

# Spartanburg Art Museum in Spartanburg, SC, Features Works from State Art Collection

The Spartanburg Art Museum is presenting the exhibit, *Contemporary Conversations II*, an exhibit of works by nearly fifty South Carolina artists, on view through July 23, 2011.

This exhibit, which is part of the State Art Collection and includes nearly 52 pieces of the complete 118-piece exhibition, is an outstanding comprehensive public collection. The diversity of media and styles that the collection encompasses reflects culture, society, and larger social issues which speak to South Carolina and beyond.

All of the artists who are included in this exhibit are well known in South Carolina art circles and includes recipients of the prestigious Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Award, which is the highest honor that the state can give in the arts. Among this select group are William Halsey (1999) and Arthur Rose (2002).



Work by William Halsey

Halsey received the award for his lifetime achievement in the arts. His works brought abstraction to his native Charleston, SC, and have been exhibited at both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. During his lifetime he held teaching positions at many colleges and galleries in South Carolina.

Rose was acknowledged for his achievements in arts education; indeed, he was known as the "Dean of Black Art in South Carolina," successfully holding the chairman position of the Claflin University Art Department for more than twenty years and positively affecting the lives of many students in the arts program throughout that time.

Among the works featured in *Contemporary Conversations II*, visitors can treat themselves to photography, sculpture, basketry, metalwork, and mixed media. This variety of media represents an intense array of abstract expressionism, beautiful surrealist imagery, arresting social commentaries, restrained yet vivid photographic instances, and striking realism. The large scale of many of these works lends power to the exhibit, while the smaller pieces make it intimate and inviting. All of them, however, "reflect the most significant local, national and international artistic directions of the last

four decades," notes Eleanor Heartney, the curator of the State Art Collection (a program and collection of the South Carolina Arts Commission).

The issues addressed in this part of the collection deal with topics from 1967, when the collection was first begun, to the present. The works in this exhibition provide insight about the views of the artists on social issues, their impressions about historical facts and occurrences, and their imaginations and visions. Together these works "reflect the many voices and diverse concerns of South Carolina artists."

The State Art Collection is considered the most comprehensive public collection of works by contemporary South Carolina artists. Established in 1967 as one of the first programs of the South Carolina Arts Commission, the State Art Collection has grown to include 448 works in a variety of media and styles by 278 South Carolina contemporary artists.

The State Art Collection ensures that an art collection of the State is going to endure and serve as a historical and cultural tool and reference to future generations. They make small exhibitions available to citizens throughout South Carolina and outside of the state, distributing shows to both urban and rural museums in order to reach as many people as possible, not only the ones that live in large or even accessible cities.



Work by Tarleton Blackwell

Works from the State Art Collection are available for loan to art museums, state agencies, and public and private organizations for the purpose of public exhibition or public display. The collection is supported in part by the South Carolina Arts Foundation and Kahn Development Company.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 864/582-7616 or visit ([www.spartanburgartmuseum.org](http://www.spartanburgartmuseum.org)).

# Artists' Guild of Spartanburg Features Works by Rich Ponder

The Artists' Guild of Spartanburg will present the exhibit, *Gathering Signals*, featuring photographic compositions by Rich Ponder, on view in the Guild Gallery in the Chapman Cultural Center in Spartanburg, SC, from June 1 - 27, 2011. A reception will be held on June 16, from 6-8pm.



Work by Rich Ponder

Ponder's latest work investigates the often overwhelming combination of prim-

itive and modern stimuli in contemporary life. In his words, the show asks, "What happens when one gathers the signals of the ancients and combines them with the constant bombardment of information modern man is forced to endure?" Ponder attempts to answer this question in his dreamlike imagery using digital processing and various printing techniques.

While Ponder describes his medium as "digital photography," he stretches the definition of that genre with his innovative printing and preservation techniques. *Gathering Signals* features giclées and "MetalPrints" - "a new art medium for preserving photos by infusing dyes directly into specially coated aluminum sheets."

A native of Cowpens, SC, Ponder studied at the College of Charleston and the Savannah College of Art and Design, including a stint in London. Some of the

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