



MOUSE HOUSE, Inc.

2123 Park Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 254-0842

mouse_house@prodigy.net
<http://mousehouseinc.blogspot.com>

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Anastasia & Friends Gallery in Columbia, SC, Offers Exhibit Inspired by Africa

Anastasia & Friends Gallery in Columbia, SC, will present the exhibit, *The Art of Africa*, featuring works inspired by the culture, people and art of Africa, on view from Sept. 1 - 29, 2011. A reception will be held on Sept. 1, from 6-9pm during Columbia's First Friday on Main. This event offers performance by Abou Sylla, Next Door Drummers, and Sufia Giza Amenwashu.

Artists participating in the exhibit are: Anastasia Chernoff, Lee Ann Kornegay, Rodgers Boykin, Michaela Pilar Brown, Wendell Brown, Tyrone Geter, Arianne Comer King, and Keith Tolen.



Work by Tyrone Geter

The exhibit will present works of art created by artists with African roots and by those who have been inspired by Africa. The exhibition will be a combination of paintings, sculpture, film, music, mixed media and textiles. An explosion of color, texture and emotions, *The Art of Africa* brings connection to the culture and gives a perspective from many sides.

"My trip to Botswana, South Africa and Robben Island in 2005 changed my life," says Anastasia Chernoff. "I was overwhelmed by the warmth of the people and their respectful co-existence with the animals and nature surrounding them. When my guide spoke to me about the trials of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, my heart was stung with an even deeper

love for these beautiful, forgiving people. I thought to myself, if only the world could subscribe to this policy of understanding and be able to live in harmony with each other and not against each other ... how would that look? And to be able to fully understand the importance/impact of forgiveness, not just for others, but for self, too? For me, it was a thunderbolt of enlightenment from these simple, yet wise people who lived in the bush. The inspiration was so empowering, that I immediately began to sculpt (for the first time in my life) when I returned home. This show honors that initial influence."

Lee Ann Kornegay, traveled to Guinea in 2000 & 2002 to study and film the cultural arts and between 2003 and 2005 went to Ivory Coast and Nigeria on work assignments. "I wept the first time I flew in over Africa. It was a powerful feeling, a visceral reaction. My trips to Guinea put me in the company of some of the best West African musicians and dancers of our time. I was and still am humbled by that."



Image from video by Lee Ann Kornegay

"One of those musicians, Abou Sylla, master balafonist and Jeli will be performing at The Art of Africa," adds Kornegay. "A singer, storyteller and doyen, Abou is a treat for the ears."

Wendell Brown, a fiber artist feels family history "forced me as an artist to use my work as a platform to look at the accul-

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Work by Wendell Brown

turation of African slaves in the United States. What survived of African culture in America? What is it today?"

"In search for answers, I looked at the Congo, Nail Fetish Sculptures (nkisi nkondi), and the masks of West, and Central

African," adds Brown. "Studying these objects revealed to me the stitch that united the African Art forms with African American quilts."

There will also be a silent auction during this exhibition for an original painting called, *Shackled Faces*, created by artists, Arielle Fern Teer and Caitlin Beidler to create better awareness about and help prevent human trafficking in South Carolina. The proceeds will benefit the South Carolina Victim Assistance Network, which has provided coordination for representatives of all agencies involved in victim/witness services through its collaboration, publicity, advocacy, and victim assistance functions since 1984. For info visit (<http://www.sevan.org/>).

For further information check our SC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 803/665-6902 or e-mail to (stasia1825@aol.com).

Editorial Commentary

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Take it from a survivor of Hurricane Hugo in 1989 which hit the greater Charleston, SC, area and then did damage all the way through Charlotte, NC, and beyond.

The damage from the storm was bad enough to deal with, but the damage done by the media exposing the nation to the scene of destruction for weeks was the real killer to our economy.

All areas hit by Hugo eventually cleaned up and in some cases became better than before the storm, but those images of destruction kept people away from Charleston - long after - way too long after the area recovered. And, not all was destroyed.

The art community recovered quickly, but there was no audience. Art exhibits were presented, but no one came to see them. Locals were tied up with recovery and the usual visitors stayed away. That's what really hurt after Hurricane Hugo. And that's what could hurt Eastern and Coastal NC after Irene passes through.

After there is a clean up period - go visit

the area. Of course you want to call and make sure places will be open and ready for visitors, but even if you take a day trip there and buy some gas and eat lunch - you'll be spending money they need. They already lost the business of the visitors who evacuated to avoid the storm, visitors who canceled stays during the clean up period and those who will stay away from the area as they are worried about more hurricanes will come to visit the area.

And, remember - no matter what rumors you hear about the damages - they may not all be true. The reports about Charleston's destruction were greatly exaggerated - some by the media looking for headlines and some by people hoping for bigger insurance checks. Some businesses didn't suffer any damage - except that caused by people staying away from the area for months and in some cases years.

Look, Eastern NC has suffered from tornadoes, wild fires, a hurricane and even the slight rumble of a rare East Coast earthquake, but lots of it is still open for business.