CURRENT EVENTS:

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PICKENS COUNTY MUSEUM’S
THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL JURIED SOUTH CAROLINA ARTISTS EXHIBITION

The Pickens County Cultural Commission is pleased to announce that the Pickens County Museum of Art & History’s “Thirty-Sixth Annual Juried South Carolina Artist’s Exhibition” reception and awards ceremony was held on Saturday April 25. The competition was open to all artists working in any medium, 18 years of age or older and living in South Carolina. The exhibition is on view until June 11, 2015.

The panel of jurors for this year’s competition represents the best and brightest in South Carolina. Associate Professor and Gallery Director at Coastal Carolina University, Jim Arendt is an artist whose work explores the shifting paradigms of labor and place through narrative figure painting, drawing, prints, fabric and sculpture. Victoria Cooke joined the curatorial staff at the Columbia Museum of Art in January 2013. She holds an M.A. in art history, specializing in 18th and 19th century French painting from Tulane University and became a doctoral candidate in Art History at the University of Delaware before deciding to devote her career to museum work. Director of Hampton III Gallery for over 25 years, Sandra Rupp works with numerous living artists, as well as the several artists’ estates, focusing mostly on Southern artists, particularly those with a SC connection.

Arendt, Cooke & Rupp spent April 10th looking at and contemplating a vast array of paintings, drawings, photographs, prints, ceramics, fiber and other mediums created by the hands of South Carolina artists. This made for the difficult task of selecting works for, and eliminating works from, the final show. The impressive final selection of 149 works of art represents 110 individuals currently creating visual art in this state.

About the jury, Sandy Rupp stated, “A nice variety of various mediums and subjects faced the judges as we attempted to narrow down the selections for the exhibition. Congratulations to all who submitted to the jurying process and who have the courage to face an empty canvas or pick up a tool.”

Jim Arendt added, “The pleasure and difficulty of selecting this year’s show from so many outstanding submissions is a credit to all the hard-working artists who submitted work. My co-jurors and I were able to select those pieces that displayed the highest level of technical skill, content, and innovation.”

Victoria Cooke summed up the day saying, “It was thrilling to see artists that embraced such a diverse array of materials, subject matter and modes of expression. I think that every visitor to the exhibition will find art that touches them and thrills them, art that challenges their expectations and even art that amazes them and makes them laugh.”

The awards for this year’s competition represent not only a cross section of what is taking place in the visual arts of South Carolina today, but are also a fair representation of the variety of artists actively “at work”. Our panel of jurors chose the ceramic with mixed media sculpture, “Balancing Act” by Greenville’s Diana Farfán as the First Place Award. Second Place was presented to Tom Dimond of Seneca for his mixed media, “Book II S.H.I.E.L.D.” The Third Place honor went to Greenville’s Ryan Roth for his acrylic on paper painting, “Business Laocoön’.”
Juror’s Choice Awards were bestowed upon Tanna Burchinal of Clemson for her monoprint, “I 57”, and to Clemson’s Sam Wang for his photograph, “VW Van”.

In addition to the above awards, the jurors presented Honorable Mention Awards, denoting artwork of special interest, be presented to: Steven A. Chapp of Easley for his reduction linocut print, “The Debate”; to Spartanburg’s Jim Creal for his ink monotype, “Cursive Practice”; to Deborah Feiste of Central for her assemblage, “Jack”; to Seneca’s Amanda Mensing for her oil painting, “Indian Motorcycle”; and to Kathleen B. Wood of Greenville for her sterling silver jewelry piece, “Tree Box with Pendant Lid”.

The Museum’s Director, Allen Coleman chose the acrylic with wood painting, “High Lonesome Sound # 5” by Glen Miller of Greenville as the recipient of the 2015 Director’s Choice Award.

Thanks to the kind sponsorships of Pickens County & the Pickens County Cultural Commission along with Mary Howe Benjamin, Roger Benjamin, Sherrill F. Benjamin, Mrs. Doreen Heimlich, Ms. Larissa Heimlich, Philip & Gilda Hendricks, Mr. Chris Hepler, Wayne Kelley, Shirley Reese, Mrs. Shirley Sarlin, the Susan B. Benjamin Memorial Fund and the Seth Schafer Heimlich Memorial Fund, the Pickens County Museum selected five works that, within the scope of their mission directive, will be added to the museum’s permanent collection.

The Pickens County Cultural Commission’s Purchase Award honoring Shirley Sarlin was presented to Melody M. Davis of Salem for her oil painting, “IF”.

The 2015 Susan B. Benjamin Memorial Purchase Award was presented to Mary E. Barron of Seneca for her oil painting, “First Light”.

The 2015 Seth Schafer Heimlich Memorial Purchase Award was presented to Kathy Moore of Belton for her assemblage, “Nonconformity”.

Additional Museum Purchase Awards were made to Easley’s Steven A. Chapp for his linocut, “The Debate”, and to Bev Peeples of Taylors for her photograph, “Floating”.

In addition to the fifteen works of art singled out for special mention, there are one-hundred and thirty-four others on the walls and pedestals throughout the museum’s Sealevel Gallery, G-1 Gallery and Focus Gallery. No matter where your individual taste in art may lead, you will find some satisfaction in this exhibition. The variety of work represented is a generous reflection of the community of artists presently at work in South Carolina.

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A Bluesman’s Close-Up
Photographs of Mac Arnold by Brian S. Kelley

The Pickens County Museum of Art & History, in conjunction with the Greater Clemson Blues Festival, is pleased to announce that “A Bluesman’s Close-Up: Photographs of Mac Arnold by Brian S. Kelley”, opened to the public on April 15, 2015. As part of the Greater Clemson Blues Festival which runs from April 15th through the 25th, this special documentation of one of our region’s most loved musicians will be on display through May 30.
About Mac and Brian’s relationship, journalist Cindy Landrum wrote in the Greenville Journal, “Brian S. Kelley was in the audience during one of the band’s (Mac Arnold’s Plate Full of Blues) early concerts at the Happy Cow Creamery in southern Greenville County, just a short trip from Arnold’s farm. The two talked and discovered that Kelley’s parents lived near Arnold. Arnold asked him to come by his house and photograph the band. That led to a long gig - seven years if you ask Kelley, about nine if you ask Arnold - that included album covers, a documentary and a photography book. ‘We started dragging him around the country with us,’ Arnold said. Kelley said the experience ‘still feels surreal sometimes. To be able to combine photography, art and music was a dream.’ That relationship led to a book and an exhibit of Kelley’s photographs of Arnold - on stage, on the bus and on his farm.”

About his work Kelley stated, “Visual interpretations of my surroundings have been essential elements of communication throughout my life. I often watch interactions among people, appreciate the forms created by nature, and study the light as it moves through the day. These observations were first recorded through drawing, which quickly led to painting and then sculpture; however, photography has received the majority of my time, effort and focus.”

He continued, “This collection of my work documents the blues legend Mac Arnold, a world-class musician living and farming near the small rural community Fork Shoals, at the southern tip of Greenville County. Mac’s talents have taken him from the cotton fields of South Carolina to stages around the world, working alongside some of the greatest musicians in blues and soul music: Muddy Waters, James Brown, B.B. King, Otis Redding, Tyrone Davis and Quincy Jones to name a few. Two very notable blues albums in which Mac played bass are John Lee Hooker’s Live at Café Au Go Go and Otis Span’s The Blues is Where It’s At. He also worked with Don Cornelius to help develop the television show Soul Train. Along with his phenomenal band, Plate Full O’ Blues, Mac has recorded four albums and continues to tour stages around the world.”

In 2010, Mac Arnold was honored with a Blues Music Award for his contribution to the 1967 performance of the Muddy Waters Authorized Bootleg, Live from the Fillmore West. And in 2014, he was recognized by the University of South Carolina with an honorary Doctorate of Music. Mac has recently opened his own restaurant and music venue in the Village of West Greenville, serving up soul on the plate and the stage.

Brian added, “For nearly a decade, I have worked closely with Mac Arnold capturing images that portray him as both musician and farmer. Through this exhibit we can travel with Mac from the field to the stage, and follow a man who is as dedicated to making music and growing food as he is to helping others.”

Kelley’s studies have included work at Erskine College, Savannah College of Art and Design, Greenville Technical College. He received his B.A. in IDS: Studio and Art History from the University of South Carolina.

In coordination with the I Can Do Anything Foundation, fifty Percent of any sales from this exhibit will be donated by the artist to support the Dr. Mac Arnold Scholarship Fund at USC Upstate. The scholarship will be granted annually to students seeking a major in the Arts.

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The Pickens County Museum of Art & History is funded in part by Pickens County, members and friends of the museum and a grant from the South Carolina Arts Commission, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.
Located at the corner of Hwy. 178 at 307 Johnson Street in Pickens SC, the museum is open:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. until 7:30 p.m.

Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Admission is free but donations are welcomed.

For more information please contact the museum at (864) 898-5963.