliciting staff participation in a rotating gallery.
- Reach out to schools and universities to hold contests or create projects that support the hospital mission.
- Partner with local businesses and community organizations to foster mutually beneficial relationships that achieve the art program goals
- Invite community artists to participate in the hospital art program through a well crafted call for artists.
- Engage patients and family members to become a part of the art program.
- Pay attention to community activities and identify opportunities to participate in current events.
- Explore options for donor art.



“Hospitals are working not just to mend bodies, but also to make their patients and communities healthier. This work extends far beyond the hospital building – bringing free clinics, job training, smoking cessation classes, back-to-school immunizations, literacy programs and so many other resources, often with little fanfare, directly to the people of the community.”

– American Hospital Association

## About Distinctive Art Source

Distinctive Art Source is a turnkey art consultancy working exclusively in healthcare with a foundation in evidence- and patient-based design. We believe thoughtfully developed art programs contribute to an integrated visual experience and foster mutually-beneficial community relationships. Our nationwide artist database connects clients with unlimited art sources throughout the country to enable hospitals to conceptualize, visualize and realize the goals of their art programs.

Established in 2003, Distinctive Art Source has served a pivotal role in creating evidence- and patient-based art programs in millions of square feet of hospital space. We are honored to work closely with some of the nation's most renowned healthcare architects, designers and artists, blending seamlessly into existing architectural processes to keep projects on time and within budget.