

NC Commercial Galleries

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Also, featuring other multicultural artists and mixed media artwork throughout the year. Hours: Fri.-Sat., 1-5pm or by appt. Contact: 336/722-0510.

Patina, 217 W. 6th St., Winston-Salem. **Ongoing** - Featuring a unique shop with art by local potters, craftspeople, and painters. Patina also carries unique clothing, gifts, home accessories and gift baskets. Hours: Tue.-Sat., 10am-6pm. Contact: 336/725-6395 or e-mail at (patinas-tore@aol.com).

The Other Half, 560 North Trade St., Winston Salem. **Ongoing** - Featuring works by Mary Ann Zotto, Chris Teague, Nic Bernard, Dodie Campbell, Jack Dent, Celeste Chapman-Dent, Ron Propst, Jason Probst, Kathy Townsend and Mike Cowan. Hours: Tue.-Sat., 11am-5pm or by appt. Contact: 336/407-5494 or e-mail at (peeps321@earthlink.net).

Village Smith Galleries/VSG Fine Arts, 119 Reynolda Village, near Reynolda House Museum of Art, Winston-Salem. **Ongoing** - American and European watercolors, oils, antique engravings and contemporary works by Gorg, McKnight, Boulanger, Alvar, Nicole Monteran, Stephen White and other gallery artists. National and regional crafts are represented in the fields of ceramic and glass. Hours: Mon.-Sat., 10am-5pm. Contact: 336/723-3653.

Winterfire Craft Gallery, 145 Stratford Road, Winston-Salem. **Ongoing** - Featuring pottery by Hank Goodman as well as hand-crafted jewelry, metal sculpture, hand-thrown pottery, art glass, and calligraphy prints. Hours: Mon.-Fri., 10am-6pm; Sat., 10am-5pm & Sun., 11am-5pm. Contact: 336/748-0145.

Editorial Commentary

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The obvious questions would be: are they going to advertise these "Cultural Districts" to the traveling public, are they going to give these areas special funding, are they going to print up a brochure showing where they are in South Carolina, will the Highway Department mark the area with special "brown" signs, or will they even get a plaque?

None of that matters for as soon as these areas become points of destinations - landlords will raise their rents so high to move them out for other high paying renters who want to be in this new hot district.

It's an age old problem for artists and people in the art biz - they move into an area unpopular that has cheap rents, the area starts to attract visitors, landlords start to increase rents for developers who are attracted to trendy areas - artists are pushed out of the area they helped create.

What the Arts Commission should be spending their time doing is getting small towns and cities to declare "special art rent areas" where the artists who move into a less than desirable area get to keep that same rent for up to 20 years, no matter how hot the area becomes because they are there.

Some people would argue that artists should buy the buildings they move into so they don't have to worry about rents being raised (these same folks probably think property taxes don't factor into these decisions). And why would you move an art studio or gallery into a not-so-hot area anyway? Because you can't afford to be in the regular business district.

These city and town leaders would also have to make tax breaks and incentives for

these landlords too so they don't lose out by keeping the rent low.

So instead of giving the artists and art biz folks meaningless titles, give them something that really matters - rent stability.

Here's a list of the current cities and town who have a "Cultural Districts" in SC: Rock Hill, Lancaster, Spartanburg, Congaree Vista, Beaufort, and Bluffton.

Eventually like Verner Awards, everyone will have one. You just have to wait your turn.

Of course everything we look at here at Carolina Arts is focused on the visual arts and what I see in this list is what's not on it - Charleston. I can take just one street in downtown Charleston - Broad Street - and it has more galleries than any official SC "Cultural District".

I doubt anyone in Charleston is rushing to become an official SC "Cultural District" but downtown Charleston is the textbook definition of a cultural district. And, it's the least people visiting from New York, Chicago, LA, or Dallas would expect for anyone to call it a cultural district - much less people visiting from London, Paris, or Rome. If I opened a gallery in Bonneau tomorrow it would be a cultural district in that town - all things are relative.

Give artists and people in the art biz rent stability and they'll help an area become more than it was to begin with and in time maybe even a cultural district under the Arts Commission's standards, but just giving them a title is like giving a thirsty child a package of Kool-Aid. What good is it without water?



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