

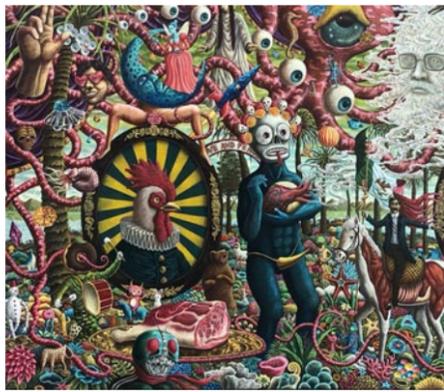
Bender Gallery in Asheville, NC

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Day of the Dead festivities, treats such as sugar skulls, clothing and art. These often-humorous “calaveras and catrinas” add to the other-worldly feel of the landscape. To add to the cacophony, Mexico is a deeply Catholic country and religious imagery is ever present. In fact, Surrealist Salvador Dali famously said, “There is no way I’m going back to Mexico. I can’t stand to be in a country that is more surrealist than my paintings.”

One cannot speak of surrealism in Mexico without mentioning the haunting work of native artist Frida Kahlo. During the war, Mexico City was an epicenter for the Surrealist Movement. Several European Surrealists remained in Mexico after the war such as Leonora Carrington, Gordon Onslow Ford, and Remedios Varo.

Yui Sakamoto’s work is pure genius. Highly detailed stream of consciousness imagery seems to randomly inhabit the canvas, yet there is a clear sense of order in the Bosch-like dreamscape. The painting *My Soul*, 2023 is an excellent depiction of Sakamoto’s dual identity in two vastly different cultures. The painting depicts two central figures highly decorated in the fashion of brightly colored folk art alebrijes seen in tourist areas all over the country. The top figure is a kai ken, one of the original dog breeds of Japan. It is adorned with Japanese imagery including koi fish, a dragon, and a foreboding Samurai with a knife in his mouth. It is set against a fiery landscape, reminiscent of the desert landscape of San Miguel. The bottom figure is a jaguar (a symbol of Mexico) decorated with imagery of the *Sacred Heart*, *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, an ear of maize, a smiling skull, and more. The jaguar is set against a sea of Hokusai-like waves in a starry night sky and



Work by Yui Sakamoto

an image of Tokyo.

In the middle of the painting is a dream-like landscape with a watchful eye, a space ship, San Miguel in the clouds and an image of Jesus surrounded by a rainbow, perhaps referring to the artist’s subconscious mind integrating two cultures.

Yui Sakamoto was born in Aichi, Japan, July 1981 and grew up in Nagasaki. After high school, he lived in Perugia, Italy, for two years, soaking in the abundance of art. In 2003, Sakamoto moved to Monterrey, Mexico earning a Carrera de Arte in 2008 at the University of Monterrey. He now lives in a Japanese ex-pat community in the fittingly surreal and beautiful city of San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato Mexico. Sakamoto’s work has been exhibited in museums and galleries in Mexico, Japan and China.

Bender Gallery is a contemporary fine art gallery exhibiting national and international artists in downtown Asheville, NC.

For further information check our NC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 828/505-8341 or e-mail to (Info@bender-gallery.com).

American Folk Art & Framing in Asheville, NC, Features Works by Ellen Langford

American Folk Art & Framing in Asheville, NC, will present *Wide Open Spaces*, featuring new paintings by Ellen Langford, on view from Aug. 2 - 23, 2023. A reception will be held on Aug. 4, from 5-8pm.

To look at one of Ellen Langford’s paintings, is to have the space to take a deep breath and notice the view all the way to the far-off horizon. Even in her smallest of canvases, she can create the feeling of wide open spaces and make the viewer feel as though they can see for miles in every direction.

Though Langford has lived in many places both within and without the United States, it is her native Mississippi that provides the beating heart of her work. She had been painting for quite some time, and pursued academic studies in her craft in New York, San Francisco, Washington, DC, and Italy, but it wasn’t until her return to the Deep South that her work took on its familiar rhythm and recognizable voice.

Living in a rural part of her home state lent Langford’s paintings a rich, unique perspective and her work captures the relationships between the delta and its inhabitants – a child with their dog, a clothesline in the breeze, chickens roaming the yard. The landscape plays just as powerful a role as any of her other characters, a fact empha-



Work by Ellen Langford

sized by the rather high horizon lines in many of her paintings, underscoring a deep connection to the land. Langford’s figures are playful and her scenes full of joy and adventure, but there is also the powerful sense of deep roots grounding her figures to the world they inhabit.

Wide Open Spaces features all new paintings from Ellen Langford; a unique opportunity to be introduced to her Mississippi.

For further information check our NC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 828/281-2134 or visit (www.amerifolk.com).

Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, Offers New Exhibitions

Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, is presenting *Memento Mori: Death and the Art of Living*, featuring works by Larassa Kabel, on view in the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts’ Mayer Gallery, through Nov. 4, 2023.

Exploring that which makes us most uncomfortable, Larassa Kabel explores the emotional and intellectual space between life and death, love and loss. Through drawing, painting, performance, and sculpture,

she confronts our view of ourselves “outside of Nature” and our desire to distance ourselves from our mortality.

Kabel offered the following statement, “I am an interdisciplinary memento mori (remember death) artist. I believe that by factoring in the limits of our time on earth, we will be more aware of ourselves, the ways we spend our time, who we share our lives with, and how we treat others and

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39th Annual Asheville Quilt Show

September 28 and 29, 9 - 5
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our environment. I am interested in how mortality has been addressed on a micro and macro level over time and by various cultures.”

“I think and create at a walking pace. Every morning I walk at dawn, and with each stride I am reflecting and making connections between myself, my imagination, my community, and nature. My work is a form of maximalist minimalism: I try to frame simple, revelatory questions and then create complicated work that often requires careful observation, the long-term collection of materials, and high levels of skill to realize. Some of the projects even require coordination with the natural rhythms of the seasons. It is highly detailed and labor intensive, but I find the process of creating to be extremely meditative. I am happiest immersed in long term projects,” says Kabel.

Larassa Kabel was born in 1970 and received her BFA with honors in 1992 from Iowa State University with an emphasis in fibers. She currently lives in Des Moines, IA, where she works as a full-time artist and independent curator. She has received numerous grants and awards including an Iowa Arts Council Fellowship. Her work has been shown nationally and is in several corporate and private collections including the Des Moines Art Center, the White House Collection, and the World Food Prize.

Also on view at the Turchin Center’s Hodges, Bickers and Community Galleries, through Dec. 2, 2023, is the exhibit, *Passage / Time Pieces*.

Passage is an installation of live music by Michael Harrison with musicians Elliot Cole, Ina Filip, and Benoit Rolland, with lighting by Nina Elder, in partnership with *Time Pieces*, featuring drawings by Nina Elder.

Passage and *Time Pieces* are closely related but separate installations originally conceived by composer and performer Michael Harrison and artist Nina Elder. The immersive debut installation, *Passage*, interprets Earth’s light and dark, using illumination and shadow to simulate cosmic movements. In collaboration with composer/performers Elliot Cole, Ina Filip,



Larassa Kabel, “In the End from Death in the Family”

and Benoit Rolland, Michael Harrison presents an interactive performative artwork that responds to the passage of one day of celestial and human time. In addition to designing the lighting for *Passage*, Nina Elder created the exquisite graphite drawings in *Time Pieces* – contemplations on the physical texture of time and the potential for transformation.

Exhibition Statements:

Passage is a multi-disciplinary project that coalesces cosmic rhythms, spatial tonality, global music, and the human experience in the form of a performance-activated art installation. Using sonic and visual tones to emulate the shifting universe, *Passage* creates space for contemplation, interpretation, and co-creation.

Passage creates a multi-sensory holographic effect through a constellation of tones which accentuate the audience’s movement through sonic and visual space. Embracing the cultural traditions of Indian classical music, in which the ragas correspond to specific times of day, Michael Harrison has collaborated with composer/performers Elliot Cole, Ina Filip, and Benoit Rolland to compose and record 8-10 hours of raga-based music corresponding to cele-

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