

# Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

## On The Cover

On our cover this month is the work of Tryone Geter, who teaches drawing, painting and manages the art gallery at Benedict College, in Columbia, SC. Geter is having an exhibit at the City Gallery at Waterfront Park in Charleston, SC. The exhibit, *Drawing from the Lifeline*, features mixed media work and will be on view through Mar. 1, 2015. Don't miss this show if you're in Charleston or anywhere within 500 miles. It will be worth the drive. Or if you have money - you can fly. Geter will give an artist's talk on Feb. 21, at 2pm at the gallery. The exhibition was curated by Frank McCauley, Chief Curator at the Sumter County Gallery of Art, in Sumter, SC.

Why did I select Geter's works for the cover? It's very simple - it was the most interesting work that came across my radar since I selected the previous month's cover. Now, how it came across my radar is an interesting story. It started on Facebook in a post I thought was being made about an upcoming exhibit of works by Colin Quashie, a Charleston, SC, artist. I made a comment that I didn't know about any such exhibit and if he would get me the details we could make sure it got included in *Carolina Arts*. I got a return comment from Quashie that he would let the people know and tell them to get in touch with me.

Apparently I had seen a comment Quashie had made about Tryon Geter's show at the City Gallery at Waterfront Park, curated by Frank McCauley from the Sumter County Gallery of Art. Just another Facebook mix up.

I thought it was pretty nice of Quashie to go to the trouble to make contact with the right people to get with me.

Now this all happened back in December 2014. And by Dec. 24th the deadline for our January issue came along and I hadn't heard from anyone and at that time no info about this exhibit was posted on the City Gallery at Waterfront Park's website. So it was going to be just another missed opportunity. I knew the exhibit started in Jan. 2015.

Now, I just finished processing 29 pages of gallery listings for this Feb. 2015 issue - covering two states. I don't have a lot of time to follow up on shows I heard something about - if info isn't sent to me on time - it's not going to make it in the paper. And I have a policy of not taking notices posted on Facebook as a press release - even though I kind of break my own rules when I see something mentioned there, but in my defense I just ask them to send me a press release and a few high res images by e-mail. If they don't do that, it doesn't make it in.

So about two weeks into working on the Feb. issue I take a chance and see that the Waterfront Gallery has finally posted a press release and some images of Geter's work. One look at this image and I was hooked.



"Rasta", charcoal and chalk on paper, 12" x 28"

I copied the info and processed it to be in the Feb. issue. This one was on me. I would go the extra mile and give the artist

what he deserved from the gallery and the curator. You see, I already knew this exhibit had a few strikes against it. The City Gallery at Waterfront Park, the City of Charleston's Office of Cultural Affairs, and the Sumter County Gallery of Arts don't have the best track records when it comes to promoting exhibits. They put on some great exhibitions at times, but do little to promote them ahead of time - at least that's my experience. It got so bad at one point that I told the Sumter folks that I would no longer include their late press releases. So they just stopped sending them to us. I guess they were saying we (*Carolina Arts*) didn't matter or they weren't going to make the effort to be on time. So be it, but ask the artists who are having shows at these facilities how they feel about it. I'd be rich if I got a dime for every time I had to tell an artist why their show wasn't included in *Carolina Arts* was because no one sent it to us or bothered to send it on time. The response on the other side is always the same - "They said they would take care of all the promotions!" - then some words not fitting to be in print usually follow.

As time went by and it was time to select a cover, the image that came to the front was that of Geter's *Rasta* drawing. I asked if he could send me some high res images from the show - in consideration - to be on the cover and he sent them right away and as soon I saw them, I knew we had our cover for Feb. 2015. But it was close to not being mentioned at all.

If I was an artist in SC - I would be very frustrated when it comes to promotions of exhibits - even more if I was an African-American artist.

## Separate But Unequal

Now if someone is thinking I selected this because February is considered Black History Month or African American History Month - they don't know me. I don't go for the idea that we should celebrate African Americans just once a year. Maybe that's what the City of Charleston was thinking when they selected Geter for this

time frame, but I don't buy into that. Ever since I came to South Carolina all I've seen is Separate But Unequal treatment when it comes to African Americans - especially when it comes to the visual arts.


The City of Charleston has the MOJA Arts Festival, which is OK I guess, but it doesn't get the attention the Piccolo Spoleto Festival gets. And a lot of times they have to scramble to get African American artists to participate without repeating the line up every four or five years.

My feeling is that African American artists should fight for a piece of the spotlight like all artists have to in the main show. No special treatment - just fill slots with the best artists. But then again I have to remember I'm in South Carolina where it's more about who you know with connections and if you would look good on the cover of *People Magazine*. So maybe it's better to at least have unequal opportunities - like Black History Month. Our gallery listings in February are usually full of shows in celebration (or is it to be politically correct) of Black History Month.

Funny thing is in South Carolina I know more white artists who use Black people as their subjects - to paint, draw or sculpt. I've never fully understood that, but it's a good thing they do so that 200 years from now when historians are combing through our junk - they'll at least know that Black people lived here too.


## Help Yourself


For 28 years I've been warning all artists to promote themselves and their shows. Don't rely on the promise that the people presenting your exhibit will promote it. I never complain about hearing about an exhibit from two different sources, but I'll always give top billing to the presenter in that case. If I only hear from the artist then I can go looking to confirm info with the presenter. Usually that gets things going as the ball is in their court to follow through - they know I know and they know the artist knows I know and so on. I usually hear from them then. Be grateful for the exhibit, but verify.



# UPSTATE

## Gallery on Main






# WARHOL

POLAROID/PHOTOGRAPHS  
FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

# NODINE

FORMATIONS




**January 15-February 28, 2015**  
Official Grand Opening - February 11, 4:30 - 6:00 P.M.

Gallery Hours-Tuesdays through Saturdays/12:00-5:00 P.M.

**Upstate Gallery on Main**  
Upstate Gallery on Main is dedicated to contemporary original works of art and exhibitions sponsored by the University of South Carolina Upstate. One of three galleries in the university system, Upstate Gallery on Main will join the Curtis R. Harley Gallery and FOCUS Art Education Gallery to support the mission of offering exhibitions and activities that cultivate an understanding of art as a discipline, the relationship of art to life, and the historical and societal role art play for the educated individual.  
172 E. Main St, Spartanburg, SC 29306

Contact:  
Mark Flowers-mflowers@uscupstate.edu  
Gallery Coordinator  
864.503.5848

Jane Nodine-jnodine@uscupstate.edu  
Gallery Director  
864.503.5838



University of South Carolina Upstate

www.uscupstate.edu  
(864) 503 - 5000