

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

Get Your Piece of the Pie Yet?

During the last couple of months I've been receiving press releases from visual art organizations, mostly in North Carolina, about the funding they are receiving from the American Rescue Plan (ARP). I'm not hearing much from South Carolina, but then what's new about that. I did hear that the Chapman Cultural Center in Spartanburg, SC, received a \$250,000 Grant from the NEA's ARP plan, but no one else in SC is talking about the cash falling in their laps. It's the sound of silence.

If you're not up on the ARP, it's the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, also called the COVID-19 Stimulus Package or American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill. That's almost 2 trillion dollars President Biden and the Democrats gave (of taxpayer's money) to the American people, small businesses and (the usual fat cats). Not to be confused with the 2 trillion dollar tax cut to the rich and corporations that former, twice impeached, President Trump and the Republicans handed over to their friends.

Part of the releases I receive contain this statement: "This is the second of three installments of the NEA's American Rescue Plan funding. Last April, the NEA announced that 40 percent of its \$135 million in ARP funding would be allocated to 62 state, jurisdictional, and regional arts organizations for regranting through their respective programs. The third installment of APR funding to arts organizations to support their own operations will be announced in early 2022.

Haven't seen any of the APR money falling in your lap? Maybe it's coming in that third installment or not. I'm sure you have to apply for it, be a non-profit (as they would be the only ones hurt by

the COVID-19 Pandemic) and have close ties to your state arts agency (I mean be so close you might be up some part of that agency's literal body). But before all that, you might have to hear about the ARP first - be informed by public notice.

Of course if you are a non-profit or artists in need, you already know what the drill is for getting disaster relief, you probably have your contacts at that state agency on your speed dial and they have you on theirs. You know it's time for some back scratching. And, I'm sure you already have your disaster story ready and can calculate the impact on you already and into the future - way into the future.

For the rest of us, on the commercial side of the art community, don't worry, I'm sure you'll be getting a call to participate when they come up with some way you can participate by making a donation to some kind of fundraiser - for the arts. After all, someone else is in need of a helping hand.

Hey if I sound bitter or even a little sarcastic, I'm not, I gave that up over 20 years ago. I know my lot in life as far as being a part of the art community in the Carolinas. I'm here to serve, not to be served. The system is rigged and it stinks, but I wouldn't want to be a non-profit in the arts spending my days begging for a handout. They're not all bad, we deal with many good ones and we help when we can. It's just not for me.

For those of you who want to know more information on the NEA's American Rescue Plan grants, including the full list of local arts agencies funded, visit (www.arts.gov/COVID-19/the-american-rescue-plan). But you're better off not looking. Believe me - don't look. They only lost 100 Billion dollars to fraud. Not that any would have gone to you, but just saying.

City of Charleston, SC

continued from Page 3

tion of eco-cultural traditional practices, *Griots of Cotton, Indigo, & Clay* showcases the rich tradition of fiber art as material culture and tells the untold stories of struggle and resilience rooted in black ecocultural traditions and textile arts. The artworks of over four dozen seasoned artisans will be on view, including works by the artists of The Return of the Bees Collective. The collected artworks examine the ideals of racial pride, social power, identity, and the importance of land, heritage, and culture.

States exhibiting artist and curator Cookie Washington, "Black fiber artisans uphold the charge of griots, weaving together narratives of resistance into tactile expressions of land memory and visions for the future." This traveling exhibition explores the innovations of eco-cultural techniques in appliqué, basket-weaving, collage, indigo, and painting, celebrating an ecosystem of over 50 master fiber artists, ceramicists, sweetgrass preservers, and blacksmiths.

This exhibition is generously supported by the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation and received funding from the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

Torrea "Cookie" Washington is a textile designer who has been a working studio artist for more than 25 years. Washington has designed costumes for theater, film, and the stage as well as high fashion wedding gowns and soft fashion accessories for women. Her proudest accomplishment to date is having been selected as one of 44 Master Art Quilters to create a quilt to honor President Barack Obama.

For 16 years, Washington has also been curator for the African American Fiber Arts Exhibit that is part of the North Charleston Arts Fest. Washington's passion is fiber art muralism that celebrates African American culture and history and the Divine Feminine. "I am a mostly



"Califia, Queen of Califarnia Surveying Her Queendom" by Torrea "Cookie" Washington

self-taught quilt artist. I have been a fiber artist of some sort my whole life. At four years old, my Granddaddy paid me fifty cents for the first "Barbie" dress I ever designed." Washington has been featured in three documentary films about African American Art Quilters: *The Wayshowers*, which she shared executive producer credit on, with Susan Scott Hester, and the film *Skin Quilt* by Lauren Cross, as well as the 2020 film *Gratitude*, a short film by Gavin Shelton.

Washington says, "I find that textile design emits a spirit, a presence, an energy, a vitality unlike that of any other medium. Quilting is in my blood. Enslaved Africans used quilting to tell their stories. I wish to keep this tradition alive, and through my work validate our culture by weaving stories of the African or African-American experience into my quilts, just as my foremothers did almost four hundred years ago. Even though I'm working in a medium centuries old, I believe art quilters are shifting the historical to accommodate our new application. Art quilting, an emerging art form, is a fairly small part of the art world. I am thrilled to be part of it."

The Black Belt Justice Center is a

continued on Page 5

Don't forget about our website:
www.carolinaarts.com



You can find [past issues](#) all the way back to August 2004!

You can find [past articles](#) all the way back to June 1999

Also don't forget about our two blogs:

[Carolina Arts Unleashed](#)

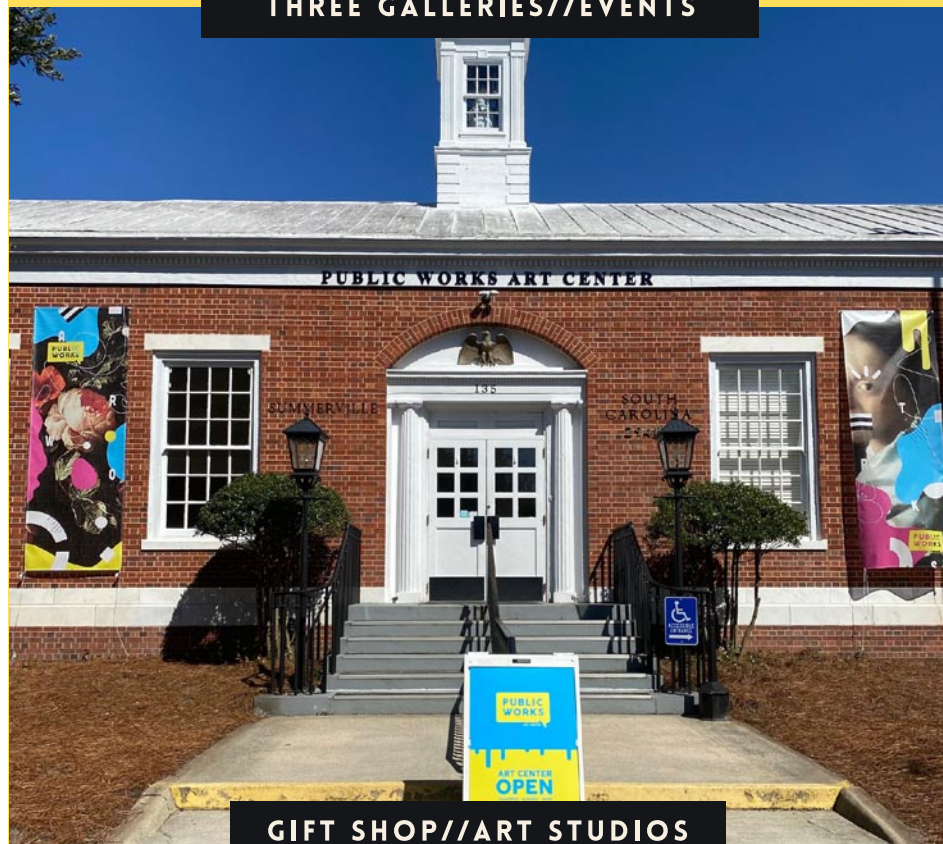
[Carolina Arts News](#)

Send us your email address to be added to our list to receive notice of each monthly issue.

info@carolinaarts.com

DOWNTOWN SUMMERVILLE'S ART CENTER

THREE GALLERIES//EVENTS



GIFT SHOP//ART STUDIOS

135 W. RICHARDSON AVE.,
SUMMERVILLE, SC 29483
843-900-3225
PUBLICWORKSARTCENTER.ORG