Exhibitions put the beauty of line on display

Three shows continue at Pickens museum

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If there's one message that comes through loud and clear in the Pickens County Museum of Art's exhibition "Writing: Putting Pen to Paper," it's this:

"Cursive writing is a dying art form," said Allen Coleman, executive director of the Pickens County Cultural Commission.

The exhibition, running through Feb. 7, seeks to remind people of a time — before typewriters and the computer — when handwriting was regarded as an art form.

"We wanted to demonstrate the beauty of handwriting," Coleman said.

Works in the exhibition, curated by Helen Hockwalt, range from medieval illuminated manuscripts to handwritten letters and documents from the 15th century to the 21st century, Coleman said.

Included are letters by statesman Henry Clay, and Andrew Pickens, the American Revolutionary war hero after whom Pickens County is named.

Those letters are displayed not merely for historical interest but for their artistic strengths as well, Coleman said.

"Learning the proper way to write was high on the list of requirements for anyone trying to become established in government or in society," Coleman said. "Their handwriting was very stylized and immaculate."

The art of handwriting is being lost, Coleman said, as schools drop cursive writing instruction in favor of teaching computer keyboarding skills.

"It seems that many kids today write with their thumbs," he added, referring to smartphones and text messaging.

"Writing: Putting Pen to Paper" is one of three exhibitions currently running at the Pickens County Museum of Art.

Also on view are "Philip Gott: Explorations in Color," featuring the abstract works of Greenville artist Philip Gott, and "Crossing the Line," a exhibition of 31 drawing by 31 Upstate artists.



Victoria Blaker's "First Snow" is part of the "Crossing the Line" exhibition at the Pickens County Museum of Art. PROVIDED

The three exhibitions com

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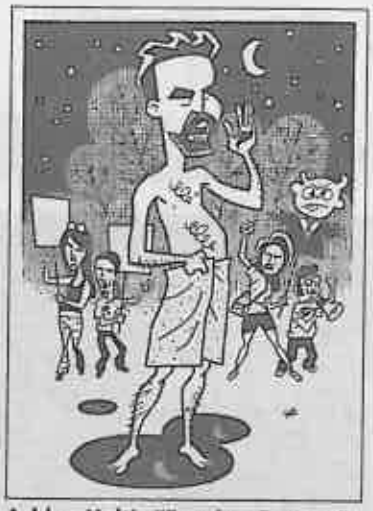
complement each other.

"They're all interrelated because of the use of line," Coleman said. "Whether it's drawing or writing or Phil's abstracts, they all come from the basic place where everything begins."

"Philip Gott: Explorations in Color" showcases the work of the local architect.

Among Gott's inspirations are architecture and deep-sea diving.

"His paintings are very colorful and energetic, and as a body of work they come together to form a very handsome show," Coleman said.



Ashley Holt's "Evening Protest." PROVIDED

The 31 works in "Crossing the Line," meanwhile, span the



"Cleveland Park No. 5" is an abstract work by Philip Gott. PROVIDED



"Lillian," by Dale Cochran, is on exhibit at the Pickens County Museum of Art. PROVIDED

gamut from realistic to abstract, from serious to humorous.

"It's the first time I've put together a pure drawing show," said Coleman, who curated the show. "I noticed during our juried show that there were a lot of artists in the area whose primary medium is drawing."

A variety of drawing techniques are featured, including metal-point, graphite, charcoal, ink and chalk.

Among the diverse array of artists in the "Crossing the Line" exhibition are Victoria Blaker, Michael Brodeur, Diane Kilgore Condon, Dale Cochran, Luiz Galvao and Ashley Holt.

The Pickens County Museum of Art is located at the corner of Hwy. 178 and 307 Johnson St. in Pickens. The museum is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are welcomed. For more information, contact the museum at 864-898-5963.

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