

Vista Studios in Columbia, SC, Offers Exhibit Focused on Yearly Mountain Retreat

Vista Studios in Columbia, SC, will present *New Work...The Natural Evolution of Six Artists and a Mountain Retreat*, featuring works by eight SC artists, on view in Gallery 80808, from Feb. 28 through Mar. 11, 2013. A reception will be held on Mar. 1, from 5-9pm. The exhibit will later travel to the Camellia Art Gallery on Hilton Head Island, SC.

For the past eight years the artists Eileen Blyth, Brucie Holler, Louanne LaRoche, Laurie McIntosh, Lynn Parrott and Jan Swanson have spent a week in the mountains of North Carolina creating and sharing their love of art.



LaRoche, Holler, and Parrott maintain studios, in the Bluffton / Hilton Head area of the Lowcountry. McIntosh, Swanson and Blyth are Columbia artists. Friends and supporters of each other's work they all acknowledge their common creative threads of process, discovery, documentation, color theory, and spirituality. The variety and expanse of their work is depicted throughout this exhibit of paintings, drawings and assemblages.

Two of the artists are sisters, Lynn Parrott and Laurie McIntosh. They offer a little history on the development of this group from their perspective. In 2005, the two sisters participated in a class with Pinkney Herbert at the Penland School in Penland, NC. They had such a ball painting together that they decided to try and put a group together on their own, with artists they knew and respected. The first time they put this idea into play was in 2006 in Parrott's garage with Pinkney Herbert as their teacher. The group was mostly all HHI area folks except for McIntosh.

The next time they pulled it together using Brucie Holler's house on the beach. Pinkney was supposed to teach but a family emergency prevented him from coming so they went it alone and discovered they did not need a teacher. They painted; cooked danced, shared ideas, books, music, wine, wisdom and inspiration from morning to night.

Also, they introduced a few new Columbia faces in the crowd. This is when Jan Swanson came on the scene. They were all at this "retreat" with the exception of Eileen Blyth.

The next year they regrouped and moved it to Caesars Head where McIntosh had a house that could sleep a group and Hemlocks Studio was right down the road. (Sue Russell of Cedar Mountain owns a studio/bed and breakfast...Hemlocks Studio) This is when Blyth came into the group. McIntosh had known Blyth for several years and thought she might be a nice addition to the group. The group was still quite fluid at this point but the six of the core group were there.

The group has stayed with the mountain idea. McIntosh sold her house so they have rented several different places to lay their heads, (including staying with Sue Russell) while still using the studio at Hemlocks to create their work. For the past 5 or so years it has been the six of them. Six is a nice number in the studio and through the years their creative spirits have learned how to work with and around each other.

Louanne LaRoche has lived in the Lowcountry since 1977. She is the former owner of the Red Piano Galleries. Her art reflects a significant sense of community, and her response to these connections, as they are being lost, displaced, or diminished. She continues to experiment exploring the relationships of color, texture, and creating new perspectives and nuances of feeling. Her work has been collected and exhibited internationally.



Work by Louanne LaRoche

LaRoche offers the following statement "There is a communion of spirit between an intimate glance towards a gesture, event or place and the process of documenting this relationship on paper or canvas."

"This yearly mountain retreat is a place for our creative confluence. Our time together provides bounty for each...fueling the flow of our artwork and constancy to friendships."

Brucie Holler, a South Carolina native, received a BFA in painting from Florida State University and did graduate work at the Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore. She then moved to Telluride, CO, and worked for seven years teaching and serving as Director of Exhibitions for the Ah Haa School for the Arts, a non-profit art school.



Work by Brucie Holler

Holler has studied with a variety of internationally known painters including Richard Smith, Mario Martinez, and Truman Lowe among others and has shown her work in galleries in Florida, South Carolina and Colorado. She moved back to South Carolina in 1997 where she maintains a studio.

Holler offers the following statement: "As a painter, I am interested in exploring the idea of beauty and my response to life through nature, symbolism and an investigation of the interior landscape. Whether I am working in abstraction or representation, I am interested in creating spaces and moments of contemplation that are inspired by personal experience."

"This retreat has really become about the friendships for me. The work is almost second. My friendship with everyone in the group has become more precious, deeper and very special to me. And the two things...work and friendship - are so intertwined that my mountain work cannot be separated from these friendships. It seems that my work resonates with this love that I feel for everyone. I almost don't want to share the art work publicly because it just means something different."



Work by Lynn Parrott

Lynn Parrott, a native South Carolinian, grew up with an artist mother who encouraged her studies towards an art degree from Queens University and post graduate work at Clemson University. Her studies with renowned artists Charles Reid, Sheila Parsons, Frank Webb, Morgan Samuel Price,

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Michael Karas, Michael Cresco, Carol Anthony, Gregory Botts and Pinkney Herbert has helped develop her style.

The landscapes of the South Carolina Lowcountry and the North Carolina Mountains provide the inspiration for her dynamic, multilayered and richly colored paintings.

Parrott says, "My life has been a long love affair with the water - the ocean, the moon, the tides and the marshes. To live with the glory and mystery of the moon, the sun and the tides - is delicious, is magic, and is not to be taken for granted - ever!"

"I treasure this retreat; it is a gift of time to renew friendships - to renew myself."



Work by Laurie Brownell McIntosh

Laurie Brownell McIntosh received a BA in Fine Art from the University of South Carolina. She furthered her studies at the Center for Creative Imaging, Camden, ME, (1994); Penland School of Crafts (2000, 2003, 2007 & 2012); and at the Anderson Ranch (2005). Since 1982, McIntosh has been a professional graphic designer in advertising and marketing and since 1989 has been the Creative Director of Brownell McIntosh Graphic Design, Inc.

Since 2007, McIntosh has been a Board Member of the SC Governor's School for the Arts Foundation (Communications and Marketing Chair) and from 2012 to the present has been a Resident Artist of Vista Studios in Columbia. McIntosh is also the author of *All the In Between: My Story of Agnes* published by Muddy Ford Press.

"I work in oils the majority of the time, but since it is the process that interests me more, the mediums can change," says McIntosh adding, "I am drawn to the process of creating... drawn to what happens when you allow your every day self to leave the room and let that elusive creative hand step in and work... drawn to that magic of the moment when the everyday self steps back in and is proud of the outcome of the process... drawn to the charm of someone else liking your work. It's the last of these that endangers the truth within the process and must be monitored at all times."



Work by Jan Swanson

Jan Swanson is a mid-century self-taught artist from Asheville, NC, working mostly in oils, but also doing acrylic/collage paintings with found objects and papers. Her work is usually colorful; sometimes humorous. She is a graduate of Clemson University

and has attended classes at the University of South Carolina as well as Penland School of Crafts, Anderson Ranch and Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts.

Swanson offers the following statement: "My paintings usually depict things that aren't quite right. Many times there will be objects falling off of tables, or crooked chairs and windows. The spots may fall off a woman's dress. Some of my recent paintings have cigarettes in them. I don't feel right about a painting unless there is something amiss."

"I am the most recent addition to the Hemlocks' Retreat group having started in 2004? After a trip to San Miguel with two of the group's members, Laurie McIntosh and Lynn Parrott, I guess I was somewhat indoctrinated into the circle. I also showed everyone's work at the Bus Stop Gallery in Columbia. The group has given me so much confidence and enabled me to show my work at Camellia in Hilton Head. Each member is always willing to provide constructive criticism and I always look forward to our retreats. They are one of the highlights of my life!" adds Swanson.



Work by Eileen Blyth

Eileen Blyth attended the College of Charleston and the University of South Carolina, where she received a BA in Studio Art and Graphic Design.

"Words cannot express how important this time is... That is why I paint," explains

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IN COLUMBIA'S VISTA

VISTA studios
gallery 80808

featuring artists

Ethel Brody
Stephen Chesley
Heidi Darr-Hope
Jeff Donovan
Pat Gilmartin
Robert Kennedy
Susan Lenz
Sharon C. Licata
Laurie McIntosh
Michel McNinch
Kirkland Smith
Laura Spong
David Yaghjian

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upcoming exhibitions

Through February 5, 2013
Laura Spong: *Swinging on a High Note*
& Katie Walker: *Words I Like*

February 7 - 12, 2013
Uptown Girls

February 14 - 19, 2013
Columbia Ringling School Graduates

February 28 - March 12, 2013
An Exhibition of the Hemlock Retreat Artists