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## The City of North Charleston, SC, Offers Works by The Village Artists of Mt. Pleasant, SC

The City of North Charleston's Cultural Arts Department is pleased to announce that works by The Village Artists, an artist collective based in the Old Village of Mt. Pleasant, SC, will be on view at the North Charleston City Gallery, located in the Charleston Area Convention Center in North Charleston, SC, from Dec. 2-28, 2013. A reception will be held on Dec. 5, from 5-7pm.

The group includes Margaret Connell-de Ruyter, Jane Hart, Ann Marie McKay, Lorie Merryman, Ryoko Miller, Faye Sullivan and Ginny Versteegen.

For many years The Village Artists have gathered to paint, critique, organize exhibits and interact as professional artists. In their month-long exhibition, titled *Inspired*, the group will present a collection of paintings and drawings in a diverse range of styles and media, including representational, abstract, still-life, figurative studies and landscapes in watercolor, oils, pastels and acrylics. In addition to original work, the artists will also have prints and notecard sets available for sales.

A native of Aruba, Margaret Connell-de Ruyter, is a naturalized citizen educated in Vermont, Boston and Charleston. She has exhibited at the Prince Art Gallery, the Piccolo Spoleto Festival, the Charleston Artist Gallery, the College of Charleston Salon de Refuse Art Show, and various venues in St. Petersburg, FL.

Connell-de Ruyter is inspired to paint the wonders of the natural world. She uses acrylic on canvas with effects and color to achieve what she sees and feels. Her series is painted in an impressionist abstract style featuring water, earth, wind and fire. Although her paintings show destructive forces at times, they are always beautiful, conveying the majesty and force of nature.



Work by Lorie Merryman

Oil painter and pastelist Jane D. Hart's work is held by private collectors throughout the US and has been exhibited in both juried and invitational exhibitions, including the Piccolo Spoleto Juried Art Exhibition in Charleston, SC. Born in southern Illinois and having lived in many states, Hart now claims Charleston and its beautiful landscapes as her home. As she says, "To me, composition is key to a successful painting. This is what draws the viewer to an image from across the room, whether the image is representational or abstract. What keeps me excited about painting is that it is a constant learning process. Painting from life contributes to this learning process as it inspires me to try to capture the light and see color accurately – a great challenge, and never boring."

After a career as a college English teacher, Ann Marie McKay became an active member of the Mt. Pleasant and Charleston art communities. She has exhibited her work at Brookgreen Gardens, Mt. Pleasant Town Hall, Old Santee Canal Park, and the Lowcountry Senior Arts Festival. She has been featured artist twice at the Charleston Artist Guild Gallery in downtown Charleston, where her work can currently be viewed. McKay prefers

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to work in plein air on location, using oil for landscapes. She also uses pastel and watercolor for colorful interpretations of people, places and animals. Collaborating with author Julie McLaughlin, McKay has illustrated three children's books: *Hungry Mr. Gator*, *Mr. Gator's Up the Creek* and *Mr. Gator Hits the Beach*.

Drawn to the beauty and architecture of the Charleston area, Lorie Merryman recently arrived on the Lowcountry arts scene from Atlanta, GA, and is a member of the Mt. Pleasant and Charleston Artist Guilds. A representational artist, Merryman works in oils and paints plein air landscapes, figures, portraits and still-life. Her work has been in numerous shows and won awards at the Atlanta Artists Center, twice in the Hudson Valley Art Association's annual exhibitions, and as a solo artist at the Brown Gallery at Mercer University in Atlanta, GA. Merryman's paintings are held in private collections across the US and Australia.

Ryoko Miller, native of Sapporo, Japan, discovered her passion for painting in Charleston. Recently, she studied at the Angel Academy of Art in Florence, Italy, and came back inspired to rediscover the beauty she sees in the world and recreate it with her own interpretation. Her skills and talent are shown in representational work such as her "Sweetgrass Basket" series. Miller's subjects include portraits, plein air landscapes, still-life and animals. She has received numerous awards from the Mt. Pleasant Artist Guild, the First Federal Bank People's Choice Art Exhibits, Piccolo Spoleto Juried Art Show, the North Charleston Arts Festival, and the Mt. Pleasant Blessing of the Fleet Festival. Miller's work can be seen at the Charleston Artist Guild Gallery.

Originally from Virginia, Faye Sullivan moved to the Lowcountry from Massachusetts after a career as an art teacher at middle school and high school levels. Her goal as a landscape and seascape painter is for the viewer to experience the beauty and the open expanses which surround them. In some paintings she tries to express the excitement of a vibrant sunset



Work by Margie Connell

or in others the peacefulness of an empty beach. The one element all of her paintings seem to have in common is her love of water.

Sullivan is inspired by water and finds it to be the ultimate chameleon as it reflects the clouds, time of day, wind, sky and shore. An active member of the Charleston, Ion and Mt. Pleasant Artist Guilds, her paintings can be seen at the Charleston Artist Guild Gallery.

Ginny Versteegen has painted and taught art in the United States and Europe. In fact, her oil paintings are like anecdotes in her life. They tell the story of what inspires her, from simple to complex. Working in plein air and in her studio in Mt. Pleasant, Versteegen interprets her surroundings using vivid colors as she paints the ever-changing beauty of the Lowcountry.

While traveling, she carries a limited palette of paints and her outdoor easel. Around every corner she finds inspiration for another painting. Versteegen's award-winning oil paintings may be found in many private and public collections throughout the United States and Europe. To see more her paintings visit the

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