

Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, Features Works by Bryan Hiott

Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, will present *Through an Ancient Lens: Photographs and Abstractions from the Wet Plate Collodion Process*, featuring works by Bryan Hiott, who uses a 19th century photographic process in art, on view in the Solomon Gallery, from May 2 through June 24, 2023. A reception will be held on May 18, from 6-8pm, as part of ArtWalk Spartanburg and an artist's talk will be held on June 15.

Upstate photographer and artist Bryan Hiott says his upcoming exhibition is a "dialogue" between the rendered photographic images and the materials of the medium he uses.

"The images in this exhibition explore the beautiful tonality of wet plate collodion photography as well as the accidents that may occur with this chemical process," says Hiott, a graduate of Wofford College in Spartanburg who also received an MFA in photography and digital media from Parsons School of Design. "Certain images display surface imperfections that nonetheless become interesting aspects of the collodion aesthetic. These images, bearing evidence of physical handling, are unique and cannot be repeated."

Hiott says another facet of the exhibition is the inclusion of "abstract images that are a function of the chemical reactions inherent in the medium. As I examine these reactions on the plates, I carefully consider how they might be composed and presented. I scan them at high resolution and print them at a large scale on paper and on canvas so that the minute details, which include fractals, may be made visible. My exhibition is a dialogue between the rendered images and the materials of the medium."

Visitors to the exhibition should leave with a greater understanding of 19th century photographic processes, he adds. "I hope that photographers viewing the exhibition might be inspired to try those processes as well."



Work by Bryan Hiott

Hiott says that while most photography today is digital, he is "captivated by the beautiful tones of the wet plate collodion process, which was invented in 1851 by Englishman Frederick Scott Archer. It was the commercial successor to the Daguerreotype and became the most widely used form of photography in the world through the 1880s. In addition to glass plate negatives, from which paper prints could be made, collodion photography also gave us ambrotypes – positive images on glass – in 1854 and tintypes – positive images on pressed iron sheets – in 1856. Tintypes were the American contribution to the process."

Wet plate collodion has seen a revival in recent years, thanks to a small core of photographers dedicated to exploring the antiquarian art form, Hiott says. "After completing my MFA thesis at Gettysburg, where I spent so much time viewing images from the Civil War, I set out to learn the process, studying with renowned wet plate master John Coffey at his farm in Upstate New York."

Hiott explains that because it is a photochemical process, wet plate collodion is labor intensive and requires multiple steps



Work by Bryan Hiott

to prepare. "Each image is unique because I hand-pour the emulsion before applying light-sensitive chemistry. After making an exposure in camera, I develop the image within a matter of minutes in the studio or in the field, using a portable dark box, as photographers did during the 19th century."

One of his cameras is a large format – 8" x 10" – wooden box with bellows and Hiott uses antique lenses from the wet plate era. "One of my lenses is 151 years old. It's a brass barrel Petzval design portrait lens manufactured in 1872 by the Ross company of London. Its visual quality is stunning, creating a sharp plane of focus in the center and an out-of-focus area closer to the edges. Images produced with it seem to swirl. This effect is very characteristic of Petzval design, which did not provide correction for optical distortion," he adds.

"Slowing down from the digital world, being still, and entering quiet reflection are part of the experience at my studio," Hiott says. "Exposures are measured in seconds of time, and the average is one to five seconds. It can sometimes take longer depending on the amount of UV light and the age of my chemistry. In my portraits, I want to move beyond surface appearances to more genuine facets of each person's personality. This is what I want to come through in the finished work – something of that person's essence. Wet plate collodion is very conducive to the outcome."

At the end of a portrait session, Hiott's clients receive one-of-a-kind photographs "and come away with a better appreciation of how much the technology of the medium has evolved. Because my work is grounded in the early history of photography, it invites a conversation between past and present. I enjoy interpreting the modern world with this very old process."

In addition to his ongoing studio practice, Hiott exhibits regularly in the United States and abroad. After completing his MFA, he began teaching for the Parsons Summer, Pre-College Academy and Continuing Education Program. More recently, he has taught digital photography, alternative processes and art history at several Upstate South Carolina colleges and universities, including Wofford College, Furman University, Anderson University, Spartanburg Methodist College and Greenville Tech.

"In addition to my studio work, I give intensive wet plate collodion workshops, which are available one-to-one and with groups of up to four people. I also teach private Zoom and in-person classes in digital photography and Photoshop," Hiott adds.

The 40 pieces in the upcoming exhibition will be offered for purchase, with prices ranging from \$300 to \$1,500.

The Artists Collective | Spartanburg, located on W. Main Street, provides a forum and home for the arts and creative population of Spartanburg, providing facilities and services to artist members for exhibits, performances and creation.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings or visit (artistscollectivespartanburg.org).

Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, Features Works by Addam Duncan

Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, will present *Following Air*, featuring works by Addam Duncan, on view in Gallery III, from May 9 through June 3, 2023. A reception will be held on May 18, from 6-8pm, as part of the ArtWalk Spartanburg event.

Spartanburg artist Addam Duncan likes water, and you can see how much in his upcoming exhibition.

"Although typically an artist focused on realism and human form, this show is a study about the nature of water," says Duncan, a native of Spartanburg who has been an artist for more than 40 years. "From its fluid properties to stillness. From transparency to vibrant color. Vastness to microscopic qualities and the fact that water can kill you but is also the most essential element 'following air.'"

Duncan, who has worked in all kinds of artistic media through the years but now works mainly in oil painting, says the art in the exhibition is a "departure" from his typical art because "I can never make up my mind what I want to be," he says. "It's abstract, organic paintings with a focus on water. I like water."

Duncan wants visitors to the exhibit to notice "textures along with fluidity" in the art. He plans to have at least 15 works on



Work by Addam Duncan

display, available for purchase with prices ranging from \$200 to \$1,800.

The Artists Collective | Spartanburg, located on W. Main Street, provides a forum and home for the arts and creative population of Spartanburg, providing facilities and services to artist members for exhibits, performances and creation.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings or visit (artistscollectivespartanburg.org).

Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, Offers Exhibit Where Artists Are Looking for a Good Home for Their Art

Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, will present *Studio Sweep: Making Room for New Art*, offering art at reduced prices, on view in Gallery II and III, from May 30 through June 24, 2023. A reception will be held on June 15, from 6-8pm, as part of the ArtWalk Spartanburg event.

Art should be in the hands of those who love and appreciate it, artists at the Artists Collective | Spartanburg believe. That's why nearly 30 of them are presenting the third annual *Studio Sweep: Making Room for New Art*.

More than 100 works by ACS artists will be offered for sale during the exhibition, with prices starting at \$10, says Judy Martin, an artist who is coordinating the event.



Scarves by Robyn Crawford

"Artists always have pieces that they are tired of seeing, they don't care for it, they have gone another direction or any other reason. It's these pieces that will be on exhibit with reduced prices," Martin says. "Space is needed in their studios for new art."

"All the art is top quality and there will be tables and walls full of beautiful art available," Martin continues, noting that the works are new, undamaged art. "Visitors will see that they can afford nice art, and we all need beauty in our homes." There will be plenty of art available, and pieces will be



Works by Rosemary McLeod

replenished throughout the month.

"Our artists enjoy and feel grateful they get a chance to display at the Artists Collective | Spartanburg," she says. "Being able to join in on a group event such as this or having a one-person show in one of the galleries is a great benefit that comes with the membership of ACS."

"ACS means different things to different members," she continues. "Some join to get ideas and learn from other artists, some join to display their work while others just want to get out and talk with other people. ACS is a mix of young, old, rich, poor, college educated and not. We are all different and we come together to make this organization work."

The Artists Collective | Spartanburg, located on W. Main Street, provides a forum and home for the arts and creative population of Spartanburg, providing facilities and services to artist members for exhibits, performances and creation.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings or visit (artistscollectivespartanburg.org).

USC-Lancaster in Lancaster, SC, Offers Smithsonian Poster Exhibit

USC-Lancaster in Lancaster, SC, will present a Smithsonian Poster Exhibition, *Sounds of Religion*, exploring the diversity of American religious life through sound choirs singing, monks chanting, and the reading of religious texts, on view in the Red Rose Gallery, at the Native American

Studies Center, through Mar. 31, 2024.

These are religious sounds. But so too are the creaking of church pews and the clanking of pots during the preparation of a communal meal. *Sounds of Religion* is a Smithsonian poster exhibition that

continued on Page 19