

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs Comes Through

Because of our monthly schedule and deadlines, it's always been hard for us to deal with providing you info about the Spoleto Festival USA and the Piccolo Spoleto Festival, which takes place in Charleston, SC - end of May (Memorial Day weekend - the first week in June (June 8 for Piccolo and June 9 for Spoleto)). Our deadline is always on the 24th of the month "prior" to the month your exhibits starts. We only deal with the visual arts, so that knocks out Spoleto most years after the big brew ha ha over the visual arts taking too much attention away from the performing art events, so most of the time it's the visual art events taking place during Piccolo Spoleto that we would need info about. Of course the exhibits at the Gibbes Museum of Art are tagged as a Spoleto event, but we would have that info anyway. It's not like Spoleto is doing anything special for the visual arts. That's why they can't really call themselves, the most comprehensive arts festival anymore. They're too slim on the visual art side of the arts.

Our deadline for exhibits being presented in May is April 24, which most years seems to be too early for the City of Charleston's Office of Cultural Affairs to have all their ducks in a row and be able to tell us what they will be presenting. And our deadline for the June issue is May 24, usually about the time or sometimes before the Festival starts. So most of the time we can only tell you about the visual arts as they are just about ending. But not this year.

Just before our May deadline I received an e-mail from the Office of Cultural Affairs and it was an electronic download of their official booklet. I was shocked, but very happy to have that info and be able to

include it for our readers. Now, if only one day they could send press releases about these exhibits with high res images of the art which will be in those exhibits. Maybe that will happen next year.

I had to write the one article we offered in our May issue about the *Piccolo Spoleto Outdoor Art Exhibition*. It was my 40th anniversary present to those artists. Most of the local media don't mention this show unless someone breaks into Marion Square at night and tries to steal some of the art. Then, that's a story worth telling at the *Post & Courier*. I would think 40 years of artists spending 16-17 days outside in Charleston's nice weather and then not so nice weather would be a story worth telling, but I doubt it. Maybe someone will tell them about what I said and it will shame them into offering one or some thief could force their hand. But nobody wants that to happen.

If you haven't been to this show which takes place throughout Marion Square Park in downtown Charleston, at the intersection of Calhoun Street, between Meeting and King Streets, go before it's over on June 8. There's a lot of art to see, a lot of artists you can talk to, and you might just catch an art demonstration if you're lucky.

Of course we did have an article about the exhibit over at the Halsey Institute at the College of Charleston. They are presenting *Cry Joy Park - Gardens of Dark and Light*, by Jennifer Wen Ma, on view through July 6, 2019. I've seen this show and I think it will be one of, if not the hit, of the visual art offerings for the Piccolo Spoleto Festival. The Halsey Institute is like the Gibbes Museum of Art, sometimes their exhibits are tagged as Spoleto Festival USA events and sometimes Piccolo Spoleto Festival events. I'm not sure why it's one or the other - maybe it's all about money, I don't

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City of North Charleston, SC, Features Works by Kathryn Jill Johnson and Courtney Sparks

The City of North Charleston's Cultural Arts Department will present two new exhibits including: *Imitations*, featuring mixed media drawings by Kathryn Jill Johnson of Huntsville, AL, and *You Feel Like Sand Paper*, featuring mixed media drawings by Courtney Sparks of San Francisco, CA. Both exhibits will be on view in the North Charleston City Gallery, located in the Charleston Area Convention Center, from June 3 - 28, 2019.

What makes people the way they are? Kathryn Jill Johnson explores this question in her exhibit *Imitations*. Through her series of mixed media drawings composed of seemingly narrative vignettes of characters, symbols, and images on a flattened, ambiguous background, Johnson's exhibit suggests a story but offers no conclusion. The viewer is invited to consider connections among the elements of each composition, but is not given enough information to be certain of their perspective. This is a reflection of Johnson's perspective on life.

"We are perpetually in a state of in medias res, the middle of the action," Johnson reflects. "It feels like our lives are a story, but the past is soft and indistinct, the climax can't be recognized, and the denouement is necessarily unknowable."

Johnson received her MFA from the University of Georgia and her BA from the University of South Florida. She is currently a Professor of Painting and Drawing at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. She has exhibited nationally and throughout the southeast, including group exhibitions at the Tennessee Valley Museum of Art, University of Montevallo the ARC Gallery in Chicago, the Huntsville Museum of Art, and most recently, the Alabama State Council on the Arts' Georgine Clarke Gallery. She has mounted a number of solo exhibitions, among them shows at Lowe Mill Arts Center Page 4 - Carolina Arts, June 2019



Work by Courtney Sparks

ter, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Berea College, and Rogue Community College.

You Feel Like Sand Paper is an exhibit of mixed media drawings created by Courtney Sparks. Sparks' work focuses primarily on human faces. She is interested in achieving both a highly technical and controlled drawing and inviting the spontaneity of childlike scribbles into her work.

"Concentrating on technique and building detail in the faces challenges me to face my medium and subject head on. Adding in those loose childlike scribbles keeps the pieces fresh and innocent. It gives my work energy and helps me release control," says Sparks. Her mixed media compositions are created using a combination of chalk pastel ground down into powder and applied using

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a dry brush technique, as well as colored pencil.

Sparks studied art at Coastal Carolina University for one year before continuing her artistic practice on her own. She currently lives in San Francisco, CA, and draws inspiration from the colorful San Francisco homes, food, hands, and faces. Her work has been exhibited at Incline Gallery Woods Bar in San Francisco and Good Mother Gallery in Oakland. She has an upcoming solo exhibition at Four Barrel in San Francisco.

The North Charleston City Gallery is situated in two corridors of the Charleston Area Convention Center adjacent to the North Charleston Coliseum, located at 5001 Coliseum Drive in North Charleston. Inquiries regarding the artists or purchase information may be directed to the North Charleston Cultural Arts Department at 843/740-5854.



Work by Kathryn Jill Johnson

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

Charleston Artist Guild in Charleston, SC, Offers Works by Konstantin Voronin

The Charleston Artist Guild in Charleston, SC, will present *Southern Inspiration*, featuring works by Konstantin Voronin, on view in the Guild Gallery from June 1 - 30, 2019. A reception will be held on June 7, from 5-8pm.

The exhibit is a collection of paintings that display the artist's venture into oils to show the different aspects of Southern spirit. His current artwork reflects the Charleston environment including its fabulous nature, architecture, marine, and low country landscapes.

Voronin was born and raised in Moscow and educated as a psychiatrist. In 1994, he came to Charleston, SC, where he remains today. He was heavily inspired by the Holy City and people who live here. He currently enjoys using oil as a medium and his unique art technique is focused on detailed visual descriptions of painting objects to maximize the viewer's impression.

Voronin states, "As a Psychiatrist, it is very important for me to understand people. The more I know people, the more inspired



Work by Konstantin Voronin

I get to create my art."

Voronin has been painting for over 35 years and has studied different painting techniques and styles from a number of well-known modern Russian artists. He also was trained in the old European arts manner and loves to use oil on canvas as well as other media. His art is found in many private collections and are exhibited at a variety of art shows in countries such as

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