

# The Art Gallery at Congdon Yard

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own memories and stories. By capturing the ephemeral - moments of light, shadow, and quiet beauty - Crowe creates works that encourage reflection and connection.

Sarah Jones Decker (Marshall, NC). Decker says, "A week before the storm, our community felt vibrant and alive."

Marshall, NC, was forever changed by Hurricane Helene, as the river's relentless floodwaters destroyed buildings, businesses, and treasured spaces. For weeks, residents dug out their town from the muck while documenting the devastation in real time. Photographer Sarah Jones Decker turned to the wet plate collodion process, building a makeshift darkroom in her Subaru and creating a series of tintype portraits - a historical technique also used during the 1916 flood.

The black-and-white images form a time capsule of resilience, documenting artists, workers, and dreamers who embody the heart of Marshall. Each portrait was created collaboratively, free of charge, as Jones Decker invited subjects to choose their locations and share their stories. The resulting work serves as both a collective memory and a tangible symbol of hope, reflecting the quiet strength of a town navigating its rebuilding and reimagining.

Neil Goss (Asheville, NC). Goss's practice blurs the boundaries of art, craft, and design. His work centers on traditional backstrap weaving - a method used since the Bronze Age - tying his art to ancient processes and Indigenous American cultures. Viewing the Earth as the ultimate art supply store, Goss responsibly forages materials like barks, nuts, food waste, and rusted objects for natural dyes. Sustainability is central to his practice; his materials are designed to be biodegradable and leave no toxic trace.

Asher Holman (Asheville, NC). Holman grew up in San Francisco and discovered glassblowing at 16 through Public Glass, a local arts nonprofit. Drawn in by the dynamic community of artists, the physicality of the medium, and a fascination with the mesmerizing molten material, he began pursuing a career as a glass artist. He earned his BA in studio art with a focus in glass from Centre College in Kentucky.

After graduating, Holman relocated to Asheville, where he worked as a professional glass artist for six years, collaborating with studios and independent artists while developing his own work. In 2022, he began the process of opening his own studio, Small Batch Glass, which became publicly operational in February 2023.

Jane Jaskevich (Weaverville, NC). Jaskevich's mystical stone sculptures explore the balance between the conscious and subconscious, the ancient and modern, and the symbolic and literal. As a direct carver, Jaskevich draws directly onto the stone, allowing her hands and tools to follow the creative process as it unfolds.

Jaskevich's inspiration often begins with the human form. A piece of wood may suggest drapery, or a broken stone might resemble a silhouette, sparking an exploration of shape and gesture. Her intuitive process embraces discovery, blending deliberate thought with unconscious creativity.

Chris Jehly (Asheville, NC). Jehly was born in Santa Rosa, CA. He received his BA in printmaking at Sonoma State University in 2006 and MFA in printmaking from Columbia University in 2011.

He currently works primarily in watercolor though his practice encompasses acrylic and spray paint as well as mixed media. He takes inspiration from the surrounding landscapes throughout Western North Carolina. These paintings confront the devastation wrought by Hurricane Helene in Asheville, NC.

The work documents the ravaged and now unfamiliar landscape through firsthand observations, photographs, and memories. Objects and landmarks transform into menacing heaps, swooning trees adorned with plastic and metal detritus, vehicles rendered into muddied, skeletal

remains. The painted images emerge like the rubble itself, both recognizable and falling into visual limbo.

Lori Brook Johnson (Bakersville, NC). Johnson's work reflects her deep ties to her Appalachian roots and the dualities of her upbringing. Her art explores themes of generational trauma, healing, and memory, rooted in the complex realities of coal mining communities.

Johnson's mark-making process is rhythmic and meditative, uncovering the beauty and individuality of lives often misunderstood. By holding space for grief and healing, her work invites viewers to see beyond stereotypes and honor the unspoken stories of Appalachian communities.

Kenn Kotara (Asheville, NC). Kotara's mixed-media practice explores the manipulation and interpretation of space. Rooted in a fascination with structure, networks, and abstraction, Kotara creates works that engage both two- and three-dimensional space. Layers of forms, symbols, and visual elements challenge viewers to find connections within complexity.

Kotara's work pushes traditional boundaries, activating both real and illusionary depths of field. His compositions weave personal interpretations, vague stimuli, and visual entanglements into dynamic narratives that encourage deeper engagement.

Joseph Pearson (Asheville, NC). Pearson believes art is a powerful tool for healing. In his work juxtaposing the devastation of Hurricane Helene with depictions of children at play, he explores themes of resilience, joy, and hope. Children represent a potential for a brighter future.

Pearson is an award-winning artist with over 45 years of professional experience. His artistic journey began at age 4, eventually leading him to Jackson State College (BS, 1969) and professional training at the Art Students League of New York, where he studied under a full scholarship for five years. After serving in the Army as an Illustrator, he worked at Stennis Space Center in Mississippi while further refining his skills. Pearson later earned a Master of Education from William Carey College, also under full scholarship, and has since received numerous grants.

Peter Roux (Asheville, NC). Roux works primarily in oils but also creates drawings and monotypes. Using nature as his subject, he explores not only natural forms but also how we experience the world around us. In an era where we encounter more images daily than at any other time in history, Roux examines how the language of imagery influences our perception of the natural world. He views all images as windows - with predetermined edges, sizes, and layers of information - and seeks to explore these parameters within his work.

Recently, Roux has focused on landscapes, clouds, water, and trees, combining representational approaches with elements of abstraction. Areas of marks and flourishes serve as reminders that his pieces are not the things they depict but instead reflections of the experience of seeing them.

Akira Satake (Asheville, NC). Born in Osaka, Japan, Satake moved to the US in 1981 and established himself as both a musician and a potter. After relocating to North Carolina in 2003, Satake founded Akira Satake Ceramics and embraced pottery as his primary artistic passion.

For Satake, creating pottery is a collaboration between artist, clay, and fire. He draws inspiration from natural forces - wind-sculpted sands, weathered rocks, and patinated walls - seeking to reveal the beauty inherent in randomness. Fire plays a critical role, transforming the clay in unpredictable ways that Satake both embraces and celebrates.

Through his work, Satake honors the natural world and the imperfect beauty of the handmade. Each vessel reflects a dialogue between intention and chance, inviting viewers to appreciate the simplicity - continued above on next column to the right

ity and depth found in forms shaped by both human hands and natural forces.

Ricardo Tejada (Asheville, NC). At age 20, with no prior experience, Tejada began working for a small print and design firm in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Immersing himself in the tactile nature of print, he spent eight years as a pre-press technician before shifting his focus to design and photography. In 2021, after years of freelancing and a role as Senior Production Artist at an Asheville print firm, Tejada launched Show and Tale Creative.

Through Show and Tale Creative,

Tejada is recognized for ethereal, dreamlike landscape photography. Often drawing inspiration from his favorite films, his images embody a cinematic quality while calling for environmental conservation. For Tejada, photographing nature is both a personal exploration and a vision of a world where humans exist harmoniously with the environment, leaving it better for future generations.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call 336/887-2137 or e-mail to (info@TAGart.org).

## Florence County Museum in Florence, SC, Features Works by William H. Johnson

The Florence County Museum in Florence, SC, has partnered with the Smithsonian American Art Museum to bring *Fighters for Freedom: William H. Johnson Picturing Justice*, starting Feb. 4, and continuing through Aug. 10, 2025. A reception will be held on Feb. 13, beginning at 6pm. Both the exhibition and reception are free for the public to attend.

This exhibition marks the first national tour of the magnum opus by William Henry Johnson (Florence, SC) entitled *Fighters for Freedom*. Johnson painted the series in the mid-1940s, creating a pantheon of historic and contemporary leaders who fought for the freedom of individuals worldwide. The exhibition of 25 works showcasing Johnson's later iconographic style is on loan from the Smithsonian American Art Museum and features works rarely exhibited outside our nation's capital.

According to the Smithsonian, "By almost any standard, William H. Johnson (1901-1970) can be considered a major American artist. He produced hundreds of works in a virtuosic, eclectic career that spanned several decades and continents. It was not until very recently, however, that his work began to receive the attention it deserves."

Stephen Motte, the Curator of Interpretations & Collections at the Florence County Museum, holds Johnson's contributions to 20th-century American Art in high regard saying, "William H. Johnson can fairly be considered South Carolina's most significant 20th-century artist. Many art historians may be tempted to give that credit to Jasper Johns, who is certainly better known, but there's a big difference. The subject matter and vision of Johnson's mature art in the 1940s were connected directly to South Carolina, whereas Johns' was not."

"The artworks in this exhibition are not just among Johnson's best, they encapsulate what separates great art from good art... that they are so intrinsic to the moment and circumstances of their creation



"Harriet Tubman" ca. 1945, oil on paperboard by William H. Johnson, born Florence, SC 1901-died Central Islip, NY 1970. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the Harmon Foundation, 1967.59.1146

that they could never be expressed better in another media or in a different way at a different time, by any another person," adds Motte.

*Fighters for Freedom: William H. Johnson Picturing Justice* was organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Generous support for this project is provided by Art Bridges, with additional support provided by Trustees of the Florence Museum, Florence County Museum Foundation, and Eastern Carolina Community Foundation Florence County Museum Civil Justice Fund.

The Florence County Museum exists to provide a dynamic sanctuary for the preservation, interpretation, and exhibition of objects of scientific, historical, and artistic significance that are unique or of special interest to the people of Florence County and the Pee Dee region of South Carolina.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call Jim Stephens at 843/676-1200 ext 58211, or visit (flocmuseum.org/exhibitions/fighters-for-freedom/).

## Francis Marion University in Florence, SC, Features Works by Katherine Rumminger & Haleigh Lennox Brewer

Francis Marion University in Florence, SC, is presenting two exhibitions including: *Common Ground*, featuring works by Katherine Rumminger, and *Dueling Identities: An Exploration Within and Beyond Twinship* by Haleigh Lennox Brewer, both on view in the Kassab Gallery of the Hyman Fine Arts Center, through Feb. 20, 2025.

Katherine Rumminger grew up in Piedmont, SC, and attended Wren High School. Her passion for art and creating grew throughout her primary and secondary school years. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Art degree in May 2021 and her Master of Fine Art degree in May 2024, both from Lander University.

Rumminger specializes in sculpture and continues to create artwork that involves commonplace, representational forms constructed out of steel. She loves to teach and has taught Art Foundations classes at Lander University. When she is not creating in the studio or teaching, she enjoys traveling, spending time in nature, and going to

cultural events.

Rumminger says, "*Common Ground* is a collection of handmade steel and mixed media sculptures depicting familiar imagery in uncanny ways. Objects such as a clock, a compass, a pillow, and a teacup are surrealistically configured, forming metaphors about interpersonal relationships and day-to-day life. Through *Common Ground* I seek to better understand myself and relate to others. Through common objects I seek common ground."

Haleigh Brewer is a North Carolina based photographer who uses her medium to explore narratives through visual stories. Her work delves into the intersections of personal and collective experiences, capturing the nuances of human emotion, interactions, and relationships through her lens. Her most recent work, *Dueling Identities: An Exploration Within and Beyond Twinship*, explores the relationship with her identical twin sister.

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