



Presenting South Carolina's culture



through art



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in the state, offering an opportunity to celebrate the region's rich artistic tradition and the perceptiveness of the curators who have brought these works together," she said. "But it also provides an important

Part of South Carolina's Art Collection, Alan Wiloughby carved this piece for the 2008 exhibit.



social service. The South Carolina State Art Collection offers a reminder that art is a public resource to be shared by all. Gathered here, these works attest to the fact that a society that nurtures the arts is one that looks beyond the immediate necessities of life towards the larger values and meanings that make us human."

'Contemporary Conversations' spark up Clemson galleries

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — It's said to be one of South Carolina's true treasures.

The culture, the memories, the changes and the historic lives lived in the Palmetto State are highlighted in "Contemporary Conversations," an art exhibit rolling into Clemson on Jan. 15.

Slated to be divided among three locations — The Brooks Center and Lee Gallery at Clemson University and the Arts Center in downtown Clemson — the exhibit showcases South Carolina artists who tell a story about the state through their chosen mediums.

"The exhibition is designed to suggest both the quality and diversity of the state's cultural heritage," said exhibition curator Eleanor Heartney.

"Contemporary Conversations Part II" is the work of 47 artists. It includes everything from hard-edge

geometric abstractions to surrealist tinged landscapes. Works are inspired by social issues, memory, local and national history, imagination, art of the past and aesthetic theory," Heartney added.

The State Art Collection was established in 1967 and has continued to grow over the years. The pieces selected for the honorable group tell a certain tale that can never be duplicated beyond South Carolina's borders.

From the civil rights struggle to industrialism, the art holds back very little.

"One of the older works in this show is Merton Simpson's Confrontation #20 (1968), a muscular abstraction whose impassioned brushstrokes embody the turmoil of the Civil Rights era," Heartney said.

Also represented are artists like Gunar's Strazdins, Bing Jian Zhang and Philip Mullen, who look beyond the borders of the

state to deal with general political, social and aesthetic issues.

Other artists such as Linda McCune and Leo Twiggs draw from personal, autobiographical sources. Modes of religious and spiritual belief have inspired works as diverse as Richard Burnside's Crucifixion (1991) Sigmund Abeles' Annunciation with Shepherd (1985) and Peter Lenzo's Altar to Virgin and Child (1992), she said.

From the Lowcountry to the Upstate, "Contemporary Conversations" welcomes the viewer to an artistic history of passion,

ter of works like Edward Rice's Mausoleum (1988) and James Edwards' Neoclassical Modules (1983)."

Kelly Lightfoot, a Clemson artist and resident who viewed a portion of the collection in 2008, said it's something that anyone would enjoy.

Jim Connell crafted this piece, "Copper Blue," which will be a part of 'Contemporary Conversations' state art exhibit that will be in the city of Clemson in January.

"As an adult, you are learning history you probably had little knowledge about," Lightfoot said. "You are engaging in a specific dance of 'who knew' with these pieces. They tell a story and a beautiful one at that. If you can manage to see each exhibit, please do."

In the end, Heartney said, art is something that can always bring people together.

"First and foremost, of course, it provides a historic record of art production

pain and pursuit.

"Contemporary Conversations" also contains a good deal of work that bears the imprint of the landscape, social history, narrative conventions and craft traditions of the state and region," Heartney said. "Such works present a unique opportunity to view the world through South Carolina eyes. For instance, the beauty and fragility of the Lowcountry is felt in Bruno Civitico's Marsh Fire, Georgetown, SC (1988), the drama of the state's woodlands in Sam Wang's Suite of Ten Landscape Prints (1984-85) and the special quality of beach life in Blue Sky's Myrtle Beach (1983). Distinctive, regional architectural styles form the subject ma-



Alice Boyle, photographer, captured this moment on Pawley's Island and titled it, 'Dancing Girl.'

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Exhibition Hours

and 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Jan. 15, for the public reception.

Brooks Center

The exhibition will be on view during regular Brooks Center box office hours, 1-5 p.m., Monday-Friday, and 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Jan. 15, for the public reception.

The Arts Center

The Arts Center is located at 212 Butler Street in downtown Clemson. Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Thursday, and 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Jan. 15, for the public reception.

Lee Gallery

Located in Lee Hall, the Lee Gallery is open 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday.

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