

# Fine Arts Center of Kershaw County in Camden, SC, Features Works by Philip Hultgren and Stephen Nevitt

The Fine Arts Center of Kershaw County in Camden, SC, is presenting *Traditions & Perceptions*, featuring works by Philip Hultgren and Stephen Nevitt, on view in the Bassett Gallery, through May 10, 2019.

Philip Hultgren is a self-taught woodworker living in Camden who uses the natural beauty of wood for his artistic creations. From furniture to wall pieces, and turnings to doors, he captures the harmony that naturally exists in a tree by using all that wood has to offer. His work includes heartwood and voids from decay, insect damage and glorious grain and lots of natural edge that anchor his pieces in real life. With an economy of design influenced by George Nakashima and a passion for stepping just outside the bounds of the traditional ala Constantine Brancusi, Hultgren's works excel at displaying the beauty wood has naturally.



Work by Stephen Nevitt

of New York, College at Oswego where he studied with Tom Seawell and George O'Connell.

Nevitt's work has been featured in numerous exhibits, including one-person shows at Anderson University, City Art of Columbia, SC, Columbia College, Florence Museum of Art, Fine Arts Center of Greenville, Francis Marion University, Kentucky Wesleyan College, Lander University, Lipscomb Gallery at the SC Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, Newberry College, State University of New York at Oswego, University of South Carolina Upstate, and numerous other places.

The Fine Arts Center is funded in part by grants from Duke Energy, the South Carolina Arts Commission, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the City of Camden, Kershaw County, and BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, along with donations from businesses and individuals.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Center at 803/425-7676 or visit ([www.fineartscenter.org](http://www.fineartscenter.org)).



Work by Philip Hultgren

Stephen Nevitt is a Professor of Art and Chair of the Art Program at Columbia College where he has been on faculty since 1976. He has a BFA degree from the University of South Carolina where he studied primarily with Boyd Saunders and Philip Mullen. Nevitt has a graduate degree in printmaking from the State University

# Sumter County Gallery of Art in Sumter, SC, Features Works by Michi Meko & Angela Davis Johnson

The Sumter County Gallery of Art in Sumter, SC, is presenting *And Then There Was Sky*, featuring works by Michi Meko and *Weatherin' Between the Canebrake Blues*, featuring works by Angela Davis Johnson, on view through June 21, 2019.

Multidisciplinary artist Michi Meko (b. 1974, Florence, AL) draws influence from Southern culture and contemporary urban. He received a BFA in Painting from the University of North Alabama. Meko's work has been featured in recent solo exhibitions at Dodd Galleries, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; University of North Georgia, Dahlonega, GA; and the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center. Recent grants and awards include a Joan Mitchell Award, Artadia Award, MOCA GA Fellowship, a Flux Projects Grant and a residency at the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center. Meko was also under consideration for 2019 Whitney Biennial, NYC. Meko lives and works in Atlanta and is represented by Alan Avery Art Company in Atlanta and E.C. Lina Gallery, Los Angeles, CA.

In addition to being a serious artist, Meko is also an avid fisherman. He infuses his hobby with a spirituality that informs his work, and vice versa.

Meko offered the following artist statement: "In the summer of 2015, I almost drowned. Inviting the influence of this life-changing event into my studio practice, my recent paintings and sculptures focus on the African American experience of navigating public spaces while remaining buoyant within them. This work contributes to an important conversation, as African Americans in public spaces are consistently threatened, now more visibly and openly with the sharing offered by social media. This barrage of images simulates an experience of drowning under the heavy weight of ten thousand pounds of pressure while being held to the ocean's floor."

"The work incorporates the visual language of naval flags and nautical wayfinding, combined with romanticized objects of



Work by Michi Meko

the American South as a means to communicate the psychological and the physical," adds Meko. "These references signal the warning of a threat, or the possibility of safe passage. Working beyond the physical image of the body, objects of buoyancy and navigation become metaphors for selfhood, resilience, and the sanity required in the turbulent oceans of contemporary America. The use of navigation is one of the skills required for any journey. At a youthful age this knowledge is taught through oral history and becomes the framework for understanding a past and a present mobility. It is the necessary visual device for future expeditions and one's survival."

Michi Meko refers to his artistic practice as Mekovision. His Sumter exhibition will feature two on-site installations as well as his large scale 2- and 3-dimensional work. He will give an artist talk on June 8.

Angela Davis Johnson is also a multidisciplinary artist whose art relies heavily on storytelling and the evolving identity of

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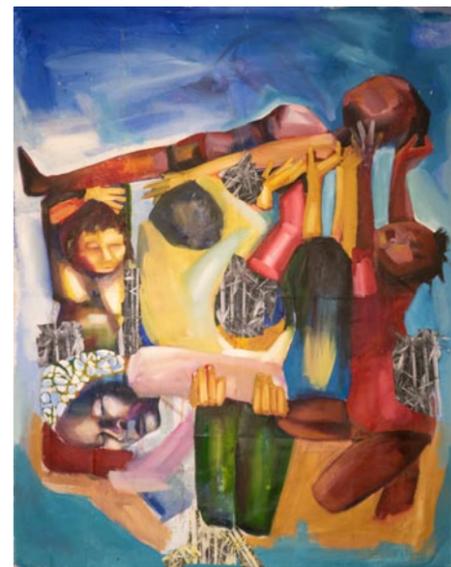
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FIBER ART & ANTIQUE PRINTS

black people throughout history. A mostly self-taught artist, she highlights overlooked aspects of Black life - facial expressions, the struggles and joys of daily living and personal style. Her textured work combines oil paints, scrap paper, and fabric - the latter a homage to her seamstress mother. Born and raised in Arkansas, Johnson moved to Atlanta in 2014. She's had work displayed at Elevate Atlanta and Mason Murer Fine Art, as well as galleries across the South, from North Carolina to Texas and Mississippi.

Johnson always considered herself to be an artist even as a child. When she was 4 years old, her mother decided to go back to school for fashion design. What she learned in class she would share with her daughter. Johnson attended a magnet school for the arts in Norfolk, VA, where she had access to equipment and skills - printmaking, oil painting, exhibition prep - at the local college and university. When she was 14, Johnson's family moved back to rural Arkansas and lived off the grid and on the land for several years. It was during this time that she learned to lean into her artistry as a method of healing. She utilized found objects and paint to help process traumatic events and life in general.

The subjects of Johnson's work range from women foraging, or gathering at a bus stop to the ancestral pain of American lynchings, or domestic violence. The choice of color and economy of brushstrokes she uses to create the human form is her way of illuminating the soul within. Each color and mark reflects an emotion or spirit. Johnson often turns to fabric because it is reminder of her mother's work. Her portrayal of the black experience is something that is past, present, and future - something that spans beyond this current moment. Finding ways of recognizing the universal within the specific is what Johnson wants to explore. There has to be a space for creating outside of our current reality, in addition to the transformative work people are doing through policy changes and disrupting societal complacency through protest. Johnson notes, we must do something to counteract the narratives of violence, fear, and scarcity,



Work by Angela Davis Johnson

not only because it distorts and destroys who we are as a society, but also because our children are watching us and emulating this madness.

Johnson observes: "I was told a long time ago that making a life as an artist is impossible. I am a Southern black woman who did not have a lot of money growing up. Every time I get the opportunity to share a painting, an installation, a performance, I do not take it lightly. I honor the yes. I value the space made for me by hopes of generations before me. I honor all the women in my family who were told no but kept dreaming anyway. I make art to remember who I am when the world tries to define me by my race, my gender, my socioeconomic status, my sexuality, my education. I make art to make myself big in freedom - big enough to make space for my children's children to dwell in."

Karen Watson, Executive Director, notes, as with all that we do at the Gallery, these exhibitions would not be possible without the support of our community partners: the Sumter County Cultural Commission which receives support from the John & Susan Bennett Arts Fund of the Coastal Community Foundation of SC, the SC Arts Commission and the National Endowment

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