

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

Are We Having Fun Yet?

This Pandemic is starting to act like the Aunt and Uncle who won't leave after Thanksgiving dinner. You're waiting to see the big ball game (what ball game?) and they're still talking about the new wallpaper they put up in their living room. You know the one, where they have clear plastic covers over all their furniture.

Or it's like that movie you keep catching while you're surfing channels. You've seen the middle a hundred times, but never the beginning or the very end, but you just can't pass it by thinking that this time you'll see the end - knowing something will draw your attention away before the end comes.

I used to think my life was kind of boring before the Pandemic came along, but now I just can't remember what I did two days ago. Or was it what I think I'll be doing tomorrow? I can't remember.

Waiting for it to just all go away like a miracle is like waiting to win the lottery, especially when you don't buy any lottery tickets.

Waiting For the Dam to Break

I'm used to waiting - waiting for Christmas, waiting for my team to win the Super Bowl, waiting for a toothache to go away, waiting for a hurricane to turn out to sea, waiting for our monthly deadline, or waiting for someone to answer a question I sent them an e-mail about.

Ever since the Pandemic hit and shut down most of the visual art activities in the Carolinas, I've been waiting for the dam to break on press releases. Every month, about a week before our deadline, the 24th of the month prior to the next month's issue (Sept. 24th for the Oct.

issue), I keep thinking that I'm going to open my e-mail and the flood gates will have opened and the press releases will spill all over me. That hasn't happened yet.

I thought for sure September would be the month, with colleges and universities opening and artist guilds coming off their Summer breaks, but it didn't happen. We're still in the age of indecision. Getting people to wear masks and staying apart from each other should have done the trick, but it hasn't happened yet. It's a simple solution which I thought the art community could handle, as art spaces usually are not that crowded in normal times, except for receptions, and many facilities have switched from receptions to all day drop ins.

Sorry to complain about all the waiting, but you can be sure, when that dam does break, I'll complain about the overload just as well, but I'll have a smile on my face and so will most of you again.

You Get Your Art Stimulus Check in the Mail Yet?

I haven't gotten mine, but I'm sure it's in the mail. Oh right, that might be the problem. It seems someone is fixing the mail by shutting a lot of it down. I guess that's like testing - the less you test, the less you know who has COVID-19, therefore less people must have it. Problem solved. Well, I'm not waiting for any check to help out the arts - at least not the commercial side of the arts, the side that makes money, hires more people, and pays more taxes. When times get tough, we don't get helped, we're asked to help others in the arts out. It doesn't make sense, but we do it anyway. Some things never change. Hang in there, folks.

Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, SC, Offers Group Exhibit

Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, SC, will present *Frontyard, Backyard, Street*, featuring works by Christian Birk, Susan Gregory, Dontré Major, Hirona Matsuda, and Alex Waggoner, on view from Sept. 11 through Oct. 24, 2020.

Redux's group exhibitions present the public with an opportunity to better understand, and engage with, the work of a collaborative unit of artists who strive to produce a cohesive, shared statement.

Frontyard, Backyard, Street, a group exhibition offering reflections on urban Charleston, invites the neighborhood to share five artist's sense of place in their city landscapes. The artists use a variety of media to depict their interpretation of a watermark in time. The surrounding street blocks team with energy and layers of stories as the hustle of the day transpires. Works use this visual language as theme, celebrating the vibrancy, while also considering the inevitable change of our city landscape. The artists consider: What is the character of Charleston? What is it that is precious and what history is necessary to protect and tell?

Christian Birk is a painter currently based in Columbia, SC. Birk earned BAs in Studio Art and Art History from the College of Charleston (2016). Birk has shown work in the Halsey Institute's juried exhibition *Young Contemporaries* (Charleston), with GHOST Art Project (Omaha, NE), and at Redux Contemporary Art Center (Charleston).

Susan Gregory is a multidisciplinary artist who paints in mixed media and encaustic, designs and makes functional pottery under the line ceramic scg and occasionally creates public art installations. She earned a BFA in Painting and Ceramics at Western Carolina University (2000), where she has a piece in their permanent collection. In 2009, Gregory

furthered her art education with Encaustics at the Penland School of Craft (NC). After years in Denver, CO, and San Francisco, CA, she returned to her native state in 2016. The artist has shown locally and nationally with recent exhibitions including ArtFields 2019 and the street sign instrumental public art piece, *XYLOPLAY*, on Upper King Street, Charleston. She is currently developing Studio Union, a collective professional art space for ceramics and mixed media in the Neck of the Charleston peninsula.

Dontré Major, originally from Oklahoma, moved to Charleston in 2015 where he attended and received a BA from the College of Charleston's Studio Art program with a concentration in photography. While attending C of C he was accepted to show in the juried *Young Contemporaries* exhibitions in 2016, 2017, 2018; in the 2018 show he won two awards, the Norton M. Seltzer Prize and The Laura M. Bragg Memorial Award as well as receiving the title Best in Show. After graduation, in 2018, Major was also a part of the Charleston Gaillard Center "Prints in Clay" exhibition which focused on the history of enslaved Africans and the fingerprints they left behind. In 2019 he also showed work in the "Enhancing African Descendant Identity through Community Engagement and DNA Analysis," which was a project in collaboration between The Gullah Society and Redux Contemporary Art Center. In the winter of 2019 he finally had his first solo exhibition at Redux.

Hirona Matsuda creates immersive environments that evoke her felt experience of a specific time or place. She has kept a studio in downtown Charleston since 2006 and has collaborated with a number of local artists and arts organizations in those years. As the city has changed, so has the

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