Pickens show taps into S.C. artists

Juried exhibition runs through June 12

By Paul Hyde
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If you want to see what contemporary South Carolina artists are painting, sculpting and photographing today, there may be no better place in the Upstate right now than the Pickens County Museum of Art and History.

The museum's 35th Annual Juried South Carolina Artist's Exhibition opened last Saturday and continues through June 12.

"I think we've got an excellent representation of the different kinds of art in South Carolina," said Allen Coleman, the museum's executive director.

"It's a nice mix of different approaches to making art, from the more naive to classical and cutting-edge," Coleman added. "There's a little something for everyone. You might see something that doesn't really excite you and then you'll turn the corner and you'll see something that really makes your heart beat."

The art competition, open only to South Carolina artists, received 315 entries. Of these, 113 works by 94 individuals were chosen to be displayed.

The featured artists work in a variety of mediums.

"We have everything from drawing and painting to ceramics and fiber art, lots of prints and photography," Coleman said.

Photography especially seems to be a growing interest among South Carolina artists, Coleman said. The museum received 70 entries in photography.

"Our museum is known as one that recognizes the value of good photography," Coleman said.

The juror for the competition was Clark Whittington, an artist and the creator of the Art-o-Mat, an old cigarette machine converted to an art-vending device.

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First place, "Escape Pod," mixed media by Richard Morgan. PROVIDED

Today, there are 90 such machines throughout the world, dispensing the works of more than 400 artists.

Whittington chose the mixed media painting "Escape Pod #13" by Hopkins' Richard Morgan as the first place award winner. Second place went to Karen Maters of Liberty for her collage, "Eat Your Asparagus." Third place was awarded to Spartanburg's Jim Creal for his lithograph "Donnelley Wildlife Management Area: Storm Clouds Gather."

"It was an honor to be allowed to experience what is happening culturally in your community and state," said Whittington, a Winston-Salem, N.C., resident. "When entering the space, I was immediately overwhelmed with the quantity of submissions. Shortly after, I was overwhelmed by the quality, until eventually pulling myself together."

Several other artists were presented awards as well.

The Pickens County Museum of Art and History is located at the corner of Highway 178 at 307 Johnson St. in Pickens. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday.

For more information, call 864-898-5963 or see the website www.picken-

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Purchase Award, "Paris Mountain," acrylic by Lu Wixon. PROVIDED

Third place, "Donnelley Wildlife Management Area," lithograph by Jim Creal. PROVIDED







Second place, "Eat Your Asparagus," collage by Karen Maters. PROVIDED



Purchase Award, "Paul's Birthday," digital photography by Bill Jordan. PROVIDED