

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

Not Ready For Prime Time

I know I say something about this every year, but it's something worth mentioning as it's very important to every visual art venue - whether a major art museum, a community art space, a non-profit art space, or a commercial gallery.

"If you're going to present an exhibition and if you're not going to promote it - don't bother putting it on."

There are people who believe, "If you present it - they will come". No they won't - if they don't even know it's taking place, where it's taking place, or for how long and at what times.

For over thirty years we have provide those who present visual art exhibits in North and South Carolina a free medium to promote their exhibits, yet thirty years later we still can't get some people to send us their info about these exhibits.

We have some venues who never, ever, miss a month to promote their exhibits. There are some who occasionally send us info and then there are the folks who send it once after we have encouraged them to send us that info, but never do again.

During those thirty years I've wondered why people don't send us this info and I've come up with a few reasons.

A few won't send us their info because I have criticized the SC Arts Commission from time to time and they are worried if they do they might lose some of their funding from the Arts Commission. That's a sad thought, but it's true. Some just care if the people who support their venue hear about what they are doing, anything else is a lot of work. Some just think it doesn't matter - no one is going to come see their exhibits. Some groups who say they cover all the arts, but are really oriented towards the performing art where tickets produce

revenue are less interested in promoting events that are free. Again very sad. And, there are some that are just too lazy or claim they are just one person and don't have time for publicity.

Every time I hear that excuse I wonder how Linda and I put out a publication covering the visual arts in two states for thirty years. And, Linda works on it part time.

I recently received an e-mail from an organization in the Carolinas which said in the subject line - Check out why XYZ's art community is thriving. When I hit the link all I find is a handful of items, a few visual art mentions, but very few details. And the info was just about the events taking place at their venue, when I know there are many, many more, even just visual art venues that they say nothing about.

A lot of folks are trying to use the arts as a driving force to bring people to their city or community - translation - bring in tourism dollars. But they just don't get the concept behind promotion. They've fallen for that idea - "if you build it, they will come." And that's a bunch of bunk. If they don't know - they don't know where to go. And, the competition in the Carolinas is rough. How do you compete with places like Charleston, SC, and Asheville, NC, that already have a step up on the tourism game?

Well first, you need to let folks know that you are an option too, you're offering something to see, and all important - letting them know you'd like them to come visit and see all you have to offer. And, you can't do that by just sitting back and waiting for that to happen naturally, as others are pounding their drums loud and long to get people's attention and to get their bodies through their doors. Nothing happens when you do nothing.

Charleston County Public Library in Charleston, SC, and the SC State Library Offers Works by Cecil Williams

The Charleston County Public Library (CCPL) in Charleston, SC, and the SC State Library will present *Unforgettable: Celebrating a Time of Life, Hope and Bravery*, featuring works by photographer, Cecil Williams, on view in the CCPL's Main Branch Lobby, from July 1 through Sept. 30, 2018.

The exhibit features works by Cecil Williams, who is known for his documentation of the civil rights movement in South Carolina. The exhibit showcases a prelude to Williams' newest publication, "Unforgettable." The collection of 40 images provides a rare glimpse of events, portraits, and moments of significant social change during the 1950s through the 1970s. The noble subjects and pioneers captured in Williams' images depict the unforgettable waves of change that impacted the world during that era.

This exhibit will also commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Charleston Hospital Workers' Strike movement, (1968-1969) by featuring several of Williams' images from the strike.

The public is invited to a special reception and book talk, where they will have the opportunity to hear the legendary photographer, publisher, inventor, and author speak on July 30 between 6pm and 7:45pm, at the Main Branch in downtown Charleston. Williams will also be signing his book, "Unforgettable." Refreshments will be served after the presentation. The event is free, but registration is encouraged. To register for the event, visit (<http://bit.ly/CecilAtCCPL>). Attendees may also register by calling 843/805-6904.

This project is made possible with LSTA

funds provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and administered by the SC State Library, and through the generosity of Cecil Williams. For more information about this exhibit, visit (www.ccpl.org/cecilwilliams).

Cecil Williams, a native of Orangeburg, SC, is a professional photographer, videographer, publisher, inventor, author of six books, and architect of six residences that became his home and photography studio. In May 2006, he published a photo-documentary entitled "Out of the Box in Dixie." "Unforgettable," the sequel to that publication, was released last year. Williams received a degree in Art from Claflin University.

Williams is a member of the coveted American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP), and a Getty Images contributor, an honor attributed to only a select number of photographers worldwide. In January 2016, the South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation honored Williams with the prestigious Herbert A. DeCosta, Jr. Trailblazer Award, an honor previously received by Congressman James E. Clyburn, Mayor Steve Benjamin, and Judge Matthew Perry.

The South Carolina State Library is the primary administrator of federal and state support for the state's libraries. Headquartered in Columbia, S.C., the Library is funded by the state of South Carolina, by the federal government through the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and other sources.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Library at 843/805-6904 or visit (www.ccpl.org).

The deadline each month to submit articles, photos and ads is the 24th of the month prior to the next issue. This will be July 24th for the August 2018 issue and Aug. 24 for the September issue. After that, it's too late unless your exhibit runs into the next month. But don't wait for the last minute - send your info now. And where do you send that info? E-mail to (info@carolinaarts.com).

Nance Lee Sneddon *Wet Sand Patterns*



Tide Watch, Mixed Medium on Canvas

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