

Greenville County Museum of Arts in Greenville, SC, Offers Works by Thomas Sills and African-American Masters

The Greenville County Museum of Arts in Greenville, SC, is presenting two exhibitions, including: *Thomas Sills: Man of Color* and *Soul Deep: African-American Masterworks*.

Born to North Carolina sharecroppers in 1914, Thomas Sills took a circuitous path to achieve success as an artist. When he was only 11, he traveled by train from Raleigh to Harlem, where he stayed with an older brother. Over the years he worked a number of odd jobs, including theater doorman, church custodian, stevedore, and liquor deliveryman.

It was in a Greenwich Village liquor store that Sills met the artist Jeanne Reynal. The two married, and Reynal introduced Sills to her circle of friends and colleagues, who included the artists Elaine and Willem de Kooning, David Hare, Mark Rothko, and critic Harold Rosenberg. An avid collector as well as artist, Reynal acquired works by Max Ernst, the de Koonings, Marcel duChamp, and a number of others. As Sills remarked, "With paintings and artists all around me, it didn't take very long before I got stirred up to doing my own work. . . . I wanted to go my own way from the very beginning."

Sills' first solo exhibition was held at Betty Parsons Gallery in May 1955. He experimented with color and form his entire career, moving from the action painting of Abstract Expressionism to vibrant Color Field painting with energetic palettes and juxtapositions.

Reluctant to be categorized as a "Black artist," Sills commented, "If somebody told me that I had to paint this way or that I had to do that . . . I wouldn't want it. . . . You like it or you don't like it, but I am doing what I want."

Sills worked and exhibited for almost 30 years. His final solo exhibition was in 1980. His work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, all New York; along with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Green-

ville County Museum of Art.

Soul Deep: African-American Masterworks features 38 works by 20 artists. Ranging from a rare 1840 poem jar by enslaved potter David Drake (c. 1800 to c. 1870) to an evocative 2020 abstract painting by Frank Wimberley (born 1926), *Soul Deep* spans 180 years of American history.

A recently discovered landscape by Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859-1937) depicts Whitewater Falls near Cashiers—one of only four paintings known to exist from the artist's brief time in North Carolina. The exhibition also includes multiple examples by three artists of the Charleston Renaissance era: William H. Johnson (1901-1970); husband-and-wife team Edwin (1882-1931) and Elise (1891-1970) Harleston; and Joseph Delaney (1904-1991).

Merton Simpson (1928-2013), Philip Simmons (1912-2009), and Leo Twiggs (born 1934) attest to the significant contributions that artists of the Palmetto State have made to the history of 20th century American art and design.

Post-World War II non-objective painting is reflected in works by Beauford Delaney (1901-1979); Hale Woodruff (1900-1980); and Frank Wimberley. A lighter, but no less powerful, touch is embodied in the lyrical organic forms of Gloucester C. Coxe (1907-1999) and the brilliant Color Field paintings by Thomas Sills (1914-2000).

Self-taught artists Ulysses Davis (1914-1990) and Winfred Rembert (1945-2021) testify to the biographical foundation of meaningful artistic expression.

The realist tradition informs iconic examples by two of America's finest practitioners, Hughie Lee-Smith (1915-1999) and John Wilson (1922-2015) whose monumental bronze head of Martin Luther King, Jr. captures the dignity and strength of the civil rights leader.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 864/271-7570 or visit (www.gcma.org).

Greenville Center for Creative Arts in Greenville, SC, Offers Exhibit Focused on Local Women

Greenville Center for Creative Arts in Greenville, SC, will present the exhibit, *City of Women*, to spotlight the impact of women in Greenville, on view in the Center's Community Gallery, from Mar. 4 through Apr. 27, 2022. A reception will be held on Mar. 4, from 6-9pm.

City of Women, an initiative that aims to advance the role of women in our community and businesses, will launch in Greenville with a juried exhibition at Greenville Center for Creative Arts (GCCA). The initiative's community-based mission is to celebrate the legacy of impactful women who have played a significant role in making Greenville the vibrant community it is today.



Work by Craig Ragsdale, "Ruth Ann Butler"

More than 50 Upstate artists submitted work in a variety of mediums through an open submission process that highlights historical and contemporary women who



Work by Diana Farfan, "Lintheads"

have made a significant impact in the Greenville community. Areas of recognition include healthcare and well-being, education, economic opportunity, science and technology, civic engagement, and arts and culture. The juror for the exhibition is Jonell Logan, Creative Director of the McColl Center for Art + Innovation in Charlotte, NC. This exhibition is sponsored by Wyche, P.A.

Greenville Center for Creative Arts is a non-profit organization that aims to enrich the cultural fabric of the community through visual arts promotion, education,

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and inspiration.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call 864/735-

3948 or visit (www.artcentergreenville.org).

Clemson University in Clemson, SC, Features Works by Anderson Wrangle

Clemson University in Clemson, SC, is presenting *Outer Banks*, featuring works by Associate Professor in Photography Anderson Wrangle, on view in the Brooks Center Lobby, through Apr. 29, 2022.

The artworks in this exhibition showcase Wrangle's collection of large-scale photos highlighting the Outer Banks in North Carolina.

Wrangle is from Houston, TX. He received his BA in English and Studio Art from the University of the South and his MFA from the University of Houston. He lived in Prague, Portland, New York, Colorado and Houston before Clemson.

Wrangle is a 2021-2023 Creativity Professor in the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities. He was a 2019 Hambridge Center Resident. He has multiple research grants, including a 2021 CAAH Materials Grant, a 2018 FRDP Grant, a 2014 CAAH Faculty Research Grant, a 2012 Clemson CAAH Seed Grant, 2015, 2013 and 2012 Clemson Center of Visual Arts Faculty Research Grants, and a 2010 Clemson University Research Grant.

His work is in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro/Coleção Joaquim Paiva, the Galerie hlavního města Prahy (GHMP), Prague, Czech Republic, and many private collections.

Wrangle offered the following artist's statement, "My mother and I drove the length of the Outer Banks when I was fifteen. I remember standing on the sliver of white sand amidst susurrating grass, staring out at the blue sea and sky. It was serene and difficult to take in. The Outer Banks of North Carolina is a place at an extreme limit of geographic possibility, threatened by rising seas due to climate change and hampered in its natural capacity for regrowth by development. This environment is almost not there, and these photographs describe these fragile barrier islands."

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call 864/656-7951 or visit (www.clemson.edu/brooks).

Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, Features Works by Robyn Crawford

Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, will present *Elemental Journeys: A Mixed Media Collection of Energy, Light, Crystals and Color*, featuring works by North Carolina artist Robyn Crawford, on view in Gallery II, from Mar. 8 through Apr. 2, 2022. A reception will be held on Mar. 17, from 6-9pm.

Crawford wants those attending her latest exhibition to, "feel the energy of each piece and travel through the elements of the Earth, starting with water and air and transitioning to fire and earth."

"We are all connected to everyone and everything," says Crawford, who lives in Hendersonville, NC, with her two children. "I have always been inspired by nature, life cycles, patterns, color and music. It occurred to me that I was actually using all the elements in the creation of these works and began to intentionally work though having all the elements represented."



Work by Robyn Crawford

of each piece with a flame releases air bubbles. This gives each work a smooth surface as well as allowing some less dense pigments to rise to the top layer and 'pop' into wonderful bursts of color."

The exhibition is a body of work that is "bright, light, colorful and full of spirit," Crawford says. "There are playful patterns and tiny details as a result of the process used. Getting up close and viewing these microcosms is mesmerizing. I would like it to instill a sense of connection. A connection to the earth, a connection to spirit and a connection to each other." She began creating the works while in quarantine during the spring of 2020 and continued through the present.

The 20 pieces in the exhibition will be offered for sale, with prices ranging from \$140 to \$1,200.

Born in Lowell, Massachusetts, in addition to being a mixed media artist, Crawford is a photographer, a teacher and a creativity coach. She attended Rochester Institute of Technology for photography/film/animation. She has gone down many other paths, such as ceramics, silversmithing, hot glass, printing, mosaic and other media. Her work has been exhibited across the Carolinas. Crawford loves working with new materials and finds that it generates new ideas and opens doors to endless possibilities.

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).



Work by Robyn Crawford

Crawford says *Elemental Journeys* is an interpretation of Earth's elements and the flow of energy. "Using bright, bold colors with upbeat music as a backdrop, the paint is allowed to dance through planned rhythmic patterns and random surprises," she explains. "It is a collaboration between energy, spirit and the vibration of light and color. All the elements are used to bring these pieces to life."

"Water – the thinning of paints and liquids to different consistencies and weights helps control the way things flow, combine and connect," she continues. "Air – breath, straws and a blow dryer create the shift of where and how the fluid colors will flow while still controlling composition. Earth – mixing in various pigments, metallic pulvers, mica flakes and actual crystals help achieve the reflection of light and sparkle. Fire – torching the surface

Check us out at (www.carolinaarts.com) or e-mail to (info@carolinaarts.com)