

# Lowcountry Artists Gallery in Charleston, SC, Features Works by Nicole Robinson & Lisa Willits

The Lowcountry Artists Gallery in downtown Charleston, SC, will present *Dusk to Dawn*, featuring new photographs by Nicole Robinson and paintings by Lisa Willits, on view from Sept. 1 - 30, 2021. A reception will be held on Sept. 3, from 5-8pm.

Painter Lisa Willits and photographer Nicole Robinson visited Lowcountry locations together and created unique individual interpretations of the scenes, feelings, and visions they encountered. Both are drawn to the magic of sunrise and sunset.

Robinson says, "I have called The Carolinas home for more than 25 years. From the Appalachian Mountains to the coastal lowcountry, one doesn't have to travel far to bask in all that nature has to offer. As a self-taught photographic artist working with film in the late eighties I began to transition to digital in 2008. Today, I am a construction industry professional by trade but a photographer by heart."

"The intricate details of a scene attract my attention; it might be the light teasing me to a spot hidden away or the texture of a simple subject or the pondering of a reflection or a shadow that changes as you step toward it," adds Robinson. "In general, I believe people tend to focus on the big picture when in fact there is a great deal more going on. All of the snippets that build to the WOW!"



Work by Lisa Willits

Lisa Willits moved to Charleston nearly 30 years ago from her hometown of Erie, Pennsylvania. While working as a technician in a research lab by day, she began taking evening art classes at the Gibbes Museum School in Charleston. After experimenting with several different mediums, she chose oil painting because it best captured her love of color. With the encouragement of family and friends, she "took the leap" and began working full-



Work by Nicole Robinson

time as a painter in 2005.

Willits is most inspired by the natural beauty of the South Carolina coast and strives to capture its enchanting atmosphere. It is little wonder that glowing skies, tranquil waters, and towering pines are among her favorite subjects.

Willits is an exhibiting member of the Charleston Artist Guild, an associate member of Oil Painters of America, and past coordinator of Charleston Outdoor Painters Association (COPA). She was also a past Director of Artistic Growth for the Charleston Artist Guild. She is also a participant in the annual Piccolo Spoleto Outdoor Art Exhibition in Marion Square, a juried show of South Carolina artists.

Beverly Nichols' prose describes the intentions of the show perfectly: "Every moment of this strange and lovely life from dawn to dusk, is a miracle. Somewhere, always a rose is opening its petals to the dawn. Somewhere, always, a flower is fading in the dusk."

For further information check our SC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 843/577-9295 or visit ([www.lowcountryartists.com](http://www.lowcountryartists.com)).



Work by Torreah "Cookie" Washington

Washington and Aiyku-Nartey are creative kin sisters. Though they live on different continents, their artistic journeys are similar. Both women have been sewing since early childhood and are daughters of dress makers who encouraged them to obtain economic autonomy and joy through pursuit of their craft. Washington launched her bridal design and soft accessories business, Phenomenal Women Designs, in 1991. Aiyku-Nartey established Eunimak Fashion in 1993. Each woman embeds their intricate textile works with spiritual, cultural, and historical transmissions.

Washington is an award-winning master art quilter and curator. A fourth-generation

*continued above on next column to the right*

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# City of North Charleston, SC, Presents An Exhibition of Quilts

The City of North Charleston's Cultural Arts Department is pleased to announce that a joint exhibition of art quilts by local artist Torreah "Cookie" Washington and Ghanaian artist Eunice Maku Aiyku-Nartey will be on display at Park Circle Gallery from Sept. 1 - 30, 2021. A free reception will be held at the gallery on Sept. 10, from 5-7pm. The two artists will have a Zoom conversation about their works and artistic processes at 6pm. The public is invited to attend.

*Sisters Across the Sea* is an exhibition of fiber art celebrating the Motherline through dialogue between African American artist Torreah "Cookie" Washington and Ghanaian artist Eunice Maku Aiyku-Nartey. For the past 15 years Washington has been curating the *Annual African American Fiber Art Exhibition* presented at North Charleston City Hall as a component of the North Charleston Arts Fest. This Park Circle Gallery exhibition was originally planned as a solo show of her work, but later became a collaborative effort when she extended an invitation to Aiyku-Nartey to debut her artworks in North Charleston. Introduced by a mutual friend, both artists create work that celebrates common themes of African history and heritage, celebrating community, and stories from their own lives.

ation textile artist, she has been creating with textiles for more than a quarter of a century. She was born in Rabat, Morocco, but has lived in the South Carolina Lowcountry for 30 years and has played an integral role in the local arts community. "I have a passionate urge to create art that is 'way-showing,'" says Washington. "I seek to make art that challenges people, art that makes your spirit soar, makes you think and feel, or that agitates and annoys; art that challenges you to learn more about the subject and to find your own feelings about it."

Washington's wish is to keep the tradition of quilting brought to the Americas by enslaved Africans alive and, through her work, validate their culture by weaving stories of the African or African American experience into her quilts, just as her foremothers did almost four hundred years ago. Although she is working in a medium that is centuries old, she believes she and other art quilters are shifting the historical to accommodate their new application. "Art quilting, though an emerging fine art form, is a fairly small part of the art world. I am thrilled to be part of the sisterhood that is bringing this craft/art to the Lowcountry. I want the viewer to come away changed after having experienced my work. I am not at all interested in creating art that matches your furniture. I find that art quilting emits a spirit, a presence, an energy, a vitality unlike that of any other medium," Washington says.

Eunice Maku Aiyku-Nartey, a Ghanaian dress designer and textile artist, has been passionate about sewing since childhood. Although she studied textile design and production at various institutions in the United Kingdom, her heart remained in Africa. After taking several entrepreneurship courses in Ghana, she launched Eunimak Fashion at Adabraka, which has developed into an international brand through trade fairs and now makes custom made clothes for distinguished ladies and the American, Zimbabwean, and Canadian embassies.

Aiyku-Nartey is also a member of the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI),



Work by Eunice Maku Aiyku-Nartey

which specializes in European and Afrocentric clothing, accessories, and soft furnishing in home décor. A commitment to sustainability is at the forefront of the fashion and fine art that she creates. The natural world and Ghanaian culture are generative sources of inspiration for her textile art, which is often created using repurposed scrap fabrics. The vibrant colors in woven kente cloth from the Ashanti and Volta regions of Ghana, as well as the rhythmic traditional dances like Adowa and Agbadza, are recent muses appearing in her textile creations. In describing her artistic journey, Aiyku-Nartey shares "my art was created along my journey of life and my sincerest gratitude goes to my late mom and dad."

Park Circle Gallery is located on Jenkins Avenue in North Charleston, in what was formerly known as the Olde Village Community Building. Admission is free and free street parking is available on Jenkins Avenue in front of the gallery, as well as on the adjacent streets and in parking lots close by. Staff and all visitors must wear a face covering while they are in the gallery. Hand sanitizer will be provided upon entry.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the gallery at 843/637-3565 or e-mail to ([culturalarts@northcharleston.org](mailto:culturalarts@northcharleston.org)). For information on other Cultural Arts programs and artist opportunities, visit the Arts & Culture section of the City's website at ([www.northcharleston.org](http://www.northcharleston.org)).