

Student entrepreneurs weave a network of art

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Tulane students, from left, Kate McCurdy, Matt Raybon, Braham Berg, Carla Scemama and Allison Conn get together at Richardson Memorial Hall to spearhead the launch of the first TelephoneNOLA art exchange this week, using accordion notebooks that are passed from New Orleanian artist to artist. (Photo by Cheryl

Gerber)

Art is often thought of as an individual work, but art also can be a collective expression. A student-led startup organization called [TelephoneNOLA](#) is creating artistic projects that are meant to create conversation between local artists about art and New Orleans.

The startup was founded last fall by a group of Tulane University students: Braham Berg, Matthew Raybon, Kate McCurdy, Kendale Mundy, James Newton, Tyler Gindraux, Carla Scemama and Allison Conn.

The TelephoneNOLA team has expanded both in number and diversity to include almost 20 student artists from various academic and artistic fields, as well as an advisory board of several local professionals, entrepreneurs and established artists. The board includes Tulane alumni Frank Relle, Kevin Draper and Heidi Woodward, as well as faculty members Josh Schoop, Rebecca Marks and Vicki Mayer.

“We’re an individual, New Orleans-based arts collective,” says Berg, a third-year architecture student and creative lead of the team. “TelephoneNOLA was inspired by [Telephone International](#), a [Satellite Collective](#) project.”

The TelephoneNOLA team is planning projects that include pop-up art exhibits, architectural walking tours and interactive art installations that will foster conversations between different parts of the city.

The idea is for an artist to take an initial prompt or a message related to the history and place of New Orleans, create art based on individual interpretation, and pass the message to another artist who works in a different medium in a different neighborhood.

TelephoneNOLA is launching its first art exchange this week. Three blank accordion notebooks will be passed between artists in New Orleans, starting with one Tulane student, one faculty member and one community member. A different New Orleanian artist fills in a page in an accordion notebook. The pages are folded separately, but open up into one large page when unfolded.

The pages together will tell one collective story, which will be displayed in a physical exhibit and online.

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“The real interesting aspect of the project is the stories, conversations and ideas which come from it.”

Braham Berg, junior