

# Artists Collective | Spartanburg, SC, Features Works by Cancer Survivors

Artists Collective | Spartanburg, in Spartanburg, SC, will present *Direct Experience: Survivors*, featuring works by Upstate artists who share works created out of surviving cancer, on view in the Solomon Gallery, from Aug. 3 - 28, 2021. A reception will be held on Aug. 19, from 5-9pm.

Ten Upstate people who live very different lives have come together under the shared experience of surviving cancer to create an exhibition of their artworks, entitled *Direct Experience: Survivors*.

"We don't always, or for that matter, very often, deal with the actual subject of cancer," says Susanne Floyd Gunter, one of the exhibiting artists who also is coordinating the show. "Some have, but typically we have moved into areas where it may be difficult for anyone to see us as anything but regular artists. After going through cancer, I think a lot of us think it is important to keep working and making art about our experiences with our 'new life.'"

Direct Experience is a group of Upstate artists united by the commonality of being cancer survivors. In addition to Gunter, who paints in a variety of media, members of the group include Carole Knudson Tinsley (painting), Christina Laurel (paper, creative installations, mixed media 2-D work), Linda Williams McCune (sculpture, drawing), Diane Hopkins Hughs (photography), Carol Funke (handmade paper, watercolor, pen/ink), Cheryl LeCroy (jewelry), Elisa Golden (watercolor), Becky "Bex" Collins (encaustic and mixed media) and Mike Stoner (woodturning).



Work by Becky "Bex" Collins

Visitors to the exhibition can expect to see about 45 works ranging from paintings, drawings, sculpture and jewelry that demonstrate the artists' engagement with life, says Gunter, chair of the Department of Art and Design at Converse University in Spartanburg. "We want people to understand that 'cancer' is just a word. It does not have to take over your life." The artwork will be available for purchase, ranging from \$100 to \$2,500.

"There is so much said and written about cancer," says Gunter, who was diagnosed in February 2016 with stage 1 breast cancer. "As artists, we wanted to move beyond the conversation and establish a new topic - where do we go with our work after cancer?"

Toward the end of months of treatment of testing, surgery and radiation, Gunter experienced non-drug-associated "flashbacks" along with physical burns. "I realized that I was dealing with a phenomenological event and life was not the same," she says. "The flashbacks took me to various places real, imagined and conjured from fragments in my life."

Using a phenomenological approach

# Artists Collective | Spartanburg, SC, Features Works by Wadi Cantrell and Amy Morris

Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, will present *Off the Chain*, a woven art exhibition featuring works by Wadi Cantrell and Amy Morris, on view in Gallery III, from Aug. 3 - 28, 2021. A reception will be held on Aug. 19, from 5-9pm.



Work by Elisa Golden

during her healing this summer, Gunter began reviewing her life and art and how she wanted to continue to develop her role as an artist, researcher and teacher. "With the charge to create a body of 'works on paper,' revisiting and recreating the places from my visions became my objective. Landscape has always figured significantly in my work even when it was not the main subject matter; however, my new views reflected the impressions, colors, land and water forms that held meaning in and of themselves and that were not tied to a particular place in the real world but would be an assimilation of places in my past, present or mind's eye. Indeed, what a long, strange trip it has been. The focus in my art-making would shift this year to where art making would take on even more importance in my life as a healing tool."

Cheryl LeCroy began making jewelry in 2011 after being diagnosed with breast cancer. "To keep my mind active and engaged while taking chemo, I started making jewelry during each five-hour chemo treatment. At the end of six treatments, I had six finished pieces of jewelry called my 'triumph jewels,'" she says. "I used this time to explore jewelry fabrication and found that it brought me great joy."

"My journey with cancer has completely transformed my life, and in addition to jewelry fabrication, I also provide coaching to help other cancer survivors with diet, nutrition, and wellness," she continues.

Mike Stoner says woodturning and oral cancer will always be connected for him. "I was diagnosed with cancer within three days of my first gallery showing of wood-turned art. Woodturning became an unveiling of the core - an artful recycling, a search for what is within, a type of open introspective process of both artist and wood, a meditation."

"Art was the constant companion and looking for the life-lines in the wood and attempting to enhance the beauty in the natural forms became synonymous with my healing journey," Stoner continues. "The new perspective remains, and I am forever grateful. Peace, light and Love - that's the story."

The Artists Collective | Spartanburg, is located on W. Main Street, provides a forum and home for the arts and creative population of Spartanburg, providing facilities and services to artist members for exhibits, performances and creation.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings or visit ([artistscollectivespartanburg.org](http://artistscollectivespartanburg.org)).

on view in Gallery III, from Aug. 3 - 28, 2021. A reception will be held on Aug. 19, from 5-9pm.

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"With this exhibition, I hope to convey that modern artistry includes textiles and traditions that span generations," says Cantrell, who describes herself as "an Afro-Latina and a Dominican Jersey girl."

"Everyday objects can be art, anything that requires fabric is a potential show piece," she adds.

"The exhibit is created using traditional techniques from the yarn being hand dyed by myself and other artists and then woven by hand on looms," Cantrell says.

"This is a collaboration of two artists - myself and Amy Morris - creating wearable art that functions as baby wearing wraps, cowls, scarves and framed pieces."

"The art of weaving serves many purposes, all with function and beauty," says Amy Morris, who will exhibit wearable art as well as wall hangings. "The traditions and techniques passed down from weaver to weaver are sacred. My career as an artist centers primarily around creating baby-wearing pieces for caregivers to use for their babies and children."

"With this exhibit, I would like to show several of the forms weaving can take outside of basic cloth," she adds.



Work by Wadi Cantrell

"I hope that viewers are inspired by the interpretation of color on cloth and an appreciation of living traditions," says Cantrell, who received an associate degree in communication arts from Brookdale Community College in New Jersey and

# Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, Features Works by Janis McElligott

The Artists Collective | Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, will present *A Dog's Life: Service, Devotion and Forgiveness*, featuring works by Janis McElligott, on view in Gallery II, from Aug. 3 - 28, 2021. A reception will be held on Aug. 19, from 5-9pm.

We hear the expression "it's a dog's life," but what does it really mean? Upstate artist Janis McElligott sets out to answer it in her latest exhibition.

The exhibition of 20 of her acrylic paintings is a "message of service," McElligott says. "Dogs are all around us, all the time. We mostly think of them as canine companions or we don't think about them at all, other than maybe wishing they'd be quiet, or when someone failed to pick up their dog's poop in the park. This exhibit focuses on some of the ways that dogs are there for us, to help us even in our local communities."



Work by Janis McElligott

McElligott used local dogs as her subjects. "You'll see the K9s from the Greer Police Department, dogs in training veterans at South Carolina Service Dogs for Vets and a guide dog from the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina."



Work by Amy Morris

pursued a BFA in graphic design from the University of South Carolina Upstate.

"The colors are inspired by my Caribbean heritage and incorporate a Taino Spirit line," she adds. Nine pieces will be exhibited; all will be offered for sale with prices ranging from \$75 to \$500.

"This work is a departure from my previous work as previous mediums have been painting and graphic design," Cantrell says. "Being a 'Jack of all trades,' I have found a meditative practice in weaving, from setting each piece up to the intricate patterns that are woven, turning simple yarn into living, usable art."

She adds that the exhibit was prompted by support from senior Collective members. "Had it not been for their constant, gentle nudging, it probably wouldn't have happened. What I like about the Collective is the positive and inspirational environment, how inclusive it is, and how the members are positive and encouraging."

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Work by Janis McElligott

The show's focus is on what dogs do to help protect, save, support and give independence to people."

The paintings were done using photographs of the dogs in action. "It took three different photographers to capture the images that lent themselves to artistic interpretation," McElligott says. "It took a lot of people to give me the chance to capture these dogs. The paintings express engagement and emotion that could not have been accomplished with using stock photos."

The exhibition focuses on several groups of dogs: law enforcement K9s, service dogs for veterans, guide dogs for the blind, water-saving dogs and abandoned dogs. "Visitors to the show will see paintings of these dogs engaging in work or their portraits," she says. "They are all

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