

# Blowing Rock Art & History Museum

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studio practices are different, their ideas and concerns interrelate,” said Stephan Dragisic, Teresa and Don Caine Executive Director of BRAHM. “Laughlin and Finn also share a life-long interest in engaging the community as a part of their artistic practices. This shared interest has been integral to both of their careers as artists and as educators. In *SHIP/SHAPE*, the community will be invited to actively shape one of the projects.”

Throughout the run of *SHIP/SHAPE*, BRAHM staff will engage with the public to explore the meaning of the suffix “-ship” and invite participants to consider words - such as friend, leader or partner - that capture their personal values and aspirations. Messages about one’s most important “-ship” will be written on paper slips and placed in small glass bottles, an interplay between the notion of “ship in a bottle” and “message in a bottle.” The bottles will be woven into a handcrafted net, symbolizing the power of art to strengthen community bonds. Visitors to BRAHM will be invited to participate in the project during the exhibition. Additionally, Museum staff will take the project to other sites across the region to expand the net of shared experiences.

“In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, which has had a devastating impact on this region, the *SHIP/SHAPE* community project is a timely and powerful reminder of the power of art to connect, heal, and empower people and a community,” Dragisic said.

David Finn has held more than 15 solo exhibitions, with shows in New York, London, Milan, Hong Kong and Lund, Sweden. Finn has created art projects for the public throughout the United States. He has received numerous fellowships including grants from the Bemis Foundation, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the North Carolina Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. He recently retired as a Professor of Art at Wake Forest University, where he taught sculpture since 1987. His work in this exhibition stems from a 2022 residency at Sculpture Space in Utica, NY.

Page Laughlin’s artwork has been selected for over 43 competitive exhibitions, including 11 museum exhibitions, 10 solo exhibitions or installations, and



David Finn, “F You Up,” wood and mixed media, 2024..

six published color exhibition catalogues. Her residency fellowships include the Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito, Calif.; the Virginia Center for Creative Arts in Amherst, VA; and the ON::View Residency in Savannah, GA. Her work is in numerous private and public collections throughout the United States, including the American University Museum at the Katzen Art Center in Washington, DC, and the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, NC. In 2021, Laughlin retired from teaching to focus on her creative activities and is now a research professor at Wake Forest University.

BRAHM’s mission is to curate, preserve, educate, and inspire. Rooted in the creative cultures of Appalachia, BRAHM aims to cultivate a community that extends beyond its walls and region, positioning Western North Carolina as a leader in the arts. The 25,000-square-foot Blowing Rock Art and History Museum, known as BRAHM, opened its doors on October 1, 2011. Located off Main Street in Blowing Rock, NC, BRAHM provides cultural enrichment by promoting the arts and history through educational programs, exhibitions, and activities. The permanent collection of more than 600 objects includes works by Elliott Daingerfield, Maud Gatewood, Elizabeth Bradford, Mark Hewitt, and other American impressionist and post-impressionist artists. Open year-round, BRAHM welcomes 24,000 visitors free of charge to experience 25 changing exhibitions. BRAHM also has an outreach education program that encourages arts education in local schools, daycares, and senior centers.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call BRAHM at 336/722-9660 or visit ([blowingrockmuseum.org](http://blowingrockmuseum.org)).

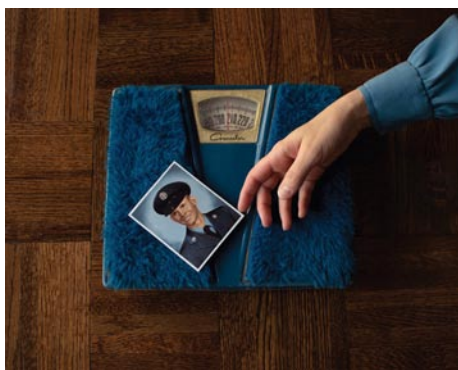
## Francis Marion University in Florence, SC, Features Works by Heather Evans Smith

Francis Marion University in Florence, SC, will present *Blue*, featuring works by Heather Evans Smith, on view in the Steven F. Gately Gallery, located in downtown Florence, from Jan. 14 through Mar. 6, 2025. A reception will be held on Jan. 23, beginning at 5:30pm.

Heather Evans Smith, an acclaimed photo-based artist known for her evocative portrayals of memory, family, and loss, will exhibit *Blue* at Gately Gallery, a body of work that delves deeply into her own experiences of grief and depression. Through symbolic compositions drenched in blue - the color historically linked to melancholy - Smith navigates the emotional complexities of midlife and profound personal loss.

“For some, my dad’s death might be seen as the spark that ignited my depression, but the sadness had been quietly simmering for years,” Smith explains. “I was just beginning to recognize it a few years into my 40s. Searching online, I found articles on how women are often most depressed at 44. And at that very moment, I was 44.” Her images are a visual manifestation of that weight, portraying the unique burdens faced by women at this life stage as they contend with aging parents, maturing children, and hormonal shifts.

Smith’s new series serves as both a personal reckoning and an invitation for viewers to reflect on their own transitions.



Work by Heather Evans Smith

The arresting use of blue throughout her work reinforces the themes of introspection, sorrow, and resilience that emerge as she grapples with shifting roles and seeks a renewed place among loss and change. Known for her imaginative yet poignant visual storytelling, Smith has exhibited at prestigious venues worldwide, including the Fox Talbot Museum in Lacock, England, the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, and Leica Galerie Milano in Italy.

Smith is also a recipient of numerous accolades, including the Critical Mass Top 50 (2014, 2018, 2021), the 2022 Silver List, and the 2022 CENTER Me & Eve Grant. Her evocative body of work continues to resonate deeply with audiences across the globe.

Heather Evans Smith resides in Chapel Hill, NC. continued on Page 19

January 14 - March 6

# blue

Heather Evans Smith

Artist Reception Jan 23 @ 5:30P

*Into the Blue:  
Breaking the Stigma  
Around Depression*  
Artist Presentation  
& Panel Discussion

March 6 @ 6P



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