

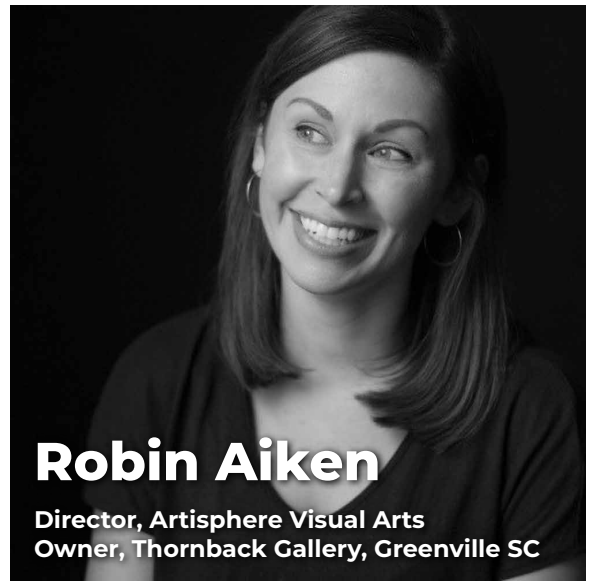
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**EASTERN CAROLINA
CONTEMPORARY
BIENNIAL**

MARCH 21 – OCTOBER 19

 *Chick-fil-A*
of florence

JURORS' STATE MENTS



Robin Aiken

Director, Artisphere Visual Arts
Owner, Thornback Gallery, Greenville SC

Southern Contemporary art is dynamic and rooted in the traditions, histories, and landscapes of the Southern US while engaging with contemporary issues and aesthetics. It encompasses diverse themes such as race, identity, memory, and the intersection of tradition with modernity.

La Frontera by Joanna Morgan was a piece that instantly resonated with all three jurors. Sewing as a craft holds deep cultural, historical, and personal significance for women. It serves as a means of expression, community building, preservation of heritage, and economic empowerment. Morgan expertly uses this craft to illustrate the resilience of women who flee violence and economic hardship to find refuge and prosperity.

I was honored and excited to be invited to jury the Florence County Museum's inaugural Eastern Carolina Contemporary Biennial. I create art, but more often I find myself on the side of the viewer, the juror, and the curator. I am always awed by those who put their art out into the world; especially to be judged and juried! It's courageous to wear your heart on your sleeve. Thank you to Stephen Motte and the Florence County Museum for this challenging and rewarding opportunity.



Thank you to my fellow jurors for a delightful experience contemplating many fabulous artworks together! The works we considered for this exhibition were incredibly diverse in media, subject matter and meaning.

I was immediately drawn to *Devotional 10*, by Charleston artist Susan Klein. I find that it strikes a perfect balance between beauty and strangeness. The title refers to a devotional object, bringing to mind a history of religious vessels, while its texture, color and playfulness situate it firmly in the present. The palette feels contemporary and crisp, constructed with bright lilacs, earthy greens and fleshy peach. The vessel is ornamented with multiplying shapes that feel both organic and otherworldly. Some decorative lines show the artist's hand, enabling one to imagine a swipe of the finger in malleable clay, while window-like holes in the sculpture offer a tantalizing invitation to get closer and take a peek inside.

I was honored and excited when Stephen Motte asked me to sit on the jurors panel for the first Eastern Carolina Contemporary Biennial. I grew up in Florence, where I experienced great support as a young artist, which allowed me to follow my dream to pursue a career in the arts and continue painting up to today. I expect that this Biennial will continue to usher in fresh waves of vitality to our city, as it welcomes new artists to Florence and celebrates the wealth of creativity in the wider region.



As a curator and gallerist, I was astonished at the breadth of artwork coming out of Eastern South Carolina. Our process took three intensive days of conversations - explorations into artist statements, projections based upon how works would exhibit in the space, curatorial ideas of which works could pair well together. We zoomed in, we zoomed out, we explored what it means to be creating contemporary art at this time and choosing artworks that reflects our time - the inclusion of diverse voices, a range of media to encapsulate these voices, and the presentation of this collective of creators.

I was most drawn to the paper works of Hampton County, South Carolina's Ian Welch. In this collection of twelve *Artificial Cut (Woodpile)* gel pen on handmade dyed paper tree-ring works, Welch explores the landscape of the Carolinas, contemporizing the cross-cutting of trees in brilliant shades of neon greens, bright pinks and bold blues. The two-tone drawings alluringly pair with the deckled edges of each tree ring piece. As if Welch is reflecting on the lushness of the land to indicate this land was made for you and me.

Thank you for the opportunity to be one of the jurors for this year's inaugural Eastern Carolina Contemporary Biennial. What a joy it was to meet with curator Stephen Motte and the other two jurors to reflect on the state of contemporary art in the South.

FIRST PLACE



Katelyn Chapman
Crow Effigy
Oil on canvas
Hanahan, SC

My work explores episodes of working-class life in America's rural South through the lens of my own family and friends in South Carolina. I index my upbringing in this place by referencing back-road dispositions alongside symbols of faith and Christian iconography to offer perspective on larger societal issues that point to a past that can't be thrown away, but instead lingers on into the present.

Brittany Alston is a native of Charleston, South Carolina and she is a self-taught photographer/visual artist. Brittany is determined to not only make “beautiful” artwork, but she also wants to make artwork that will connect with the viewer and hopefully to awaken the unconscious mind to help make the world a better place.



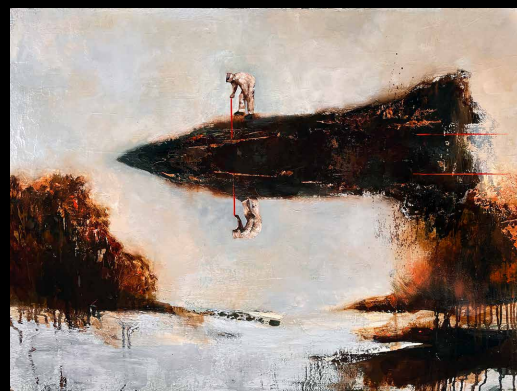
Brittany Alston
Determined
Photography
Charleston, SC

My artwork amplifies the voices of the unheard and brings unseen worlds to life. I build a relationship with each image by recognizing its story and value, exploring intersections of race, gender, and society. *Daa Bai (Market Woman)* is an oil painting that captures the lived experience of a Ghanaian woman, portraying her daily struggle to make a living.



Indira Bailey
Daa Bia (Market Woman)
Oil on canvas
Orangeburg, SC

Quantum Doppelgänger explores themes of duality and connection. This painting has an ambiguity which offers several different explanations of relationships.



Jim Boden
Quantum Doppelgänger
Oil on canvas
Hartsville, SC

SECOND PLACE



Jo-Ann Morgan
La Frontera
Fabric
Surfside Beach, SC

La Frontera is from a series titled *News from the Front* that addresses the hardships of women internationally. At the US/Mexico border (*La Frontera*) women face a kind of battle line after fleeing their home countries for an unknown future in the north.

My work explores episodes of working-class life in America's rural South through the lens of my own family and friends in South Carolina. I index my upbringing in this place by referencing back-road dispositions alongside symbols of faith and Christian iconography to offer perspective on larger societal issues that point to a past that can't be thrown away, but instead lingers on into the present.



Katelyn Chapman
Ladders to the Sky
 Oil on canvas
 Hanahan, SC

My work seeks to investigate moments of grief, trauma, and loss and recontextualize them not as abhorrent events that are insurmountable, but as regrettable occurrences that changed the trajectory of who we are. By mimicking and encapsulating that trauma within distressed drywall panels, I fill that void with sculptures made from paper which is both fragile and flexible.



Charles Clary
Memento Viveradiddle Movement #20
 Hand cut paper and wallpaper on distressed drywall
 Conway, SC

Years ago in my studio overlooking the port of Savannah, I began exploring American consumer culture as I reflected on the powerful influence of the endless flow of physical goods. My life had been shaped by the pursuit of material happiness, beginning in childhood with plastic toys. Later, my work adopted popular cultural icons like T. Rex, which symbolize our complex relationship with consumption. There is widespread denial in America about our relentless consumerism. Acquiring and discarding goods is normalized and patriotic.



Colleen Critcher
To Have And To Hold
 Acrylic on (4) panels
 Florence, SC

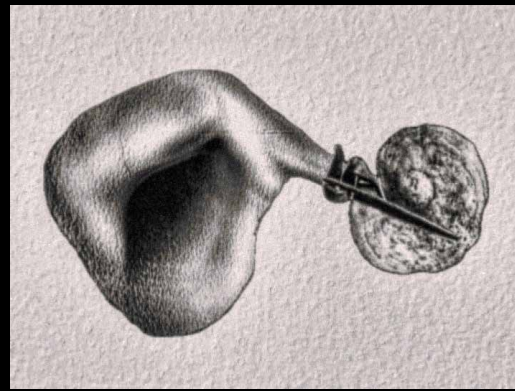
THIRD PLACE



Ian Welch
Artificial Cut (Woodpile)
Gel pen on handmade
dyed paper
Brunson, SC

My current work, *Land Rites*, is a meditation on the fleeting nature of rural landscapes and the callous tendency to denote human boundaries in natural spaces where there were none before. *Land Rites* utilizes imagery culled from hours of quiet investigation of both lush and decimated landscapes primarily through printmaking and handmade paper culled from sites of ecological destruction.

the false eye,
now consumed,
warms the belly,
with golden truths.



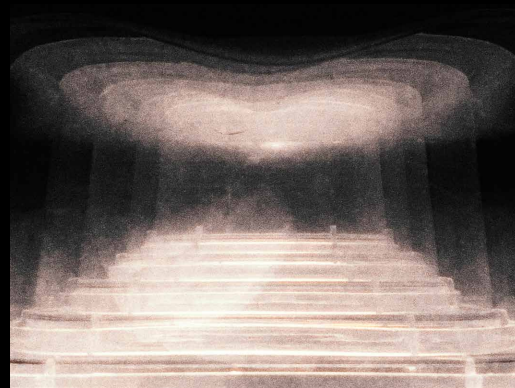
Colin Finlayson

Mother with Breast and Springblade

Digital collage

Florence, SC

the false eye,
now consumed,
warms the belly,
with golden truths.



Colin Finlayson

Past St. Peter

Photography

Florence, SC

Building upon the history of observational landscape painting, I consider its relevance in an age of time-based media, mass imagery and instant information. Embracing human limitations, I explore the complexities of first-hand experiences and familiarity. Through sequential and perceptual painting, my practice creates an archive of sustained engagement with perpetually fluctuating environments.



Brittany Gilbert

Pacto Sumaco I

Oil on individual panels

Florence, SC

HONORABLE MENTION



Susan Klein
Devotional 10
Oil paint and underglaze
on ceramic stoneware
Charleston, SC

My paintings, sculptures, and drawings use symbolic and abstract language to channel ideas of creative energy and the ritualistic utility of art. The ceramic sculptures act as devotional objects. Touch is venerated in this work; learning and making with one's hands is held up as sacred and essential. The figure/finger/phallic symbols are signifiers of generative creation, birthing a fecund world.

I create individual pieces, then repeat and arrange them to conjure objects, imagery, and emotional terrains. The resulting work suggests that luck, and maybe even life, are constructs of our own making. Ultimately, this way of working is an exercise in acceptance and making use of what I've been given.



Douglas Gray
Lucky Bastard
 Ceramic stoneware
 Florence, SC

I seek to tell stories of SC through art. My pieces are from different time periods, created with different materials, but they both depict women of color making their way along the roadside. The oil is in response to an 1870 etching depicting a woman selling “sweet-taters” and the collage is sweetgrass sewer in 1964. Over 90 years separate them, yet they share an agency and determination.



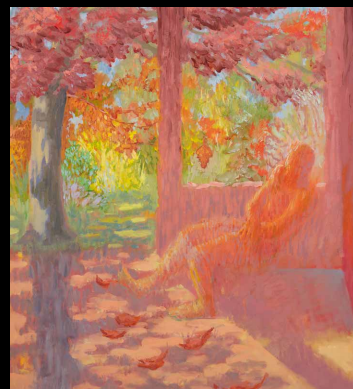
Karyn Healey
Harry Fenn's Roadside Scene, 1870
 Oil on panel
 Summerville, SC

My current body of work is constructed from threads, fabrics, nylon, latex, paper, and other embellishments. I stitch, glue, and tie these together to create tactile combinations and optical illusions that capture attention, rouse sensations of curiosity or wonder. I symbolically investigate memories, truths, vulnerabilities, boundaries and the desire to stay wild and free.



Mary Judge
She Bought the Shoes AND Ate the Cake!
 Fibers and found objects
 Florence, SC

My paintings explore the relationship between experience, memory, and identity. As perception is translated from fact into imperfect memory, our sense of self merges with our environment. In my recent work, I aim to highlight the room for self-reflection that routine events, spaces, and objects help create, and the ways in which they form an extension of our inner selves.



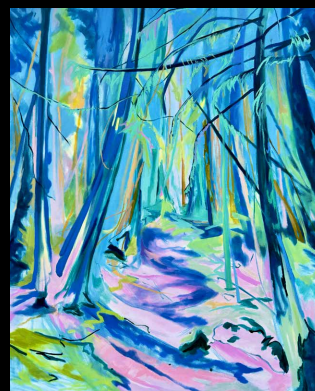
Joseph Kameen
Disappeared
Oil on panel
Graniteville, SC

Recently, I have been exploring the use of plants in two tone cyanotype prints. The plants used to make toners can physically become part of the prints. The use of Biblical symbolism has been a source of inspiration in my photo-based media work repeatedly. The symbols visually translate symbolic representations of life and truth that demonstrate the relationship between God and man.



Julie Mixon
Uninhabitable
Toned cyanotype
Florence, SC

My recent work explores how we create meaning through experiencing landscape. When remembered, places once known become ungraspable. The works display an unstable space, reminiscent of the fragility and intensity of memory. Colors shift and blur, dynamic marks build on the surface and dissipate, describing spaces that seem to exist as we know them, yet can change or vanish at a moment's notice.



Alyssa Reiser Prince
Elder Cedar
Oil on canvas
Hartsville, SC

Luke explores the stylistic language taken from virtual representations of mythologies in video game media, the Internet, Asian cultures and economies, and the everyday. The sculpture is detached from a programmed state, as part of the conceptual process of actualizing role-playing games on the screen or in the market. Luke's work challenges the fantasies of the techno-orientalist eye.



Luke Sarmiento

Xielo: After Babylon

Video, speaker, wood, computer paper, LED light
Florence, SC

Reflection is a solar plate print made from a digital photograph of trees reflecting on water. The original image was taken on a clear day at sunset, the ink on the print changes the atmosphere to something more dark and gloomy.



Madeline Severance

Reflection

Solar Plate Print
Darlington, SC

My work is about loss, longing, accountability, and atonement. Rooted in a foundation of traditional sculpture, I examine fractured relationships on both the personal and societal levels.



Austin Sheppard

Whatever

Wood, steel, found objects
Hartsville, SC

I am inspired by nature's imagery to explore the interconnections between individuals and their surroundings. Nature's diversity mirrors cultural blending and personal identity. My art reflects the interplay of my biracial background, using paper as a medium to tell a story of transcultural fluidity, identity, and the shape-shifting experience of multiracial individuals.



Delaney MeSun Shin
Dancing with Alluring Attractions
 Watercolor, collage, Micron pen
 Florence, SC

Healing physical trauma always leaves its mark. My art explores the physical and emotional cost of healing. The feeling that exists in the “after” compared to the “before” such traumas. And all the emotional strength between the layers of healing that lie beneath the surface, and work to restore a person to whole even when on the outside something may still be missing.



Sophia Shumaker
Inbetween
 Felt, thread, polymer clay
 Florence, SC

I have always been intrigued by the tragic, mythological figure, Charon. On the shores of the River Styx, we see an old brooding ferryman in his boat, as two lost souls nearby ponder their wretched fate. Like Sisyphus, Charon too is condemned with an interminable task, viz., transporting the dead to the infernal city of Hades.



Kevin Spaulding
Charon
 Oil on canvas
 Florence, SC

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Ian Welch

A Surge, A Standstill

Intaglio with monoprint stencil and papier collé
Brunson, SC

My work is an exploration of color as it moves from abstracted landscapes further into non-representational images. While references to elements of nature may still be present, geometric shapes and lines as well as large fields of colors create depth and form. I work in a series by creating layers of transparent and translucent acrylic paint as I add and subtract paint to build up the surface.



Beth Wilson

Light Beam

Acrylic on panel
Loris, SC



The Florence County Museum would like to express our gratitude to Chick-fil-A of Florence for sponsoring this exhibit. Chick-fil-A is a committed advocate for the Florence County Museum and the visual arts community. Without their support this exhibit would not have been possible.

Florence County Museum | 111 West Cheves Street | Florence, South Carolina
Tuesday - Saturday: 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, Sunday: 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Free extended hours on Thursdays until 7:00 pm

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