

Upstairs Artspace in Tryon, NC

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up as Alice for Halloween.

"She was a vision that stepped out of my story book," Walker says, "and it has tumbled around in my mind for years looking for a creative outlet through my work as an artist."

Visitors to the show are invited down the rabbit hole, to drink the potion, to shrink

in size and grow too big, and to join the tea party. Meet the Mad Hatter, the Queen of Hearts, the March Hare and many more familiar characters.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the gallery at 828/859-2828 or visit (UpstairsArtspace.org).

Penland School of Crafts in Penland, NC, Offers New Exhibits

The Penland School of Crafts in Penland, NC, is presenting several new exhibits including: *Between Dreams and Reality: Bespoke Footwear*, curated by Penland instructor and shoemaker Amara Hark Weber, on view in the John & Robyn Horn Exhibition Gallery, through May 25, 2024, and in the Focus Gallery is the exhibit *being here. seeing things*, featuring glass sculpture by Granite Calimpong and paintings by Kathrine Toler, on view through Apr. 13, 2024.

Although most shoes today are made in factories, making shoes by hand is a complex craft with a long history. The exhibition of the year is a rare glimpse at what this tradition looks like in the twenty-first century. *Between Dreams and Reality: Bespoke Footwear* presents custom-made shoes and boots from thirteen contemporary makers who are working with the highest levels of vision and skill.

"*Bespoke Footwear* is an optical illusion of simplicity," explains Weber. "In reality, every dimension is made of at least three layers of leather. Knowledge of anatomy and human kinetic motion as well as mastery of leather working is necessary to work in this trade. There are no longer schools, so the craft is learned by spending time in the workshops of elders and by trial and painful error."



Works by Lisa Sorrell

Included in the exhibition are a number of pairs of elaborately decorated cowboy boots: one pair looks like it has been tattooed, another flies the American flag, and several are covered with beautiful appliqué flowers. Along with the boots are fancy heels covered in snakeskin, several pairs of high-style dress shoes, and even a carefully-crafted pair of work boots. One pair of black men's shoes is decorated with gold letters that cheekily tell the wearer, "The most interesting thing about you is me."

Along with the astonishing display

Toe River Arts Council in Spruce Pine, NC, Features Works by Lori Johnson

The Toe River Arts Council in Spruce Pine, NC, will present *Lori Johnson: A Nearly Concealed Heart*, on view in the Owen Gallery, from Apr. 26 through June 1, 2024. A reception will be held on Apr. 26, from 5-7pm.

"This body of work explores labor and its effects on relationships, self-esteem, and one's ability to grieve with a focus on the confident beauty that would have been expressed if loving care was given in place of exploitation," says Johnson. "Born in the coal fields of West Virginia, I reference my personal history as well as documentation from The Farm Security Administration and the National Child Labor Committee to compose new mixed media drawings to

reflect on the generational ramifications of exploitative labor. The effort of this work is focused on healing and tending to things neglected or harmed in the past. This exhibit will include pieces composed around child labor, the family, and our relationships with animals and the immediate environment."

Johnson received a BA in Drawing at the University of North Carolina, Asheville, with Cum Laude and Distinction in Art. She received a MFA in Drawing from Clemson University, Clemson, SC..

Johnson is a 2018 and 2020 recipient of The Elizabeth Greenshields Grant and currently lives in Bakersville, NC, where she is a Teaching Artist in the Schools at Penland

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School of Craft.

Toe River Arts improves the quality of life in the Toe River Valley by connecting artists, the arts, and communities.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Council at 828/682-7215 or visit (www.toeriverarts.org).

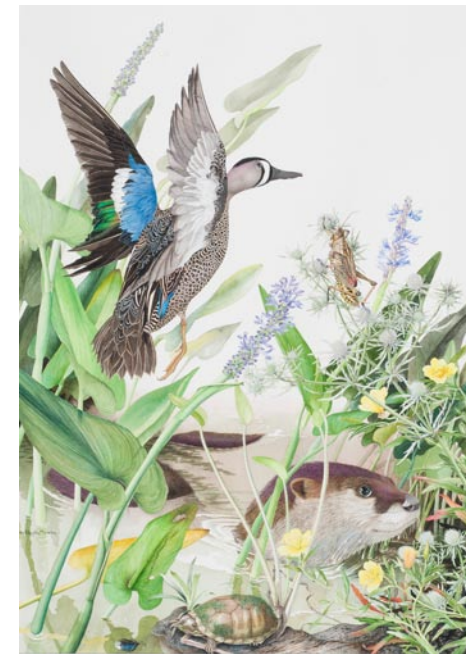
Asheville Art Museum in Asheville, NC, Offers Works by Sallie Middleton

The Asheville Art Museum in Asheville, NC, is presenting Asheville's *Naturalist: Watercolors by Sallie Middleton*, on view in the Blossman Companies Education Gallery, through June 10, 2024.

Sallie Ellington Middleton (1926–2009) has long been considered one of the most gifted botanical painters. She possessed a remarkable eye for detail, a skilled hand to record what she saw, and a keen imagination to shape her enchanted images. Watercolor was the perfect medium for Middleton, as it allowed her to carry her paints on forays into the woods, and it made for a more natural and less messy process than oil paint.

Though she was an extremely accomplished painter, Middleton had very little formal training in art. Her uncle, the architect Douglas Ellington, was a noted draughtsman and built several important buildings, including the Asheville City Hall. Middleton spent her childhood living with her uncle at Chunn's Cove, a home that Ellington built using eclectic building materials from several of his architectural projects in Asheville. She and her sister Martha grew up in this remarkable setting, having ample time to explore the valley and hillsides around the house. Though she briefly lived in Charleston, SC, and spent a few years in Biltmore Forest, Middleton spent most of her life living in the same home she had grown up in, and in the forests surrounding Chunn's Cove.

Middleton's detailed watercolors required months, and sometimes years to complete. She would work from life, painting the same specimen day after day until it grew too big for her composition. She would then put her painting aside until the following season, when she would find a similar plant or animal at the same stage of growth and pick up where she left off. Middleton said, "I have to work quickly. When you're working so intimately with models, you can see their colors changing



Sallie Middleton, "Otter & Teal", circa 1970-1985, watercolor on paper. Gift of Mikell Middleton Howington, 2018.53.04

almost daily."

When asked about her technique, Middleton called her process "brush drawing" because she was able to render sharp details in watercolor. She had brushes in all sizes, including some with just a single hair - allowing her to make precise lines and load her brush with deeply colored pigment. In many of her compositions, she included a single bluebird feather, which acted as a form of signature and taught her viewers to look closely at her work, just as she looked at the natural world. In this exhibition, how many blue feathers can you find?

Sallie Middleton quotes are from *The Magical Realm of Sallie Middleton*, text by Celestin Sibley, 1980, Oxmoor House, Inc.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 828/253-3227 or visit (www.ashevilleart.org).

Asheville Art Museum in Asheville, NC, Features Works From the John and Robyn Horn Collection

The Asheville Art Museum in Asheville, NC, is presenting *Counter/Balance: Gifts from John and Robyn Horn*, on view in the Museum's Debra McClinton Gallery, through July 29, 2024.

The exhibition presents important examples of contemporary American craft, including woodworking, metalsmithing, fiber and pottery by renowned American artists Albert Paley, Hoss Haley, Toshiko Takaezu, Stoney Lamar, Mary Merkel-Hess, Dorothy Gill Barnes, Kay Sekimachi, Bob Stockdale, and many others.

This exhibition explores the traditional craft art-making process, a human hand working with technology to transform raw materials into a new form, containing a fundamental tension between the mechanized and improvisational to achieve

qualities of asymmetry and balance or forms with richly textured surfaces. Many of the objects gifted from the Horns' collection - whether made from glass, clay, metal, fiber, or wood - highlight this tension. The dialogue between forms fashioned in a studio and shapes implicit in nature does not necessarily create conflict but rather a counterbalance, implying a desire for human interaction and unity with the beauty found in nature.

This exhibition is organized by the Asheville Art Museum and curated by Carla Funk, assistant curator.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 828/253-3227 or visit (www.ashevilleart.org).

Southern Highland Craft Guild in Asheville, NC, Offers Glass, Metal, and Clay Day - Apr. 6, 2024

The Southern Highland Craft Guild in Asheville, NC, will present Glass, Metal, and Clay Day, on Apr. 6, from 10am to 4pm, in the Folk Art Center's Auditorium, located off the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The Southern Highland Craft Guild's Educational Event Series begins with Glass, Metal, and Clay Day, a free educational event for the Asheville community.

Each year as Spring rolls around, members of the Southern Highland Craft Guild

launch their Educational Events programming at the Folk Art Center with Glass & Metal Day on the first Saturday of April. This year, the event will be combined with the annual Summer event, Clay Day, incorporating clay craft-making techniques. As the nation's second oldest craft organization, the Guild brings awareness to the process of handmade craft through their free and educational events for the

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