



Stephen Chesley

# Vista Lights "Taking Flight"

THURSDAY NOV. 21 5:00pm - 9:00pm 413 Pendleton Street, Columbia, SC 29201



Sharon Licata



David Yaghjian



Michel McNinch

Show dates: November 20-December 8 / For More information: [Click here](#)

## Sumter County Gallery of Art in Sumter, SC, Features Works by Carolita Cantrell

Sumter County Gallery of Art in Sumter, SC, will present *Carolita Cantrell – Spirited Vision*, on view from Nov. 7 through Jan. 10, 2010. A reception will be held on Nov. 7, from 5:30-7:30pm.

Growing up in Atlanta, GA, Carolita Cantrell recounts that when she was very young she had to take a nap every day. She asked if she had to sleep or if she could draw instead. A young Carolita told her father that she wanted to be a doctor and her father told her that women could not be doctors (how times have changed!) she then said well, if I can't be a doctor, I want to be an artist to which her father replied that she wouldn't make much money. She has been making art ever since in a variety of media: paint, sculpture, wax, pastel and watercolor.

It is the creative process and not necessarily the end result that excites her. Cantrell, formally Harvin, lived in Sumter for many years raising her family of four. She remarried in the mid-'80s to Frank Cantrell, living in Columbia and then Banner Elk, NC, before moving to Nevis, West Indies where she lived for 11 years before returning to Sumter in 2017.

In Nevis, the island environment and the local population indelibly influenced her work. It was there that she began to explore abstraction, which she is still exploring. Cantrell notes, "There was a lot of mysticism on the island, an almost dreamlike state." This sense of mysticism has been incorporated in her recent work.

These days, Cantrell rises, goes to her studio, turns on the NPR classical music station (two of her favorites are Chopin and Beethoven), and paints. She paints exclusively in oils, preferring the intensity of the color, although some earlier paintings included in the exhibition are acrylic. Cantrell is difficult to categorize.



Work by Carolita Cantrell

She moves effortlessly from one medium to another, from one style to another. She is an artist confident in her abilities and vision and also wise enough not to sweat the details. On her walls hang grand, formal mosaics constructed of cereal and snack boxes (Cantrell cut and assembled all the "tiles" herself and says she found the process meditative), sublime self-portraits and bright, enigmatic abstracts. Her work references art historical movements such as Surrealism, Expressionism and early Byzantine iconography while existing in a space entirely its own.

When she is not painting, Cantrell enjoys a healthy social life lunching, attending gallery openings and SLT productions with fellow artist Deane Ackerman and a cadre of formidable Sumter women: Barbara Burchstead, Sister Wimberly, Katie Levi and Mary Shaw. She is also an active mother, grandmother and great grandmother - "Muv" to her extended Sumter/Charleston/New Orleans family.

Cantrell studied art at the New York

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