

West Main Artists Co-op in Spartanburg, SC, Features Works by Mayo “Mac” Boggs

A lifetime of work by one of Spartanburg, SC’s most celebrated artists, the late Mayo “Mac” Boggs, will be presented at West Main Artists Co-op, from May 2 through May 31, 2018, celebrating 43 years of international recognition and acclaim. This extensive collection of sculptures and 2-dimensional works-of-art, will be presented in the Co-op’s Venue Gallery, as *Mac Boggs: A Retrospective*. The public is invited to a reception on May 17, from 5-9pm, during the city’s monthly ArtWalk. His widow, Ansley Boggs, Ph.D., will give a free artist’s talk between 6:30-7 p.m.

“This will be West Main’s most important exhibit for the year,” Venue Committee Chair Dwight Rose said. “There is probably no other Spartanburg artist who has achieved as much recognition and respect as Mac Boggs. His work is literally around the world.”

Boggs passed away on Mar. 10, 2014, at the age of 71, due to heart disease. At that time, he was retired from teaching art at Converse College, where he retained the distinction of Professor Emeritus of Art. Dr. Boggs survives him and has worked with Rose to curate this retrospective exhibit at the Co-op.

“Mac always believed in artists supporting each other, so he loved that WMAC established an influential and supportive artist community,” Dr. Boggs said, “Mac was legendary for his mentoring and support of fellow and budding artists. While supporting well-known artists, Mac always sought out those artists of whom no one might be aware, whether because they hadn’t exhibited, or because they didn’t recognize themselves as artists. Frequently, people in the community attributed their artistic success to his encouragement and generosity in sharing his talent and time. He was a creative inspiration to all!”

“Artist Winston Wingo enjoys telling the story of a rainy night, when he was in high school, and he knocked on Mac Boggs’ front door,” she recalled. “When Mac answered, Winston said, ‘I hear you’re the new sculptor in town.’ Mac responded affirmatively, and Winston replied, ‘Well, I’m a sculptor too, and I want to do what you do!’ They remained friends for the rest of Mac’s life.”

The exhibit will include many abstract and non-representational metal and bronze sculptures, for which he is most known. However, the exhibit will also have marble constructions, paintings, computer graphics, prints, photographs of commissioned art, sketches of proposed sculpture, awards, newspaper articles, models of proposals, and letters from students and colleagues. “I hope that people appreciate Mac’s amazing versatility and creativity, as well as sense his inspiration, enthusiasm and passion for creating art and teaching,” she said.

“Over a 40-year period, I have interacted with Boggs and observed him using his energy, talent, and expertise to become a driving force behind the development of the visual arts program at Converse College,” Wingo has been quoted. “Since my high school years, he has served as a role model to help guide my career in arts education. Boggs’ immeasurable contributions to his students, Converse College, as well as his community, are evidence of exemplary leadership in the field.”

Boggs was born and raised in Ashland, KY. He earned a bachelor’s degree in art from the University of Kentucky and a master’s degree of fine arts (sculpture) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. From 1970-2013, Boggs was the professor of sculpture at Converse College in Spartanburg. He received numerous awards and honors, and in 1991, he was named Honorary Artist of Spartanburg by proclamation of the Mayor. In 2000, the Mayor proclaimed a “Mayo Mac Boggs Day.”

In 2008, he was selected to serve as a Technical Collaborator for the Lynne



Work by Mayo “Mac” Boggs

Streeter Art and Marble Stone-carving Summer Workshop of Pietrasanta, Italy. In 2010, Boggs was honored by Converse College, Wofford College, and USC-Upstate with a 40-year retrospective exhibition on each of the three campuses. And in 2013, he received the Elizabeth O’Neill Verner Governor’s Award for the Arts, South Carolina highest arts award.

Boggs is well known for his metal sculptures in steel, stainless steel, and bronze. His work is in the presidential libraries of former United States presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. His work is located internationally in permanent collections of numerous corporations. In addition, he has received sculpture commissions for public parks, libraries, college campuses, schools, local businesses, and private residences, two of which were for the home of the author, Lillian Jackson Braun. Though he is best known for his metal sculptures, Boggs also carved marble and soapstone, and exhibited his photography and digital art. He frequently participated in local, regional, national, and international exhibitions. Also, he often served as a guest speaker for lecture-demonstrations.

“The welded steel sculpture has remained a constant as my medium of expression,” he once said. “I love the look, feel, taste, smell and sound of steel. My great-grandfather was a blacksmith in Kentucky; both my grandfathers and my father were welders and steelworkers. I grew up watching steel pouring from the blast furnaces and the nightly spectacular display of slag being dumped from huge, railroad-sized crucibles. I walked the railroad tracks and picked up scrap metal that had fallen from freight cars. The ironworker’s material and process were an everyday part of my childhood in Ashland, KY. I have taken this material and its process and made art, continuing a family tradition of ironwork.”

Dr. Boggs, who is college professor of education, has collected much of her husband’s work and related materials, such as published articles and photographs. From her stores of information, she relayed this quote by her husband, “I have enjoyed being a participant in my students’ growth in self-confidence, in the development of their creativity, and in their experiences as proud contributors to the art world. I teach them to be unafraid, to ignore rejection, to be confident. One can do anything that she sets her mind to do. Many students come with little self-confidence and knowledge and exposure to the art world, the world of the arts. I encourage and help students get experience. I developed over the years internship programs which gave students exposure to working in art studios, major art auction houses, fabric design studios, interior design studios, and museums in cities, such as London, New York, Atlanta, etc. I also developed travel programs to major art centers in the United States and Europe.”

All of the work in the Co-op exhibit will be on sale, ranging in price from \$125 to \$2,500. All proceeds will be donated to the development of the Mac and Ansley

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Boggs Travel Scholarship Fund for Converse College art and education majors who do not have the financial means to travel. Boggs believed strongly in the importance of travel to a student’s art and life, his widow said.

In preparation for his 2010 40th-year retrospective, Boggs wrote, “What inspires sculptors to produce the images they do? Sculptors have an innate desire to build things. They are usually very hands on, mechanically inclined, and technically oriented. Many come from a physically oriented background-the results of an unscientific poll showed that many sculptors were high school athletes. Sculptors are kin to architects who dream of objects in three dimensions. As children, we were the ones who played with erector sets and building blocks-the ones always



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using hammers and nails. These were the people who thought outside the box, literally.”

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings or visit (www.WestMainArtists.org).

West Main Artists Co-op in Spartanburg, SC, Features Works by Stephen A. Chapp

Pickens County printmaker and artist Stephen A. Chapp will exhibit a large collection of his work in the exhibit, *Observer Observed*, on view at Spartanburg, SC’s West Main Artists Co-op, through May 12, 2018.

This exhibit is giving the public extensive insight to his American ancestors, especially during the Civil War. Within the more-than 26 unique hand-pulled prints are historic family photos, written documents, and original drawings that Chapp used to create print collages, monoprints, and etchings using various printmaking techniques. The print collages are new constructions using older or current prints to create new compositions that he would not otherwise have made.

“Visitors will see original hand-pulled prints and print collages with some mixed media that represent several printmaking methods that include intaglio, relief, monoprints, and monotypes,” Chapp said. “These are works that in some cases show crows as observers peeking at others, and, in other instances, they represent me as the observer. We all might look at our surrounding, but are we observers?”

Many of the prints have a somber attitude, using dark images and colors. Often, the subject has a ghost-like figure in the composition; very often there is a black crow in the image. The black crow is a symbol that Chapp has used throughout this artistic career. It represents an ever-present non-judgmental observer of humankind. The finished images are often layered and invite to the viewer to hypothesize what the story is behind the print. “I think of them as mysterious and at times dark,” he said. “But at the same time compelling to look at.” He recommends that patrons “look close at the works.”

“I am always inspired by my observations of people and my surroundings,” the 65-year-old Chapp said. “This particular body of work shows a move in my subject matter to explore my ancestors and what I have discovered about them. In particular is a great-great-grandfather who fought with the Union during the Civil War and left letters that describe his travels. The letters are but a glimpse of a man I never met. But having read them and the stories discovered within these letters, I know much more about his life during those troubling times.

“I hope that the audience will see an artist’s energy in making marks that tell a story and that they can add to this story in their own interpretations of the imagery,” he continued. “I want then to understand that printmaking is not a simple process and that each image comes from working in various printmaking techniques and methods to arrive a finished plate to either make a limited edition or a singular unique image.”

The bulk of this exhibit was created during the past six months with some of the images coming from a 2017 exhibit at if ART Gallery in Columbia, SC. All of the works will be for sale. Chapp is not a member of West Main Artists Co-op, but he is no stranger to the Spartanburg-based arts group. “I was excited to be asked by a



Work by Stephen A. Chapp

former colleague to exhibit with WMAC,” he said. “I have shown there before in the past in juried shows, but not in a solo exhibit. WMAC has been an influential and positive art institution for Spartanburg bringing art exhibits and studio opportunities to the area.”

Chapp is a native of Kansas City, MO, but spent his teen years in the Bay Area of California and his college years in the Carolinas. He has a bachelor’s degree in art education from Appalachian State University with a major in printmaking and drawing. Also, he has a master’s degree in printmaking and drawing from Clemson University. Retired from public education after 29 years, Chapp has taught classes and workshops in various media, including printmaking at the Greenville County Museum of Art; as an adjunct instructor for Clemson in Genoa, Italy; Fine Arts Center in Greenville, SC; South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities in Greenville; Coastal Carolina University, Presbyterian College; and at his print studio Black Dog Press in Easley. Currently, he lives Dacusville, an Upstate community.

Chapp has received various awards and recognition for his art, and his works are in private and public collections regionally and nationally. if ART Gallery represents Chapp, and he has had several solo and group exhibits during the past 15 years. Among his contributions to the arts, Chapp coordinates invitational art exhibits in the Narthex art gallery at the Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Greenville. He is a founding member and current vice chair of the Contemporary Print Collective, a group of Upstate South Carolina printmakers who work in the various print media and are dedicated to elevating the public awareness to the fine art of printmaking.

Chapp has directed two print exchanges - *Shifting Plates I* and *Shifting Plates II* - organizing them to travel throughout the Carolinas. Most recently, he helped organize two print fairs at the Greenville Center for Creative Arts.

“My maternal grandfather introduced me to the printed images on postage stamps, which is still an interest of mine,” Chapp said. “I have always enjoyed the process of making a singular or repeatable image creating marks on a surface be it wood, metal or on an acrylic plate. Printmaking, regardless of the process, is a medium in which I feel compelled to do this. It is my objective to create images

continued on Page 22