

West Main Artists Co-op

continued from Page 21

that not only speak of marks but to have marks that speak for the image. It is how many artists arrange their marks that an image is resolved be it from the initial sketches or the final image.”

“As an artist,” Chapp continued, “I am foremost an observer of things around me, whether they be the landscape, people or animal. In many of my images I use the crow as metaphor for humankind. To me the crow is an observer, a watcher of events, the ever present watchful eye. As an artist I am interested in narrative images, which goes back to my childhood when I was attracted to the illustrations in books. I was far more interested in the story I found in the illustrations than the words on the page. I could use my imagination to create my own story. I want my images to tell a story and for the viewers to read what they will into the images. The recent works have included images of actual ancestors that at times include the presence of a crow, the observer. As I investigated my ancestors’ letters and stories I became the observer wondering about their lives and daily interactions. In the works absent of the crow we viewers become the observer of a past life.”

West Main Artists Co-op in Spartanburg, SC, Features Works by Elizabeth Bagwell

Spartanburg, SC, artist, Elizabeth Bagwell, will exhibit her latest collection of work, *The Southerner Abroad: A Modern Lifestyle Installation*, on view at West Main Artists Co-op in Spartanburg, from May 17 through June 16, 2018. A reception will be held on May 17, from 5-9pm during the city’s monthly ArtWalk.

This new collection is a vibrant mix of 40-plus paintings on canvas, paper, and metal based on the energy and movement drawn from vintage photographs of Paris, France, from the late 1930s to early 1940s.

Bagwell, known as an abstract expressionist, will present work that invokes raw emotion through the use of thick and thin lines, often using a single color in subtle, varying shades. As a professional artist, this is her first solo exhibit. Bagwell’s work is often described as bold, raw, and mid-century modern with a sense of energy and drama through her use of dark versus light. She works in a variety of mediums including acrylic, latex, ink, charcoal, vintage and found papers, pastels, and hand cut/torn paper.

“This exhibit was inspired by souvenir photographs my paternal grandfather, Clyde E. Bagwell Sr. picked up in Paris, France, during World War II,” the artist said. “He showed them once or twice to me as a young child. He was quiet about his time in the military but those photographs have always stood out in my memory. They captured a moment in time – a glimpse of daily life and its many stages – a time gone by.

“I went through over two dozen photographs and selected six to eight that were visually very strong – energy seemed to be jumping off the page – whether due to the lines of buildings – thick and thin – or due to individuals looking like small ants scurrying about their daily life through bustling city streets,” she continued. “It is from these photographs that I set to work creating my lines and many layers. I stripped these images of buildings, landscaping, and people down to the bare bones – their most basic shapes – rectangles, circles, squares, half-circles, and clean, uncomplicated lines. From there I worked to capture the vivacity of each snapshot and translate it through mark-making and color placement to create vibrant, strong, raw works of art.”

Bagwell, is a native of Spartanburg and a graduate of Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC. She holds a degree in history and a minor in art administration. She has been creating her entire life and pursuing

“I look at this exhibit as an opportunity to educate the public about original printmaking,” Chapp said. “There is a misconception that prints are a second-class art medium. Often I have been asked when people look at my art, ‘where is the original?’ The works are not reproductions: They are original works constructed by hand and pulled from the plate by hand by the artist.”

West Main Artists Co-op is a nonprofit, all-volunteer arts group on West Main Street in Spartanburg. It is housed in the former West Main Baptist Church and is continuously renovated by its members who are 50-plus strong. It provides affordable work spaces for more than 30 artists in the 20,000-square-foot building. In addition, the Co-op has the largest collection of locally made art for sale with extremely diverse buying options, including pottery, jewelry, paintings, sculptures, quilts. Each month, the Co-op hosts three new exhibits by its members and nonmembers, some of whom enjoy regional and even national recognition.

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



Work by Elizabeth Bagwell

her creative pursuits professionally for several years now. She is a juried member of the Artists’ Guild of Spartanburg, a member of the Guild of American Paper-cutters, the Society of Children’s Book Writers & Illustrators, and the Spartanburg Downtown Association.

In the winter of 2017 she was a guest artist at the SC Governor’s Conference on Tourism & Travel held in Spartanburg, where she did a live, freehand cutting of pineapple silhouettes. Bagwell is continually inspired by post war contemporary artists Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell, Perle Fine, and modern masters Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, as well as South Carolina silhouette artist Carew Rice.

Much of the work in this exhibit hints at a playfulness seen in Matisse’s later life, large-scale paper cuttings or blue nude series. Dramatic gestural lines as often seen in the work of Motherwell, Kline, and Fine come to the forefront ushering in an understated complexity. Many of the pieces are abstract verging on being non-representational. Yet, there is a sense of seeing something for the first time, life stripped down to the bare bones. Bagwell’s work brings about an appreciation for and a new understanding to life in its most primal form. “This collection of work is characteristic of my abstract work in many ways but is also a further exploration of light vs. dark and the push and pull of shape and form in composition,” Bagwell said.

“You can expect to see lots of texture

continued above on next column to the right

– whether it’s handmade watercolor paper or layers upon layers of paint, charcoal, pastel, and ink. Texture and truly a rawness to my work are what you will find. I have a deep fascination with lines, shapes, and the push and pull they create with one another. I am drawn to deeply saturated colors and finding a soft, quiet counterbalance with white, pale shades of blue, and tan/ off-white. It’s a shock to the system – but a delightful shock – one that will keep you thinking long after you view the painting in person.”

Bagwell outlined her method for creating this collection, “Many people are probably curious as to how I begin each piece. My process is pretty similar regardless of the surface I will be working on. I begin by looking at photographs and asking myself, ‘What do I see? What shapes? What energy is jumping off the photograph to me?’ Then I do several quick thumbnail sketches to capture my initial reactions to the lines and action in the image. After that, I look at my sketches and really zoom in on a small portion of the sketch that I think has the most interest – the most life to it. From there I grab one of my favorite tools, charcoal, and lay down lines on the canvas based on my initial sketch. At that point, many, many layers begin to form and build upon one another. As the layers begin to build, I then start to scrape them back to expose the many levels of paint, pastel, charcoal, etc. until I feel the piece is done. Often I strip back layers and then add new layers. It is a constant game of balance until I find the right stopping point.”

All of the work will be for sale, ranging in price from \$30 to \$4,700. “I appreciate

the opportunity that an organization like WMAC offers me – a venue to exhibit and sell my work, the chance to connect with fellow artists and collectors, and the Spartanburg community at large. It’s priceless!” Bagwell said.

“Another very important part of this exhibition is my goal of creating a home-like setting to showcase my art – allowing viewers to understand how local, original art can be displayed in their own homes,” Bagwell added. “I will be including touches like live plants, a gallery-style wall grouping featuring a variety of new and vintage frames with small to medium works. Fabric featuring designs from my paintings are also in the works.”

In her artist’s statement, Bagwell says, “I am fascinated with creative use of negative space in my work. In particular, I love circles and bold, thick, super-dark lines that ooze energy and movement. I like to work with contrast, that push and pull of quiet versus movement and energy in a piece. And you’ll see that I frequently work in black and white with subtle shades of tan, cream, and gray to soften the palette. Laying down that first instinctual mark or making the first cut of a silhouette brings excitement and fear but teaches me to slow down, enjoy the experience of creating, and to discover beauty in the small details – some planned, some unplanned.” Bagwell works in several mediums and focuses on abstract expressionist paintings, freehand cut silhouettes, mixed media works, and watercolor illustrations.

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

Greenville Technical College in Greenville, SC, Features Works by Alice Ballard

Greenville Technical College in Greenville, SC, is presenting *Walk Remembered*, an installation of white work by Alice Ballard, on view at the RIVERWORKS Gallery, through May 26, 2018. A reception will be held on May 4, from 6-9pm.

Nature conjures images of the power of fecundity, the quiet of meditation, and the sensuousness of form. Though nature is often equated with vastness, the ocean or the Blue Ridge on a drive to Asheville, we overlook the magic that each of us are of nature. All life is either born, hatched or sprouted.

Alice Ballard reminds us that the miracle of nature is often condensed into the smallest pod, fruit, or twig that we step on or bypass in our rush to scenic grandeur.

Ballard began making her “White Works” in the 1980’s after ...“discovering a bag of tulip bulbs beneath my studio sink that I had forgotten to plant in the fall.” These bulbs had sprouted in the damp dark. A number of years later the “... series focused on the often tiny natural objects I pick up on my walks.”

Ballard creates a *Walk Remembered* by arranging and grouping her sculptural clay forms on low pedestals that make a winding path through RIVERWORKS giving us a similar perspective for making our own discoveries on our walks. Her “White Work” is white earthenware burnished with white terra sigillata. Each is a hand built sculpture based on the small, often overlooked bits of nature, a shell, a seed, a twig. Through her exquisite craft she elevates these found natural bits and pieces to create a space of contemplation and appreciation of grandeur on a smaller scale.

Though white has a number of personal associations for Ballard, creating these works in white heightens our appreciation of their form without the distraction of color. She recounts, “Nature to me is a



Work by Alice Ballard

constant reminder of the interconnectedness of all things. My attention is drawn to natural forms that become symbolic of rebirth, hope and renewal.”

Ballard’s “White Works” relate to her life’s journey through happiness and pain from Charlotte to Alaska to Greenville. As a self-described “eternal optimist” she beckons us to calmly and with spiritual grace join her on *Walk Remembered*.

Ballard is retiring from teaching in Greenville. She and her spouse are building a home in an orchard that will provide fertile ground to discover more natural forms for her “White Works”. Ballard has made art in an international ceramic colony in Macedonia and in India on a Fulbright Grant. She muses that her time in Alaska influenced her delight in white. For Ballard, “White is like pure potential.”

RIVERWORKS Gallery is operated by and for the faculty and students of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Greenville Technical College. The gallery is located along the scenic Reedy River in downtown Greenville, SC.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the gallery at 864/271-0679, e-mail to (elizabeth.markel@gvltec.edu), or visit (www.gvltec.edu/dva) and click on RIVERWORKS.

Every once in a while I feel like just filling one of these spaces with a kind of nothingness. You know as if nobody reads what’s in these spaces anyway. So if one time I said something like the first person to read this and send me an e-mail to (info@carolinaarts.com) during the month of May, they’ll get a free 1/4 ad in our June 2018 issue. But who reads these space fillers anyway? Not many I bet.

The deadline each month to submit articles, photos and ads is the 24th of the month prior to the next issue. This will be May 24th for the June 2018 issue and June 24th for the July issue. After that, it’s too late unless your exhibit runs into the next month. But don’t wait for the last minute - send your info now. And where do you send that info? E-mail to (info@carolinaarts.com).