



**Fracture**  
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[PSlade@alumnae.brynmawr.edu](mailto:PSlade@alumnae.brynmawr.edu)

Louise McCallum Halsey 501.650.5090  
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## Gibbes Museum of Art

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of Hirsch's sculptures on view throughout Charleston. An accompanying cell phone audio tour will also be produced so that art lovers can tour Hirsch's work inside and outside of the museum.

A companion catalog, "Art is a Powerful Language" Willard Hirsch: The Man, The Artist—compiled by Jane Hirsch with photography by Douglas M. Pinkerton and edited by Amy Fluet—is scheduled to be published by Home House Press in September 2012. In conjunction with the Gibbes exhibition, the College of Charleston's Ad-dlestone Library will offer an exhibition of artifacts, photographs, and manuscript materials relating to the artist and his family. The College of Charleston exhibit will be on display on the third floor of the library from Sept. 21 to Dec. 21, 2012. For more information, contact the Addlestone Library at 843/953-5530.

*Willard Hirsch: Charleston's Sculptor* is sponsored by the member auxiliary group Gibbes, etc.

On Oct. 11 and Nov. 15, at 2:30pm, the

Gibbes will offer a Curator-Led Tour, conducted by Sara Arnold, Gibbes Curator of Collections. The tours are free with museum admission.

Established as the Carolina Art Association in 1858, the Gibbes Museum of Art opened its doors to the public in 1905. Located in Charleston's historic district, the Gibbes houses a premier collection of over 10,000 works, principally American with a Charleston or Southern connection, and presents special exhibitions throughout the year. In addition, the museum offers an extensive complement of public programming and educational outreach initiatives that serve the community by stimulating creative expression and improving the region's superb quality of life. Visit highlights of the Gibbes collection on Google Art Project at ([www.googleartproject.com](http://www.googleartproject.com)).

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 843/722-2706 or visit ([www.gibbesmuseum.org](http://www.gibbesmuseum.org)).

Today, African-based faiths honoring black merfolk still thrive, and new communities of color have reestablished and revitalized African water-spirits in their art. Quilting and doll-making traditions have undergone a renaissance. No longer are they considered utilitarian tasks, but are now emerging as works of art. This exhibit demonstrates the revisualization of African mermaid myths. Curator Cookie Washington states, "Each piece is a storyteller, using color, texture, form and embellishment to express a narrative."

*Mermaids and Merwomen in Black Folklore* features the works of over fifty of the country's premiere African-American fiber artists including internationally known artists Dr. Edward Bostic, Donna Chambers, Marion Coleman, Arianne King Comer, Michael Cummings, Dr. Deborah Grayson, Dr. Myra Brown Green, Dr. Kim

Hall, and Patricia Montgomery. These artists come together to weave a journey of color and inspiration and to tell the tales of these legendary merfolk.

An accompanying catalogue, *Mermaids: In Vision and Verse*, invites you to celebrate the relationship between fine craft and poetic verse. Making a splash in verse are poet and quilter Jacqueline Johnson, Affrilachian Poet and Cave Canem Fellow; spoken-word poet and musician Kurtis Lamkin; filmmaker and poet Bianca Spriggs; Akua Lezli Hope; Poet Laureate of South Carolina Marjory Heath Wentworth, and more.

Special thanks to *The Liberator Magazine* and YWCA for their support of this exhibit.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the gallery at 843/958-6484 or visit (<http://citygallery-atwaterfrontpark.com/>).

## The Art Institute of Charleston in Charleston, SC, Features Works by DeWayne Sykes and Curtis Stephens

The Art Institute of Charleston in Charleston, SC, will present the exhibit, *DeWayne Sykes and Curtis Stephens - The Art of Pyrography Defined by Heritage*, on view from Sept. 27 through Oct. 30, 2012. The exhibit is a 2012 MOJA Arts Festival Invitational Exhibition.

DeWayne Sykes says, "For me, pyrography is an incredibly spiritual art form. When I create these works of art, I really get into the piece that I am working on and I pour all of my focus into it. The feeling I get is one almost of total transcendence. When reality drifts away, I become the wood and the tool through which the marks of divinity can express themselves into the world. Each work of art that I do is, in itself, inherently powerful in some way. They all have a spiritual dimensions that transcends the simple reality of burnt wood that people see – you would have to look deeper, see the inherent symbol-



Work by DeWayne Sykes

ism, and look into the pieces of each little world I have created.

Curtis Stephens says, "What inspires me to create my style of art is the fact that I am black, and with each unique peace of wood I try to portray our rich and diverse history. Black people are some of the most beautiful and dynamic people on the

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## City of Charleston, SC, Offers Exhibition for MOJA Arts Festival

The City of Charleston, SC, is presenting the exhibit, *Mermaids and Merwoman in Black Folklore*, on view at the City Gallery at Waterfront Park through Oct. 28, 2012, as part of the 2012 MOJA Arts Festival. A reception will be held on Sept. 8, from 5-7pm.

Curated by Torrea "Cookie" Washington, this exhibit showcases fiber art pieces portraying mermaids and merwomen from artists across the United States.

African merfolk first appeared in the centuries old belief of the dwelling of water spirits in Western Africa. With the increasing contact between Europe and Africa of the time, these legends eventually combined with traditional European myths of mer-

maids. Thus, African water-spirits evolved from a representation as half-human, half-creature, to being popularly depicted as a half-fish, half-woman.

Beginning in the 16th century with the arrival of African captives on the Atlantic slave trade, traditions of their beliefs and practices honoring their ancestral water deities were transplanted into the United States. Tall tales of capricious female water spirits evolved into stories describing anything from wrathful sea creatures brewing great storms to harm the Carolina Sea Islands to mermaids acting as obliging "fairy-godmothers."

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