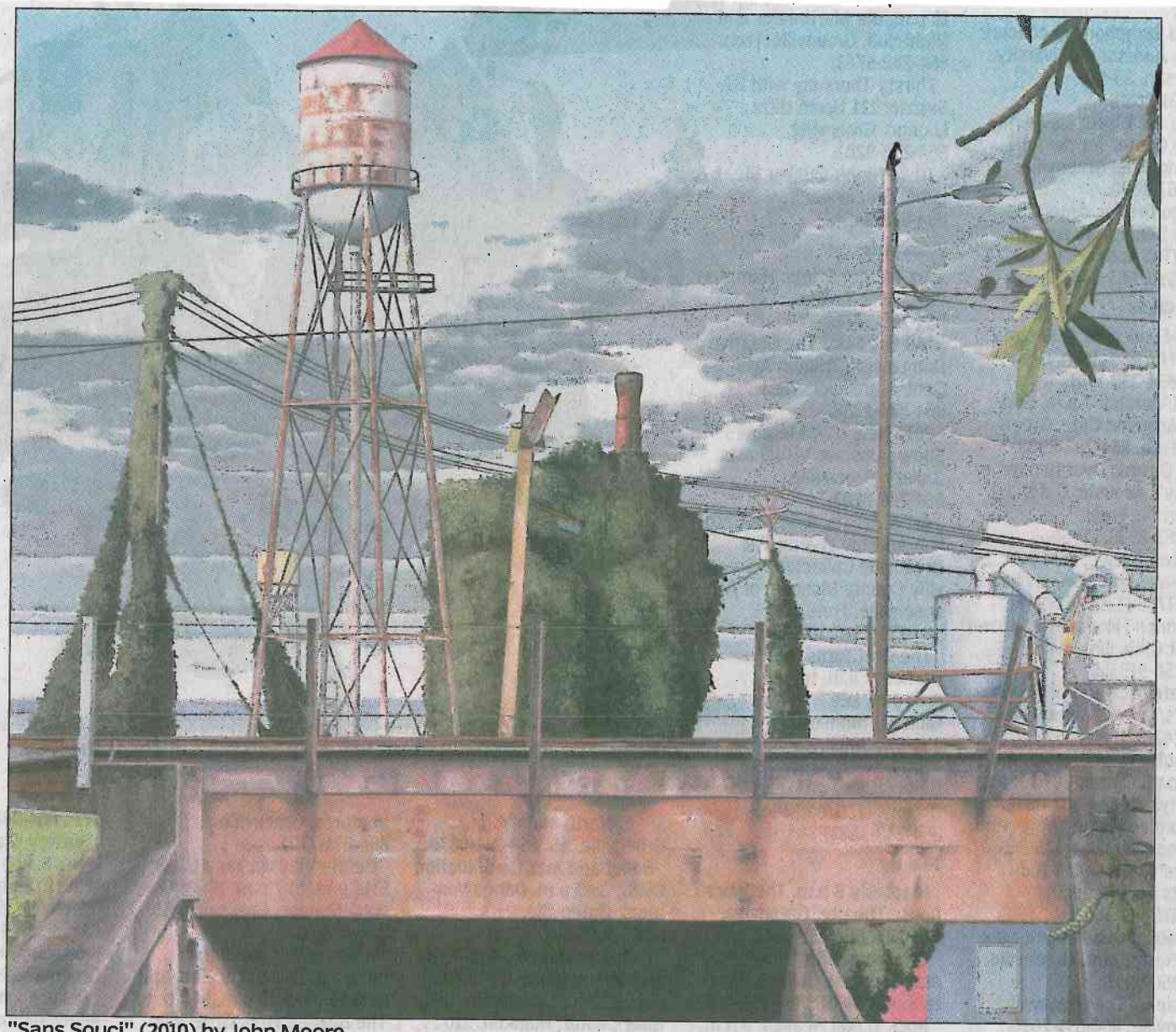


"Sans Souci" (2010) by John Moore

Reflection of Greenville

New museum show captures our town through artists' eyes

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Some had a room with a view, others walked the streets or perched above the city on the top floor of parking garages. Still others took trips outside Greenville – but not too far away – to capture her urban face, varied moods and historic meaning.

Over the past two years, unbeknownst and unannounced to the rest of Greenville, a small, talented troupe of visual artists from other cities descended on the town to create "A Portrait of Greenville." Their impressions were recorded as paintings, photographs, textiles and sculptures, all commissioned by the Greenville County Museum of Art.



"Monaghan" (2009) by Melissa Anderson

Now those pieces converge with older commissioned works from different stylistic directions to capture Greenville's urban sense of place. The museum's "A Portrait of Greenville," which opens Saturday, is an ambitious project that offers a multifaceted look at our hometown.

The show features works by major national and regional artists and represents

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YOU CAN GO

- "Portrait of Greenville" opens Saturday and continues through Sept. 26 at the Greenville County Museum of Art, 442 College St. Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and Thursday until 8 p.m.; Sunday 1-5 p.m. Admission is free. Call 864-271-7570.
- Gallery talk: 6:30 p.m. March 4 with curator Martha Severens
- Other programs related to the show include original poetry reading, discussion on Greenville's skyline with area architects and summer open house hands-on activities. For a complete listing visit http://greenvillemuseum.org.

MUSEUM

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nearly 25 years of commissioned projects. The number 25 also marks the quarter-century anniversary of the Museum Antiques Show, says museum director Tom Styron, which helps raise funds to purchase new additions to the museum's permanent collection.

The striking show includes works by artists such as Florida-based Stephen Scott Young, New York's Andrew Lenaghan, Philadelphian John Moore and Southern artists Edward Rice, William McCullough and Tim Barnwell, and it reflects what they chose as their subjects.

Styron, who became museum director in 1983, says he learned early on what works in Greenville. He recalls how the first show he mounted in his first year here – "From the Streets," built around New York's 1980s graffiti movement – went bust. However, he later commissioned one of the artists in that show, American sculptor John Ahearn, to come to Greenville and create six bust-length figures representing a cross-section of the community. Instant success, and the work is still on display in the museum lobby.

Styron followed with what he calls a slow process of commissioning works by bringing artists to Greenville from the outside. Among them were emerging artist Stephen Scott Young, whose project resulted in a dozen works and took the watercolorist nearly four years to complete. Titled "Portrait of Greenville," the 1990s exhibit was a resounding win for artist, museum and community. A number of works from that project have been pulled into the current show.

More recently, New York artist Andrew Lenaghan painted the view of Greenville from his top-floor room at the Hampton Inn. It gave him a bird's-eye-view of the Reedy River, the Peace Center and beyond. This was Lenaghan's second trip to the city. In 2000, at Styron's invitation, the artist, a photorealist with a real love for the nitty-gritty, spent about a week and a half here and completed four paintings. All four subjects that he captured are now gone, Styron says, including the Camperdown Bridge and the old ice-house. Those works are part of the current show.



Artist Andrew Lenaghan chose the perspective from the top floor of the Hampton Inn for his portrait of Greenville.

In an interview Lenaghan describes the Reedy River area from his hotel room as looking like a grande jatte, which is why he titled his huge urbanscape "La Grande Jatte: Reedy River and Greenville Skyline from Room 623, Hampton Inn."

"Greenville had definitely changed in the 10 years between visits," he says. "The whole Main Street scene was a revelation. Greenville has really gotten some Euro vibe going on for sure."

Styron says he's always been interested in the work of another out-of-town "big name, urban realist," Philadelphian John Moore. He describes the painter's treatment of his subjects as composites with allegorical sense. The result of Moore's visit is "Sans Sou-

ci," which Moore says he built on images gathered "out on Buncombe Road driving around with a sketchbook and a camera." Moore, while doing research on Greenville also discovered it was the home of the late, great blues singer Josh White. Moore purchased one of White's CDs and played it while he painted. "I think Josh White made it into the final painting too," Moore says.

South Carolina artist William McCullough, a Kingstree resident, took a perch on the top of the North Church Street parking deck, which eyes the museum, churches and tall commercial buildings, and titled the result "Greenville Skyline." Another South Carolina artist who favors close-up architectural compositions, Ed Rice, was challenged by Styron to deal with the legacy of Vardry McBee, Greenville's founding father. He came up with architectural features of four historical churches, all built on property donated by McBee (1775-1864).

Reacting to the more recent past, Asheville photographer Tim Barnwell was inspired by memories of the small-town Greenville where he grew up. He captured that feel in nostalgic, silver gelatin prints featuring scenes in Greer, Pelham and Fountain Inn.

The exhibit is further enriched by other "portraits" by Susan Page, Thomas Wyche, Mike Mathers, Charles Blackwood, Cheryl Goldsleger, Gary Grier, Mark Mulfinger and Darrell Koons. Two additional images – "Monaghan" by Melissa Anderson and "Greenville Landscape #1" by Owen Riley – were selected from the Metropolitan Arts Council's "Greenville Seen" show, which invited local artists to submit images of the city as a collaborative project with the museum.