

# ‘Changing the face of society.’ Twin artists on Forbes Under 30 list are Columbus grads

BY NICK WOOTEN

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## Columbus artist inspired by hair, grandmother's voice

Multi-disciplinary artist Jarrett Key, an east Alabama native based in New York City, recently created one of their Hair Paintings and Other Story for the permanent collection during a public installation at the Columbus Museum. BY ROBIN TRIMARCHI

Twins who graduated from Brookstone School in Columbus were named to Forbes' Under 30 list for 2020.

Jarrett and Jon Key were selected as honorees in the Art & Style category. The list honors “600 revolutionaries in 20 industries changing the course—and the face—of business and society,” according to Forbes' website.

JARRETT KEY

According to their Forbes profile, Jarrett Key grew up in rural Alabama and dreamed of being an opera singer.

Today, Key's work combines performance and painting. Both are mediums they were drawn to as a way to process the Black Lives Matter movement. In one series inspired by their grandmother, Key uses their hair as a paintbrush after straightening it.

"It's really exciting to me because it is sort of the way I wanted it," Key told the Ledger-Enquirer in 2018 about a hair painting they completed for the Columbus Museum. "I wanted to be able to come home, do this work, and have it permanently hang in my community. It's very special."

Key and twin Jon are co-founders of Codify Art, which is dedicated to showcasing work by artists of color — particularly women, queer and trans artists.

Jarrett Key, 28, lives in Providence, Rhode Island. They are pursuing a master's degree at the Rhode Island School of Design.

## JON KEY

According to his Forbes profile, Jon began designing posters for his mom's friends and church after receiving a book on HTML coding when he was 10. Today, his work includes creating graphic designs for clients like Nike and the Cooper Hewitt museum as well as painting.

In a series of works he began after the Pulse Nightclub shooting in 2016, Key uses green to represent the south, black for race, violet for queerness and red for family.

Jon Key, 28, lives in Brooklyn, New York.

## COLUMBUS REACTS

Brookstone congratulated the twins in a Facebook post.

"Did you happen to catch the recent Forbes 30 under 30 listing? The Art & Style category includes two members of the Brookstone Class of 2009, brothers Jarrett Key and Jonathan Key!" a portion of the school's post reads. "Congratulations, Jarrett and Jon — we are so proud of your hard work and accomplishments!"

Paul Pierce, producing artistic director for the Springer Opera House, praised the Keys twins on Facebook. Jarrett and Jon are Springer Theatre Academy alumni.

"I am thrilled to learn that Forbes magazine has named Springer Theatre Academy alumni Jarrett and Jonathan Key in its new 30 Under 30 edition. These twin innovators were named in the Art and Style category, demonstrating that "Life Skills Through Stage Skills" is more than just a catchy slogan," his post reads.



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<https://www.forbes.com/30-under-30/2020/#496a5fa033fa>

Nick Wooten is the Southern Trends and Culture reporter for McClatchy's South region. He is based in Columbus, Georgia at the Ledger-Enquirer but his work also appears in The (Macon) Telegraph and The Sun Herald in Biloxi. Before joining McClatchy, he worked for The (Shreveport La.) Times covering city government and investigations. He is a graduate of Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.