

Asheville, NC's River Arts District Artists Illuminate 2nd Saturday Art Strolls All Year Long

Asheville, NC's River Arts District artists will illuminate Second Saturday Art Strolls with the District's theme, 'Who Am I? Who Are We?'

The vibrant and eclectic community of over 300 artists in Asheville's River Arts District is thrilled to announce the launch of a captivating initiative during their renowned Second Saturday Art Strolls. Commencing each month, the district will embark on a creative journey with the theme, "Who Am I, Who Are We?" - a compelling exploration into individual and collective identity.

Each month, participating artists, galleries, and collectives will delve into the theme and create unique pieces inspired by the month's prompt. The inaugural prompt was "Origin Story" and for April it's "Cycles of Nature," inviting the community to express their interpretations through various artistic mediums.

The River Arts District has long been a haven for creativity and expression, and this thematic approach aims to enhance the immersive experience for both artists and visitors alike. By focusing on a specific prompt each month, the district hopes to foster a deeper connection between artists and their audience, providing a platform for meaningful conversations and a rich cultural exchange.

The culmination of this exploration will be showcased during the monthly Second Saturday Art Strolls. Participating artists will proudly exhibit their newly created works, providing the community with an opportunity to engage directly with the artists and gain insights into the inspirations behind their pieces.



View of the River Arts District

"Second Saturday Art Stroll has been a popular event in the River Arts District, and the launch of our monthly theme is a new way to help showcase the amazing artists here in the RAD", says Jeffrey Burroughs, President of the River Arts District Artists and owner of Jeffrey, a jewelry boutique in the heart of the River Arts District. "We are excited to see what the participating artists come up with for April's theme".

The River Arts District invites residents, tourists, and art enthusiasts to join in the celebration of creativity, diversity, and the power of artistic expression. The Second Saturday Art Strolls promise to be a dynamic and enriching experience, offering a glimpse into the profound perspectives of the artists who call this vibrant community home.

The River Arts District in Asheville, North Carolina, is a dynamic and diverse community of artists, galleries, and studios. Known for its lively atmosphere and eclectic offerings, the district is a hub for artistic expression and cultural exploration.

For further information, please visit (riverartsdistrict.com).

a contemporary fine art gallery exhibiting national and international artists in downtown Asheville, NC.

For further information check our NC

Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 828/505-8341 or e-mail to (Info@bender-gallery.com).

American Folk Art in Asheville, NC, Offers Annual Face Jug Show

American Folk Art in Asheville, NC, will present its 12th Annual Face Jug Show, on view from Apr. 10 through May 1, 2024. A reception will be held on Apr. 12, from 5-8pm.

Mark your calendars for the 12th Annual Face Jug Show at American Folk Art & Framing! And join us all month long as we celebrate a storied regional tradition: the wild, weird, and culturally iconic Face Jug! The face jug began to appear in these parts in the very early 1800s. In those days, self-sufficiency ruled and handmade, locally-crafted clayware was common.

Our regional soils contain all the elements needed to make hardy clay and our forests plenty of wood for the fueling of kilns. Over the years, popularity of these face vessels has waxed and waned, but the tradition has managed to survive and even thrive. Today, face jugs are an eagerly sought after & widely collected part of our mountain heritage. Wood-fired kilns remain the popular favorite, but there are some who experiment with gas- or electric-fired kilns, either for convenience, curiosity, or to achieve bright colors.



Work by Wayne Hewell

own free-spirited irreverence. 7th generation North Carolina potter Michael Gates creates both historically informed vessels inspired by his ancestors and wildly colorful 'tattooed' face jugs that express more of his personal style. Wisconsin potter Joel Huntley puts his own spin on what have commonly been referred to as 'ugly jugs' by creating beautifully-refined and delicately-featured face vessels in softly colorful glazes.

"For us, this is the most wonderful time of the year," says gallery owner Julia L. Mills. "All month long, we get to share this unique pottery tradition with folks that have never encountered it before, and we get to reconnect with many of our most loyal collectors. Opening day is also just an incredible rush; it's the only day of the year we open the gallery late, because we already know the phone will be ringing off the hook once the clock strikes noon."

Twelve potters will be featured in the 2024 Face Jug Show, including: Wayne Hewell, Mike Ball, Ben J. North, Michael Gates, Tim Whitten, Carl Block, Vicki Miller, Stacy Lambert, Walter Fleming, Steve Abee, Joel Huntley, and Stephen Harrison.

Whether you can visit the gallery in person or only online, please join us as we celebrate this storied pottery tradition at American Folk Art.

The 12th Annual Face Jug Show will debut on the gallery website at (www.amerifolk.com) at 11am, on Apr. 10. For a full hour, the entire show will be available for previewing before phone sales begin promptly at noon. Remaining face jugs will be on view in the gallery through May 1, 2024

For further information check our NC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 828/281-2134 or (www.amerifolk.com).



Work by Ben J. North

At the heart of our Annual Face Jug Show are traditional creators like Walter Fleming, who at 86 claims the title of the oldest working potter in the state of North Carolina and still hand-digs his clay off his property in the foothills. Wayne Hewell, a 5th generation potter in the mountains of Georgia, creates expressive jugs complete with corn cob stoppers from his own farm. His family's pottery, still in operation today, began in 1850 and nearly every member of the Hewell clan has worked there for a time.

But what would a show celebrating the Face Jug be without variety? Texan Carl Block takes the Appalachian face jug in a very different direction and incorporates influences from Mexican folk art and his

Bender Gallery in Asheville, NC, Features Works by Linda Gritta

Bender Gallery in Asheville, NC, will present *Short Stories*, a solo exhibition of recent works by Linda Gritta, on view from Apr. 6 - 30, 2024. A reception will be held on Apr. 6, from 5-8pm.

Bender Gallery is pleased to present *Short Stories*, the first solo exhibition at Bender Gallery for artist Linda Gritta. Expressive, fresh paintings varying in size up to 60 x 60 inches will be on display. Gritta's work encourages the viewer to visit an alternate reality, to recall a real or imagined memory, as images flit in and out of actuality on the canvas.

Short Stories will delve into the layers of exploring a narrative through abstraction. Gritta uses primarily oil paint, due to its complexity and ability to create nuanced colors, but is fond of starting with acrylic, loosely blocking in shapes, and finding a composition through the exploration of color. Then she begins to build layer upon layer with oil paint, oil sticks, and sometimes goes back in with graphite pencil to correct or adjust certain shapes. The artist is always aware of balance in a piece and how there can be a dialog amongst the elements depending on the way they are laid out on the canvas.



Work by Linda Gritta

While some of Gritta's paintings are purely abstract, most of them reference a landscape, a part of a building, or an object. Gritta unapologetically shifts between abstraction, to landscapes, to figuration based on her inspirations and in response to the paint. In some cases, it could be as simple as the color palette of her garden and the desire



Work by Linda Gritta

to immerse herself in all the hues she sees outside her studio window.

"I want color to teach me in real time. Paint is forgiving, I can keep changing it. I have to pay attention and learn what happens when I do this," motions to the canvas, "and make this big color here. I want to learn as I'm going because each painting teaches me so much," says Gritta.

Some of these new works are inspired by childhood memories. For instance, the painting, *Horse Tale*, explores a story when the artist first felt shame as a young child consumed with a love of horses. The blue sky, green meadow, and ambiguous mark-making can elicit a fragment of a memory for most viewers. Another piece shows a young Gritta, albeit abstracted, performing a handstand, something she can no longer do. This painting mourns the loss of childhood, while celebrating the energy of youth.

Linda Gritta was born in 1956 in Chicago, IL, and grew up in a suburb called Riverdale. In the early 2000s, while working as a translator for deaf people, she received her BFA in Painting and Printmaking from Converse School of the Arts in Spartanburg, SC. She has lived in many different states but ultimately settled in Asheville, NC in 2005.

If you crave texture and color, come to Bender Gallery to see the tactile works by our only Asheville artist. Bender Gallery is

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Gallery Mélange, A Contemporary Art Gallery Opens in Asheville, NC

Gallery Mélange, a contemporary art gallery featuring works of noted artists Mark Bettis and Victoria Pinney, alongside the exquisite fine jewelry of Jeffrey Burroughs, announces a Grand Opening Reception of their new gallery. The reception will be held in the gallery on 67 Biltmore Ave, downtown Asheville from 4pm-8pm on Apr. 5, 2024 with refreshments.

Gallery Mélange, founded in 2024 by artists Mark Bettis, Jeffrey Burroughs and Victoria Pinney is an artist-owned space committed to showcasing the beauty and diversity of contemporary art. The gallery's name Mélange reflects its mission to create a harmonious mixture of artistic styles, mediums and perspectives. Located in downtown Asheville, Gallery Mélange is a dynamic addition to the thriving arts scene of the city.

A masterful painter, Mark Bettis transforms ordinary scenes into extraordinary works of art. His bold and uplifting paintings, characterized by a harmonious blend of styles, promise to captivate art enthusiasts.

A visionary abstractionist, Victoria Pinney draws inspiration from the textures of the world around her. Her brightly colored



A look inside the new Asheville gallery

abstractions, reflecting the essence of beauty found in everyday elements, showcase a unique approach to contemporary art.

Originally from NYC, Jeffrey Burroughs specializes in fine, custom, ceremonial, and heritage jewelry. While his work brings a touch of elegance and individuality to Gallery Mélange, their work can also be found in fashion editorials, billboards, TV shows, and films. Their jewelry designs are a testament to the fusion of ancient tradition and dazzling modernity.

For more info check our NC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 828/782-1110 or visit (www.gallerymelange.com).