

# Lowcountry Artists, Ltd. in Charleston, SC, Features Works by Robert Clair & Stephen Hazard

Lowcountry Artists, Ltd. in Charleston, SC, will present the exhibit, *The Power of Glass*, featuring works by Robert Clair and Stephen Hazard, on view from May 28 through June 11, 2011. In this, perhaps the largest showing of art glass ever to be seen in the area, viewers may expect to see a monumental display of many colored, blown pieces as well as fused and etched pieces, which will push the envelope as far as furniture with glass panels.

Art and nature are two passions that have consumed Robert Clair since an early age. Though he has never received any formal art training, he has sought out and created opportunities to learn from established artists and master craftsmen in the US and abroad. Clair's vision arises from his upbringing, awash in the wonders of life in the South Carolina Lowcountry and the frequent adventure that growing up there provides.



Works by Robert Clair

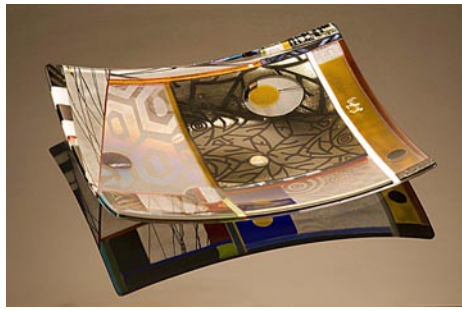
Clair's primary early work was in painting and illustration. After extensive travel and artistic exploration around the world, he worked with master potters and kiln builders in Japan, opening his own studio there in 2003. Upon returning home in 2005, he was presented with the opportunity to breathe new life into his vision as he met a local glass artist with a slot open in his hot shop.

For Clair glass blowing strikes a balance between his own waterborne origins and the volcanic nature of wood-fire ceramic work, between the colors of his early acrylic paintings and the subtle decorative traditions of Japanese ceramics, between the blue-green seas that bore him to the adventures of his youth and the red orange fire that while burning hot, glows softly in his heart.

Stone and glass materials and their beauty are created by the earth in periods of time that defy human life-spans. Mimicking the processes that occur in the core of the earth, the artist is able to create the materials and manipulate them into desirable forms in a much shorter period of time. Beauty is born from the heat and pressure of the glass furnace. Within the context of the work, each glass blowing session is an opportunity to dance with gravity to a 45 minute composition and produce a three dimensional visual representation of that process.

This show is the product of four years of working as an assistant in the hot shop of his teacher and glass blowing mentor, Herman Leonhardt, being paid in hot, clear glass and studio time. "Over the years of blowing and accumulating glass-work, I have come to realize the power of the pieces as a group, the richness of the colors and forms combined and in proximity," says Clair. "Together they have not only beauty but a resonance and a living

presence."



Work by Stephen Hazard

Steve Hazard's art draws upon Africa's rich and diverse artistic traditions from the past, but thrusts the viewer in the present and the future. From patch work quilts of the South, West African sculpture and ceremonial masks to the complex patterns of multi-cultural textiles, Hazard creates iconic art works that captivate the viewer and transports him to sacred, ancient and/or lost cultures, while allowing the viewer to possess a bit of history in functional contemporary glass art. He has established a distinctive style at the intersection of art and design using cubistic abstracts from traditional and contemporary world art to create functional objects, jewelry, sculpture, wall pieces and furniture. Hazard's dense abstract compositions with overlapping graphics reflect his continuing exploration of geometric patterns and color harmonies seen in art from many cultures.

Since 2005, Hazard has been creating works in fused glass by piecing together original abstract compositions from colorful fragments individually cut, shaped, and sandblasted with geometric patterns. Next, the pieces are kiln-fired; first to fuse the glass together into panels, and then fired again to shape the vessel.

With blown glass, all design decisions about a piece must be completed and executed in a matter of minutes before the glass cools and cracks from thermal shock. However, the design work for fused glass is all done cold, before the glass is fired in the kiln. Time used during the design phase can take minutes, hours, or days if necessary. As a fused glass artist, Hazard can exercise a wide variety of design options and combinations in the creation of each piece. He now has the option to make furniture using clear glass and colorful fused glass, alone or in combination. This has led to an exploration of metal working, with a full metal shop - using welders, plasma cutters, grinders, and polishing tools. Works created for this show include etched crystal; kiln formed and etched glass, fused glass objects, wall pieces and sculptures, tables with fused tops and etched clear glass tops.

Hazard is constantly refining his techniques, processes and tools to develop greater mastery and increase his skills for manipulation of glass and metal. In this way he has greater freedom to create new forms and structures. In recognition of his exceptional work as a designer, Hazard has been commissioned to create art works in glass for US Presidents Bush, Clinton, and Obama, as well as numerous other dignitaries and personalities.

For further information check our SC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 843/577-9295 or visit ([www.lowcountryartists.com](http://www.lowcountryartists.com)).

# SCOOP Studios in Charleston, SC, Features Works by Lisa Shimko

SCOOP Studios Contemporary Art Gallery in Charleston, SC, will present the exhibit, *Stop Making Fence*, featuring works by local artist Lisa Shimko, on view from May 6 - 27, 2011. An opening reception will be held on May 6, from 5-8pm and a closing reception will be held on May 27, from 5-8pm.

The exhibit is a collection of self-described absurdity and unedited im-

agery guided by the irrational nature of daydreaming. Shimko, a local favorite, says, "This series is a commencement of embracing the fact that a lot of life doesn't make sense and art can be a place to celebrate it instead of constricting it."

Shimko's art featured in *Stop Making Fence* is seen as a departure from her previous collection, and exhibits the

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new direction she has taken in the last year. The artist explores the metaphorical connotations associated with fences, and attempts to break down and move past their barriers while acknowledging them at the same time. Shimko's ever evolving perspective asks the viewers to repel the norm, and to approach the unfiltered work. A clever word savvy friend of the artist said upon seeing the pieces that, "absurdity shocks you into freedom," which has become the mantra of Shimko.

Shimko enjoyed her childhood in York County, PA, where she spent most of her time collecting rocks and exploring the terrain of forests and farms. Forms, colors, and textures of nature supplied hours of entertainment and therefore was a foundation of her artistic aesthetic. A simple graphic nature and bold colors found in her paintings harken back to the Pennsylvania German folk art found in Shimko's everyday life as a child.

Shimko received a BFA in Painting from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia where she began showing her artwork on a regular basis. She has called Charleston home for the past five years. The southern coastal culture and terrain blends with her past to assemble her ever evolving perspective. Shimko has been the featured artist for the Charleston Farm-



Work by Lisa Shimko

ers Market and has shown her work in numerous group shows while her altruistic nature often aids local non-profits such as the Jazz Artists of Charleston, The Sofia Institute, The South Carolina Aquarium and Planned Parenthood.

For further information check our SC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 843/577-3292 or visit ([www.scoopcontemporary.com](http://www.scoopcontemporary.com)).

# Sculpture in the South Takes Place in Summerville, SC, May 7-15, 2011

The 13th Annual Sculpture in the South event takes place in Summerville, SC, from May 7 - 15, 2011. The sculpture show and sale will take place again in Azalea Park, Saturday, May 14, 10am-6pm and Sunday, May 15, 10am-5pm.



Work by Alex Palkovich

Celebrating the arts through sculpture has become the trademark of Sculpture in the South. For more than twelve years, the Sculpture in the South Show and Sale has received recognition as one of South Carolina's premier outdoor arts events and is fast being hailed nationally. Held in beautiful Azalea Park, this event is fueled with tradition and layered with exceptional world-class sculpture.

This is a one-of-a-kind event offering collectors and first time art enthusiasts a chance to mingle and chat with thirty-five leading fine art sculptors, representing a wide range of original artworks. All artwork is available for purchase with proceeds benefiting Summerville's Permanent Public Sculpture Program. We are pleased that 20 pieces of bronze sculpture have been purchased and installed since 1999 through the efforts of this organization.

With tremendous success in 2010, Arts Education Week returns May 7-13. The week brings together all the arts under one umbrella and offers workshops and lectures for all ages. Regionally and internationally known instructors will be based in Summerville for the week. Workshops vary in cost and each participant receives a Show & Sale ticket. After-school workshops are also available. An exciting Lecture Series is free to the public. For

complete details visit

(<http://www.sculptureinthesouth.com/>)

A "Meet the Sculptors Reception" will take place on Friday, May 13, 2011, from 7-10pm.

Patrons, Sponsors and Sustainers have the opportunity to personally meet the sculptors and take a sneak peek at newly released sculptures before the general public. A \$150 Patron Package for two includes: Sculptors Reception, Early Bird Preview, Weekend Passes and Membership. For more information on becoming a Patron, Sponsor or Sustainer call 843/851-7800.



Work by Sharon Collings Licata

Daily admission to the Sculpture in the South Show and Sale is \$5. A Weekend Pass is available for \$7. There is free admission for students of any age with adult admission.

Sculpture in the South Show and Sale will take place in Azalea Park, at the corner of South Main St. (Hwy. 17A) and West Fifth Street South in Summerville.



Sharon Collings Licata working

Make your plans to experience the charm and hospitality of Summerville, SC - The Gateway to Charleston! Stop by the Greater Summerville Dorchester County Chamber of Commerce at 402 N. Main Street and pick up a free Hands On Guide to Summerville's Permanent Public Sculpture and take a wonderful leisurely tour of our collection.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings or visit (<http://www.sculptureinthesouth.com/>)

