

# West Main Artists Co-op

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ite things in life as seen through my eyes, my own personal looking glass: a reflection on sights and memories of things past and present, with a bit of whimsy thrown in the mix -- as seen through the artsy heart."

The pottery and ceramics in this exhibit are a departure from what McEllhiney has done in the past. "Complete departure," she said. "I've been a functional potter with a little creativity thrown in, now I am stretching my limits and even working in a clay material I have never used before. Some of these are the biggest pieces I have ever attempted!"

Much of her work is based on a vessel or vase design that is cut apart to form flower-like sculptures. Others are sculpted with added organic features, giving the work a floral and pod resemblance. Until now, McEllhiney's work has been known to be "functional pottery." "I'm not just a function potter!," she exclaimed.

Eugene Johnson, too, is departing from what he has been known for and comfortable with in the past. "This exhibit is very much a departure from what I'm comfortable with," he said. "There's a family history of photographers that run back to my grandfathers. The majority of my work prior to joining WMAC has been event, sports, and photojournalism. The Co-op has allowed me to venture into and experiment with other forms of photography, such as figurative, expressionism, and most recently impressionism.

The exhibit is a collection of various styles of photography: landscapes, portraiture, figurative works, and macro in various styles both straight out of the camera, as well as molded works using various digital techniques."

Right out of high school, McEllhiney left her native Florida to travel and work in Renaissance Fairs across the continental United States. Performing and learning many trades, she always felt most at peace when she was creating something with her hands. In 2004, she left the fair circuit and settled back in South Florida for just shy of 11 years. During her time there she began to dabble in acrylic painting and mixed media, learning technique and form. After moving to South Carolina in 2015, she took her first pottery class in Spartanburg, under the tutelage of Jim Cullen of Roundhouse Pottery.

Within the first five minutes of her hands in the clay, she knew she had found her heart's desire. In the winter of 2015, she established a business for her art, The Blue Bee, which she currently sets up shop in and around the Greenville and Spartanburg area craft fairs and art shows. Today, she lives and works in Simpsonville. She has been a member of West Main Artists Co-Op for two years and is a single mother of a 16-year-old son.

"I took my first clay class just a couple of months after I moved here," she said. "It was love at first touch. I did not know



Work by Melissa McEllhiney

what I was getting into, had no interest in doing wheel or anything. I had seen some Clemson students doing this cool thing at Artisphere - later learned the technique was called Sgraffito - and I wanted to carve designs into a bowl too. In order to do so, I needed to learn how to make a bowl, so I signed up for a class. I remember telling the teacher that I was going to learn how to make a bowl only so I could carve into it, that I wasn't interested in anything else. Then, I actually threw a bowl - successfully the first time - and literally cried. I didn't know why I wept, it just moved me. I felt like I went home. Anyhoo, it's been a whirlwind since!"

Johnson, 50, has been a member of WMAC since 2016, and this is his first exhibit. The Columbus, OH, native now lives in Spartanburg and said, "The co-op is a fantastic place to immerse yourself as an artist into a collective of various styles, abilities, and mediums. This exhibit has come together over the past two years.

There are influences throughout the exhibit from WMAC member artists who definitely played a role in expanding both the quality and content of the pieces on exhibit. I've been studying the works of Baroque and Impressionist painters and applying those techniques such as tenebrism, chiaroscuro, minimalism, and color, to photography. Also, I want an appreciation of the role of technology in art. There are times when technology can be a crutch and other times when it can be used as tool just like any other tool an artist may use."

All the work in *Through the Looking Glass* will be for sale.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Co-op at 864/804-6501 or visit ([www.WestMainArtists.org](http://www.WestMainArtists.org)).

## Greenville Technical College in Greenville, SC, Features Works by Katy Bergman Cassell

Greenville Technical College in Greenville, SC, will present *The Undesirables: Jewelry* by Katy Bergman Cassell, on view at RIVERWORKS Gallery, from July 6 through Aug. 5, 2018. A reception will be held on Aug. 3, from 6-9pm.

For centuries most civilizations have considered jewelry as an enhancement of beauty, it's luxurious, preciousness symbolizing the prestige of its wearer. Today, jewelry and desirables continue to be synonymous. Has Cassell debunked these centuries of history by creating jewelry titled, *The Undesirables*? Has she painstakingly carved and enameled brooches and necklaces that are off-putting and undesirable? Hardly. Cassell has discovered beauty of form and color in slugs living under a rock and in the fungus that grows on rotting wood. Baudelaire might have described her art "as a glimpse of the phosphorescence of decay." In her own words, "I find beauty in the forms associated with decay, signify-



Work by Katy Bergman Cassell

ing the unending cycle of life and rebirth of which we are all a part."

*The Undesirables* is a series of objects, wall pieces, and jewelry. Jewelry is the main component of the series because Cassell believes the wearer herself completes the piece. Cassell adds, "The wearer gains a uniquely intimate relationship with the piece as physical sensation and attention

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## Again, Then Again

A Clemson Curates Creative Inquiry Project

April 23 - September 12, 2018

Sikes Hall

Clemson University

Curator's Talk & Closing Reception

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

3:30 - 4:30 pm

Participating artists:

Amber Eckersley, Hannah Gardner, Geneva Hutchinson, Dustin Massey, Rachel Rinker, Zoë Rogers, Sydney Smith, Caren Stansell, Anna Sullivan, and Annamarie Williams



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to detail are incorporated into the viewing experience. Also, jewelry takes the art out of the gallery and into the world, so it is important that the works are actually wearable even if noticeably bulky, because the function of wearing empowers the ideas embodied within." The undesirable become sensuously desirable.

Cassell's pieces begin with carved wax that is then electroplated in a month-long cold bath of copper and sulfuric acid. Once her copper form has achieved the desired exterior, she can then melt the wax from its interior. Using a wire brush she scrubs the oxidation from the form and neutralizes its surface with baking soda. The enameling process begins by applying powdered glass, colored with oxides to the copper form.

Each layer of glass is melted and adhered to the copper in a kiln. Layer by layer, the coloration is built-up considering the translucent nature of the glass. The enameling, a product of heat, foretells the warmth the jewelry will absorb from its wearer. This long, deliberate process gives Cassell

meditative space to consider ... "the ideas of fragility versus durability, and the cycle of death and rebirth."

Cassell has adopted Greenville as home with her husband and their two daughters. She is on the faculty of the Fine Arts Center and is also the Visual Art Department Chair. One of her most recent awards was the National Artists Teachers Fellowship allowing her to travel to England to work with British enamel artists, to explore the Jurassic Coast, and to tour the enameling archives at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

RIVERWORKS Gallery is operated by and for the faculty and students of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Greenville Technical College. The gallery is located on River Street, Suite 202, along the scenic Reedy River in downtown Greenville, SC.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the gallery at 864/271-0679 or visit ([www.gvltec.edu/dva](http://www.gvltec.edu/dva)) and click on RIVERWORKS.

## West Main Artists Co-op in Spartanburg, SC, Offers Works by Plein Air Artists

West Main Artists Co-op in Spartanburg, SC, will present *Art by Sight*, featuring works by plein air artists, showcasing a large collection of artwork that was created outdoors in Upstate South Carolina, on view in the Venue, the facility's largest gallery, from July 3 - 27, 2018. A reception will be held on July 19, from 5-9pm, during the city's monthly ArtWalk.

The participating artists are all part of an informal and less-than-one-year-old group of retired teachers who gather to paint in the classic French tradition of plein air, which by definition is work created on location and outdoors. The group is still in the formative stages and includes core members Jessica Barnes, Shannon Patrick, Doris Turner, AK McMillan, Cynthia Link, and Shelba Cook.



Work by Doris Turner

"Through my association with various Upstate artists, I had heard about this group of artists who were gathering to do plein air," said the Co-op's chair of Venue Ex-

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