

# Mark Bettis Gallery

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peoples' hearts here.

The title of the show comes from a poem by mystic poet Rumi, "We are the mountain. You are the sounds coming down". Providing spiritual sanctuary, refuge, natural beauty and wonder, the Blue Ridge Mountains are a constant source of inspiration for local artists. Created with the heavily impastoed, and expressive use of oil paint that the artist is known for, the paintings depict moments of inspiration, or what Sheldon likes to call 'ecstatic moments' with people and nature.

Sheldon's sculptural works explore, in three dimensions, the underlying, universal forces of nature the artist experiences on his frequent hikes 'up mountain'.

Sheldon received a BFA in Painting from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1984, which included a formative year spent painting in Rome, Italy, as part of RISD's European Honors Program. As a grad student, Sheldon brought sculpture into the mix. His thesis show for his MFA in 1990,

at the University of Maryland, incorporated large-scale, mixed-media paintings, as well as sculptural works.

Sheldon continues to create cutting-edge sculptural works in metal, as well as provocative public art. Modernist sculpture, with its emphasis on the dynamics of form and space, continues to be a major influence in his work. Sheldon endeavors to create what he calls "spatial music".

Mark Bettis Gallery offers unique and distinctive works of art in a variety of mediums including contemporary paintings, glass, and sculptural work, as well as a variety of rotating exhibitions by local and nationally acclaimed artists. The River Arts District Gallery is a working art studio and gallery, where visitors can observe the creative process as artists compose new works.

For further information check our NC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 941/587-9502 or visit ([markbettisgallery.com](http://markbettisgallery.com)).

## Pink Dog Creative in Asheville, NC, Features Works by Layton Hower

Pink Dog Creative in Asheville, NC, will present *Everything is Endlessly Vast*, featuring paintings by Layton Hower, on view in the Pink Dog Gallery, from Aug. 25 through Sept. 24, 2023. A reception will be held on Sept. 9, from 5-8pm.

Hower offers the following statement, "This will sound goofy to some and obvious to others, but I think it's pretty safe to say: everything is endlessly vast. The scenes we see, our routines, dusty objects at our places of work or domicile, all of it, is an incomprehensible mix of time, energy, feeling."



Work by Layton Hower

"Not to say we flit from one profound experience to the next; I don't, but knowing that curiosity, gratitude, wonder, lots of things, are always on the menu, is something I want with me, like a compass to check from time to time, sometimes on purpose and sometimes not," adds Hower.

"As best I can tell, I paint because I'm trying to make sense out of being alive, and I'm also trying to live. Trying to understand it and be in it. Both at the same time. And this feels relevant to the first two paragraphs in this statement."

Hower also adds, "It took a lot of time to make these paintings. Some moments the experience of painting them was truly



Work by Layton Hower

exultant. Some moments I felt horrible - too much coffee or I would ignore things I needed to do or people who deserved my attention, so I could paint. Those moments were highs and lows though. Most of the time spent was a steady hum of seeking and trying, a repetitive process of unmasking something that is both so obviously present and completely unknowable."

Layton Hower has been making paintings for around twenty years. He lives in Asheville with four other beautiful beings-Michele (wife), Otis & Pax (sons) and Gemi (cat).

Randy Shull and Hedy Fischer have created a colorful sensation on Depot Street in Asheville's River Arts District. The former textile manufacturing and warehouse building at 342-348 Depot Street has been transformed into an exciting mix of artist studios and retail spaces. Pink Dog raises funds and awareness for people and organizations working to make our communities more equitable and just, including Southside Rising, Youth Artists Empowered and the Edington Center, among others.

For further information check our NC Commercial Gallery listings or visit ([pinkdog-creative.com](http://pinkdog-creative.com)).

## Bender Gallery in Asheville, NC, Features Works by Yui Sakamoto

Bender Gallery in Asheville, NC, will present *My Soul: Mexican Surrealism with a Japanese Heart*, the first solo exhibition in the US of Japanese Mexican artist, Yui Sakamoto, on view from Aug. 5 - 26, 2023. A reception will be held on Aug. 5, from 5-8pm.

Sakamoto paints large colorful and highly detailed dream-like works, carrying forward the rich history of Surrealism in Mexico. With his unique dual heritage, Sakamoto seamlessly blends themes and iconography from Japanese culture, Mexican folk art, pre-Columbian artifacts, and current cultural references. Sakamoto's work is nothing short of amazing and Bender Gallery is proud to showcase it in

the US. .

One can argue that Mexico has been an important center for Surrealism for centuries. Long before the influx of Surrealist artists and writers fleeing Europe at the onset of World War II, Mexico had a Surrealist movement of its own percolating. The landscape of Mexico is surreal itself: pyramids, Olmec, Mayan, and Aztec sculptures and friezes repeatedly depict double headed serpents, masks of Bat God, huge Olmec heads, skulls with bulging eyes and bared teeth, effigy vessels in the shape of jaguars and other fantastical beasts.

Skull and skeleton imagery (calaveras) are ubiquitous throughout Mexico from

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