

Interview With Tom Starland

continued from Page 11

Q: So how's your relationship going with the SC Arts Commission?

A: You are a stupid hobbit. Ask me something that matters.

Q: So what do you think is next?

A: Well, you got me there. I have no idea what change will come next. I just know I won't like it already and probably after years of doing it - what ever it is - won't understand how it works. And, the *Hobbit* was great.

Q: What would you like to see happen in the future?

A: I'd like to be able to tell my computer what to do. That's probably already possible, but either too expensive or too complicated for me. But, that would be nice.

I'd like to get more coverage and advertising from areas we never send anything. I know exhibits are being offered everywhere, we just never hear about them and the people who are presenting them probably think no one wants to hear about them, but I do and I think our readers do too.

Every once in a while I get some free time to do some research on the internet and you'd be amazed at the great exhibits that are taking place around the Carolinas in places that rarely get regional coverage - much less local coverage. I feel sorry for those art spaces that are in the area of coverage of a major city - which has a bunch of non-profit institutions presenting exhibits. Try getting coverage for the little guy when space in most publications for the arts is shrinking and these big institutions are always pleading for local coverage. Oh, it happens when a big name artist is showing in a smaller space - that's news to these papers, but what about the talented local artist? There's no room for them in arts coverage in major publications.

Some would say that's the natural process of survival. The cream will rise to the top, but that's a bunch of bull droppings. I know a lot of talented artists who will never get their spot in the sunlight, and a handful of less than talented artists who always seem to get their 20 minutes of fame - over and over.

And, I could get rich if I just got a dollar for every time someone asked me "why" I was including this or that exhibit. I collect \$5 in my head for every time they ask why I placed that same article next to their article. It's a dog eat dog world out there when it comes to media coverage. And some want it to be an exclusive club with restricted membership.

Q: Yet you say you have to beg for people to send you info.

A: There's the rub. We're still living in a world where print media coverage is still on top. Who knows how long that will last - I don't know, but that space is getting harder to come by. There are a lot of folks out there that don't think an online publication is worth anything.

Don't get me wrong, I know coverage in our paper doesn't compare to a local gallery space or artist getting coverage in a local publication that all their friends and neighbors will see. That's an exciting occasion, but it also stops at the extent of that publication's coverage - which is limited. An article in our paper has regional coverage which for an artist and gallery has the potential for growing their market. Coverage in our publication might get you a future show in another region of the Carolinas or a visit from a traveler who takes home some works off your gallery's walls.

For folks under 30 - online media and social networking is their way of life, they don't know much of anything else. For folks over 30 - it's all so new and change is coming too fast for many of them. And, for most people the older they

are the more they cling to the old ways. But, more and more older folks are seeing the light and are making the leap into the future and finding an amazing world out there. We're hoping more and more of those folks who say they loved the old *Carolina Arts* will one day find us online and discover we are better than ever and that turning pages on a tablet is easier then re-setting the clock on their old VHS recorder.

But getting back to the subject at hand - we offer a great opportunity for any art space that presents exhibitions to get coverage in our paper. And, for the time being - it's free. All you have to do is get the info to us by deadline. I'd tell these folks all about how they can get the info about doing that on our website at (www.carolinaarts.com) under the heading "How the Paper Works" - a phrase I've written and spoken a million times, but they're probably not reading this. At least I hope they haven't been reading our paper all this time and are still not sending us info.

Q: What else do you hope for in the future?

A: Beside computers that do the work when you tell them what to do and for people to promote their exhibits in *Carolina Arts*? Well, how about *Star Trek* style transporters, and non-fattening, vitamin enriched, ice cream? I'm ready for that kind of change - where's that?

Oh, I've got one. I wish someone, preferably Apple, would come up with something that replaces Facebook. If Apple does it I hope it works better then them trying to replace Google maps.

Q: Well, I was thinking more about the visual arts.

A: Do I get three wishes - that kind of thing?

Well, I wish more people would buy art and buy it at galleries, art fairs, artists' studio tours, and even online and say they did it because of *Carolina Arts*.

I wish Americans would realize that funding for the arts is like the government funding other industries - like corporate farmers, energy companies, and the defense industry. Stop using the arts as a political whipping post. And, the arts should stop wasting some of the money they get from the public by giving the money to artists who insult the public.

And, I guess my third wish would be that I wish the SC Arts Commission and *Carolina Arts* were BFFs.

Q: The SC Arts Commission keep popping up. What's that about.

A: It's about me pulling your chain and making people read on hoping I'm going to drop a bomb on them, but I'm not. Like a lot of folks my age, my Momma told me that if I couldn't say anything nice about someone - don't say anything at all. I don't really want to be BFFs with them, they have enough of them already.

Q: Any closing statement?

A: Ya know, here's another change. So much that I've talked about in these three interviews has stayed the same that there's no reason to go over them again and again. But, here's an answer to a question a lot of folks have asked me.

If I won the lottery tomorrow and they gave me \$300 million in cash take home, the first thing I would do is call my cousin Joyce, who I promised would be my first call, and no, I would not go back to printing *Carolina Arts*. I would definitely spend some money making it a better online publication, but I would not go back to print - ever. This is the future.

And don't call me again for one of these interviews until another six years passes. I want to be surprised as to where we are then.



ARTworks in Beaufort, SC, Features Work by Greg Rawls

The Arts Council of Beaufort, Port Royal, & Sea Islands in Beaufort, SC, is presenting *Reflected Awesomeness: Kiln-Formed Glass by Greg Rawls*, on view through Feb. 28, 2013. A reception will be held on Jan. 25, from 6-8pm.

"Glass is forever," asserts artist Greg Rawls, and that fragile timelessness is part of its awesomeness. "Glass is an eternal medium that has been worked, in one form or another, for millennia. Fused glass art has been found in ancient Egyptian excavations, and was a revered art form," Rawls explains.

For his 21st Century show at ARTworks, Rawls intends to share a new "Sea Glass," installation, a previous version of which placed him in the Top 100 of 1500 world-class artists in ArtPrize, the biggest art competition in the world held in Grand Rapids, MI. "Sea Glass" will appear in ARTworks' gallery bit by bit, just like sea glass pushed on shore by the waves: "Since I can only make two pieces every two days and the total installation will probably have over 50 pieces, this installation will "emerge" during the two month run of the show."

Rawls is working towards a new round of competitions, including ArtPrize 2013 in Michigan, the new ArtFields event in Lake City, SC, and One Spark in Jacksonville FL, both in April. He is creating a 7 foot by 7 foot "Quilt of Humanity" which might also appear at his ARTworks show - a rare preview for collectors and art admirers. The glass quilt will be composed of thirty-six 1' x 1' panels, presenting the awesomeness of the "history of humanity starting with the beginning of time to the future. I am highlighting major events and people that have influenced who and what humanity is today. Some of the things I've learned designing this piece is history tends to repeat itself.



Work by Greg Rawls

Most major events tend to have positive and negative outcomes. Some seemingly small events had a profound impact on humanity," says Rawls.

This awesomeness will occur in the spacious gallery at ARTworks, surrounded by a black box theater, workshops, and artists working in their studios. ARTworks is the community arts center of Beaufort, the coolest arts council in the Carolinas, and applies the many creative tools of The Arts to strengthen artists, and enrich audiences, collectors, and visitors through high quality arts experiences and arts education programs 365 days a year.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the gallery at 843/379-2787 or visit (www.ArtWorksIn-Beaufort.org).

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