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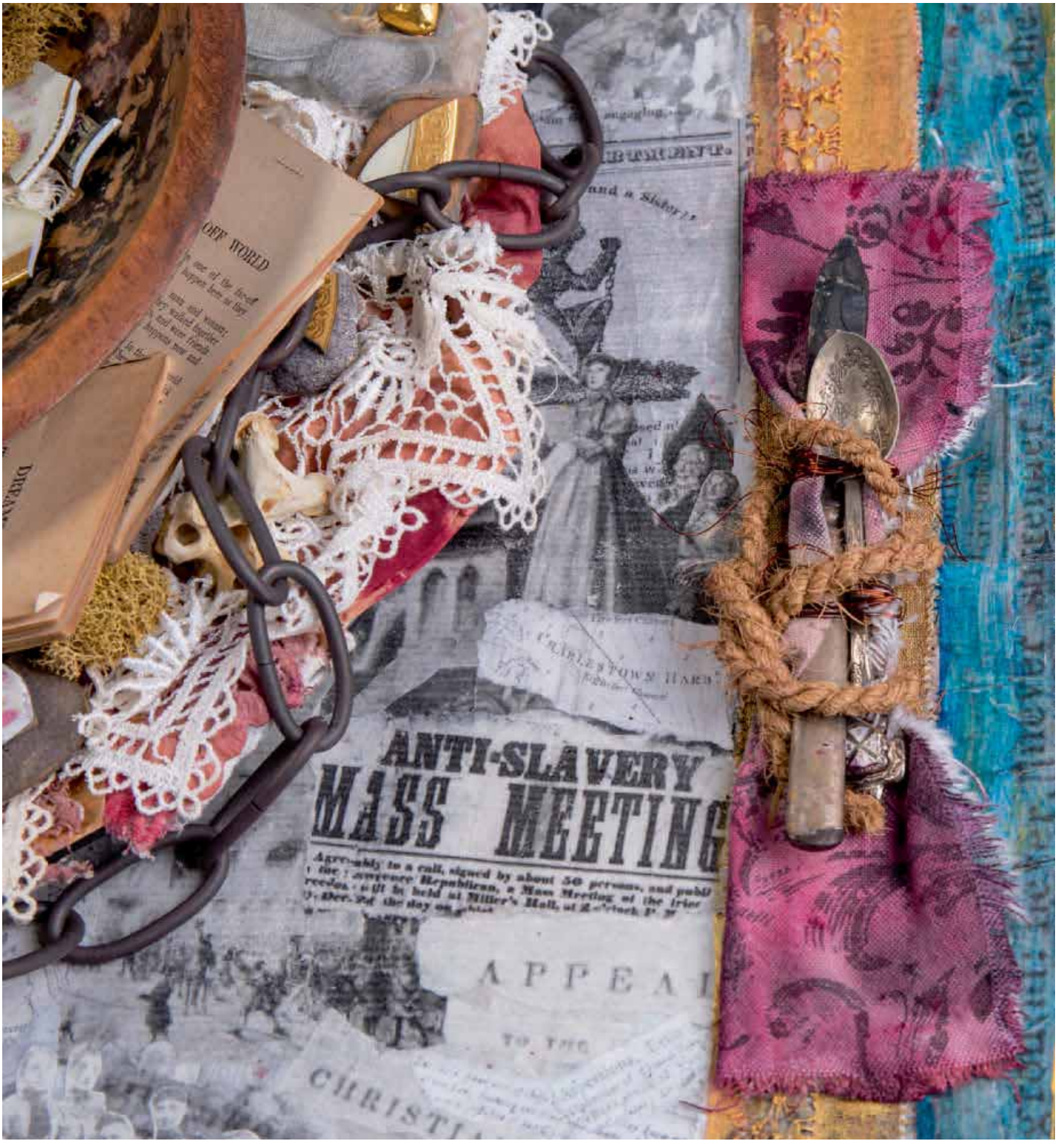

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Hey y'all—

This latest issue of Jasper Magazine comes to you at an exciting and tumultuous time for both us and the arts scene in general. Much of this past year for us has been about The Supper Table, a massive multidisciplinary endeavor from the Jasper Project and which is our biggest project to date. The long-gestating brainchild of Jasper Magazine Executive Editor/Jasper Project Executive Director Cindi Boiter, the Supper Table is a South Carolina-rooted homage to the 40th anniversary of Judy Chicago's Dinner Party and digs deep into the fascinating past and present of our state's iconic women, both heralded and otherwise. In the process, it also showcases more than fifty artists from across literary, visual, theatre, and film arts disciplines and a small army of community members to create a powerful and, we believe, necessary arts installation to address past injustices and reckon with our present day realities of living in a region, a country and a world still far too hegemonically oriented towards white men (many of them Southern to boot).

At the same time, there's been a lot of change and upheaval in organizations large and small throughout our arts community, and lots of new faces and identities and roles popping up and contributing in new ways. Still, it's the losses that hit hardest. In the music community, the past year feels almost bookended by the young deaths of two of the city's most powerful voices. Can't Kids frontman and multi-instrumentalist extraordinaire Adam Cullum passed away last September, leaving a gigantic hole in not only a host of bands around town but in the hearts of almost everyone who knew him. More recently, Those Lavender Whales leader and Fork & Spoon label-runner Aaron Graves died after battling a brain tumor for years (a tribute to Aaron is on page 60 in this issue).

Both Adam and Aaron were singular figures in our music scene. Adam, with his offbeat humor and preternatural gift for melody and wordplay, also interacted with the larger world with a kind of earnest bewilderment, and he was a totemic figure for whom music always made more sense than it did to the rest of us. With Aaron, a searching interiority was balanced with an abiding belief in the power of community and friendship to lift us up in his music, and it extended to the warm embrace that he willingly offered people from all walks of life. The songs each left behind are not only a testament to their creative abilities, but are also defining, indelible testaments to what a music scene and arts community can be for us as humans.

As we're putting this magazine together, some of the members of the iconic 90s local band Lay Quite Awhile have been doing some reunion shows. It's been a pleasure watching Danielle Howle, Dan Cook, Troy Tague and John Furr dust off and breathe life into songs that served a similar kind of binding force for the Columbia scene two decades earlier. It breaks my heart a bit that we'll never see quite the same thing for Can't Kids or Those Lavender Whales, but I take some solace in the idea that their songs, like Lay Quite Awhile's, nonetheless will live on and matter to those who found a powerful kinship in them.

Take care,

Kyle Petersen

Jasper// as in Johns, the abstract expressionist, neo-Dadaist artist
as in Sergeant, the Revolutionary War hero
as in Mineral, the spotted or speckled stone
as in Magazine, the Word on Columbia Arts

FALL 2019 / VOLUME 008 / ISSUE 003

THE

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FIND YOUR SUPER POWERS.

JASPER GUILD

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There is much joy in doing the work that Jasper does. Which is why we do it. Which is also why we quote people like the fictional character Charles Xavier. That, and we just don't take ourselves that seriously. How could we? We are surrounded by everyday superheroes and supersheroes who give their lives, or a portion of their lives, to making the world be more and mean more through their art.

If all the Jasper Project can do is offer a pat on the back or a dollar here or there to help buy supplies, or maybe organize a bare-bones event to help celebrate art – ART – the essence of our HUMANITY – then, yay. Our day just got better.

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Setting the Supper Table

Supper Table visual artists pictured with table artist Jordan Morris and project director Cindi Boiter. L-R Mana Hewitt, B. A. Hohman, Rênee Roullier, Morris, Boiter, Eileen Blyth, and Heidi Darr-Hope. Not pictured, Laurie Brownell McIntosh, Bohumila Augustinova, Tonya Gregg, Michaela Pilar Brown, Flavia Lovatelli, Olga Yukhno, Lori Isom.

BY CINDI BOITER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATHRYN VAN AERNUM AND BRIAN HARMON

Like seeds, ideas are planted on the wind. They ride the currents of questions, concerns, and eventual solutions before, if conditions are agreeable, they ultimately deliver themselves stronger, confident, full of potential and purpose, ready to be planted and grow. This was the way of the Supper Table, a multidisciplinary art project created as an homage to the 40th anniversary of Judy Chicago's art installation, The Dinner Party, and a novel plan for bringing more than 50 South Carolina women artists together to honor women who have gone before us.

Mary McLeod Bethune, Alice Childress, Julia Peterkin, Modjeska Monteith Simkins, Eartha Kitt, Althea Gibson, Septima Clark, Eliza Lucas Pinckney, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, Elizabeth Evelyn Wright, Dr. Matilda Evans, and the small but mighty Sarah Leverette. All these women left legacies and all deserve to have their stories told.

The idea for the Supper Table came to me more than a decade ago when, after teaching courses in women's and gender studies while at the same time eking out a career in freelance writing, I shifted the focus of my writing from women's and children's health to arts and culture. As both a later participant in and a student of the second wave of the US women's movement, Judy Chicago's iconic 1979 feminist art project, The Dinner Party, had come to me in an avalanche of answers to the interrogative call-to-arms for late twentieth century historians of marginalized peoples -- What were the women doing? It was both enthralling and disheartening to learn for the first time the names of some of the women who sat at Chicago's epic table. Not just Virginia Woolf, Susan B. Anthony, and Georgia O'Keeffe, who most of us know, but Christine de Pizan, Hildegard of Bingen, Boudica, and 33 more women with inspiring stories every woman and girl should have in their intellectual arsenals.

As a native South Carolinian, my consciousness of my foremothers was raised in the 1980s when, thanks to the scholarship of groundbreaking historians like

Catherine Clinton, Jaqueline Jones, and Anne Firor Scott, it became obvious to me that the women clinging to the branches of my own family tree, and those of most people I knew, were not the Southern belles that Hollywood, popular literature, and the Daughters of the Confederacy would have us believe. The women who built South Carolina, as well as the women who made it better, were women with dirt under their fingernails. They were scrappy, determined, often indignant, and knew few privileges, much less romantic fairytale notions of beaus, parties, or magnolias in the moonlight. The women who built South Carolina, and especially the women who made it better, came to their missions from places of need, anger, and sometimes desperation. They were visionaries, problem solvers, fixers. They were women who couldn't sleep at night because of what they knew had to be done. And they deserved their place at a metaphorical table of their own.

The idea of using Chicago's model of setting places at a symbolic table to celebrate some of the most admirable of South Carolina's women presented itself almost fully formed from the confluence of my personal experiences with art and women's history and the desire to tell the often untold stories of women who would be heroes if their stories were better known. The seed for the Supper Table found a place to grow in the Jasper Project, a collaborative arts engineering non-profit organization that had grown from the multi-arts publication, Jasper Magazine, founded in 2011.

But forty years had passed since the Dinner Party was unveiled. While, as women, we still contend with far too many of the same issues Chicago and her contemporaries did, the evidence of revolution is all around us in the way we communicate, share knowledge, see art, see each other, and enjoy the products of women artists. While the Dinner Party was, for the most part, a solo-artist endeavor created to rattle the chains a patriarchal arts culture held over women artists, South Carolina women artists today enjoy a supportive community and a sisterhood that makes them strong and visible. Granted, there is little to be shared among South Carolina artists when it comes to structural and financial support of the arts, and in a state as traditional as South Carolina, women still bear the added brunt of institutions that impede their full embrace of a career in the arts. Still, despite these obstacles, the culture of women artists in South Carolina is thriving. Given the current climate, the application of Chicago's model to a project celebrating South Carolina women's history perfectly presented itself – women should honor the women.

And so it was that, after much deliberation and a consultation with Dr. Marjorie Spruill, professor emeritus at the University of South Carolina and renowned women's history scholar, a baker's dozen of women were selected from a staggering roster of agitators and homemakers, church ladies and iconoclasts, all of whom had stories deserving to be told. (The Supper Table's baker's dozen is brought to us courtesy of the Grimke sisters, Sarah and Angelina, Charlestonian abolitionists whose devotion to social

Supper Table place-setting details – left and far right, artist Renee Roullier, subject Matilda Evans; center, artist Bohumila Augustinova, subject Elizabeth Evelyn Wright

The women who built South Carolina, and especially the women who made it better, came to their missions from places of need, anger, and sometimes desperation. They were visionaries, problem solvers, fixers.

B.A. Hohman, Heidi Darr-Hope, Eileen Blyth, Jordan Morris

justice was as strong as their commitment to one another, and so the sisters share a place at the table. I don't think they would have it any other way.)

One of the strengths of the Jasper Project is our ability to bring artists from different disciplines together to use their unique tools and talents to process and preserve specific moments in South Carolina's cultural history. The Supper Table provided a perfect opportunity for women artists, much like the women boundary-pushers they were honoring, to celebrate the gifts our honored women gave us.

To that end, twelve of South Carolina's most exceptional women in each of the fields of visual, literary, film, and theatrical arts were invited to participate, each providing her own perspective of the honored women's contributions. Some of the artists reached across disciplinary lines to consult or work together on their subjects. Others worked independently. All gave us heartfelt, sometimes paradigm-shifting tributes to women from history who, after living with them via hours of research and the soul-thrashing labor of creating art, became dear to the artists. All of them gave pieces of themselves to the Supper Table, and it is as much a memorial to these more than 50 women artists as it is to the honored women seated metaphorically at the table.

Our first official meeting was in January 2019 when a dozen visual artists and a dozen writers gathered together at Stormwater Studios to snack, sip on wine, and blindly select who would be honoring whom. The gallery buzzed as filmmaker Lee Ann Kornegay, who is also creating a long-format film on the making of the Supper Table, captured us chatting and becoming more and more comfortable with the project and each other. Kornegay's film will premiere in spring 2020.

There were few constraints on the artists—all were encouraged to honor their own aesthetics as they were honoring the seated guests.

It was at the first meeting that sculptor Jordan Morris was introduced to the assembly of, at this point, mostly ladies of some degree of maturity, save assistant project director Christina Xan who had moved from intern to the position of god-send. Jordan and Christina were the youngest women in the room, but their spirits measured up to the most enthusiastic of us. And soon, both women were fully immersed in the all-encompassing project -- Jordan, as she created the 15' x 15' x 15' cherry and African mahogany table upon which the place-settings would be set, and Christina, as she gathered in her arms all the pieces and problems my hands couldn't quite hold.

We met several times throughout the year for happy hours and such. In the spring, film coordinator,

Supper Table place-setting details – top to bottom, artist Olga Yukhno, subject Sarah Leverette; artist Bohumila Augustinova, subject Elizabeth Evelyn Wright; artist Tonya Gregg, subject Alice Childress

Mahkia Greene, brought in 12 more filmmakers, including Kornegay, to begin their work of creating 90 second films about women at the table. Greene invited the filmmakers to workshops and sharing sessions throughout the summer, finally screening the finished products in August before the September project premiere.

Theatre artist coordinator and theatrical component director, Vicky Say Henderson, waited until summer was underway to begin selecting actors to work with her in creating a theatrical performance to accompany the visual, literary, and film art. From a small suggestion of a simple staged oration Henderson developed an intricately woven script created, in part, by the actors themselves, all of whom intensely studied the women they were to portray.

It felt like we had just gathered on a chilly day in January when, suddenly, summer was almost over and tickets for our project were on sale at Trustus and Harbison Theatres, with travels planned for the installation that would take our art throughout the state.

Artist Laurie Brownell McIntosh studied how to process indigo for her place-setting honoring Eliza Lucas Pinckney.

I had never been that exhausted or satisfied in my life, nor had I ever known the exquisite joy of being a sister among sisters before. It was time to set the Supper Table for real.

Women have always found a way to create art, whether they called it art or not.

In the absence of tools and supplies women have captured canvasses wherever they could find them. From prehistoric cave-painters (it is estimated that as many as seventy-five percent of whom were women) to Helena of Egypt, Herrad of Landsberg, and the quilters of Gee's Bend, women have a knack for finding avenues for expression of their creativity even in the harshest of circumstances. Cultural anthropologists tell us that, even in Neolithic times, women were the principal artists creating not just utilitarian art objects such as textiles, baskets, and pottery, but also jewelry and other bodily adornments.

In one of my favorite books, In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens, Alice Walker writes about the flowers her mother always planted to bring beauty to their humble country homes. And from Walker's stories I developed an intense desire to identify the places the women from my own family claimed to express their unique needs to rearrange the world into something more beautiful than the way it was when they found it. The way they planted their gardens with chrysanthemums interspersed between bean plants to keep bugs at bay. The way they arranged their pantries with all the colors of the earth on the shelves in jars of peaches, pickles, and tomatoes, kept precious until they would ultimately nourish a family. The way favorite articles of clothing appeared repurposed as coils in braided rugs and chair cushions. Women, especially poor women, have always known the importance of bringing beauty into not-always-beautiful situations.

In our commemorative collection of art and essays called, Setting the Supper Table, SC poet laureate Marjory Wentworth writes, for example, about the Black Pulitzer Prize nominated playwright, novelist, and actor, Alice Childress, who used the combination of her skilled way-with-words and the unique perspective of a Southern woman living in Harlem to reveal the intense adversities of life in a white world. In her young adult novel, A Hero Ain't Nothin But a Sandwich," Childress writes, "One day I almost said it . . . after goin over the words in my mind, 'Benjie, the greatest thing in the world is to love someone and they love you too.' But when I opened my mouth, I said, 'Benjie, brush the crumbs off your jacket.'" While Childress wrote primarily about race relations and the gross unfairness she witnessed daily, she still found beauty in her stories of love and relationships.

Supper Table place setting honoring Eliza Lucas Pinckney by Laurie Brownell McIntosh

Similarly, women have always known the importance of restoring dignity to otherwise undignified environments. This was likely the impetus for the groundbreaking work at which so many of the honored guests at the Supper Table labored.

In USC professor of African American Studies Qiana Whitted's essay on Septima Poinsette Clark, for example, we learn not only about Clark's dedication to literacy for her Black sisters and brothers, but that the educator and civil rights activist took great pains to teach her students the expressive flow of cursive writing, not only because it was beautiful but because being able to provide a signature was a requirement for registering to vote. Art can be utilitarian, and it is always purposeful.

In her melodic essay on health care activist Dr. Matilda Arabella Evans, literary artist Candace Wiley writes that, among the many institutional advances Evans deserves credit for, her founding of a school for nurses in Columbia, SC allowed Evans' "tribe" of young health care professionals to live "their parents' most untamable dreams. Through nursing, these women would find a path away from farm and

"Women have always found a way to create art, whether they called it art or not."

domestic work and toward financial independence. Through nursing, they'd have a hand in saving Black Columbia." Is there a greater dignity than bettering oneself and one's community at the same time?

The Supper Table brings together more than visual and literary artists though. Spitting in the face of all the warning signs for having too many moving pieces and too many plates in the air,

As much as we have traditionally been encouraged to dichotomize women into convenient categories of good women (those who know their place) versus bad women (those who don't), the women at the Supper Table, like the women who honor them with their art, defy classification. While some women worked through the church, others fought their way through the academy, making paths by walking them and leaving trail-markers for others to follow.

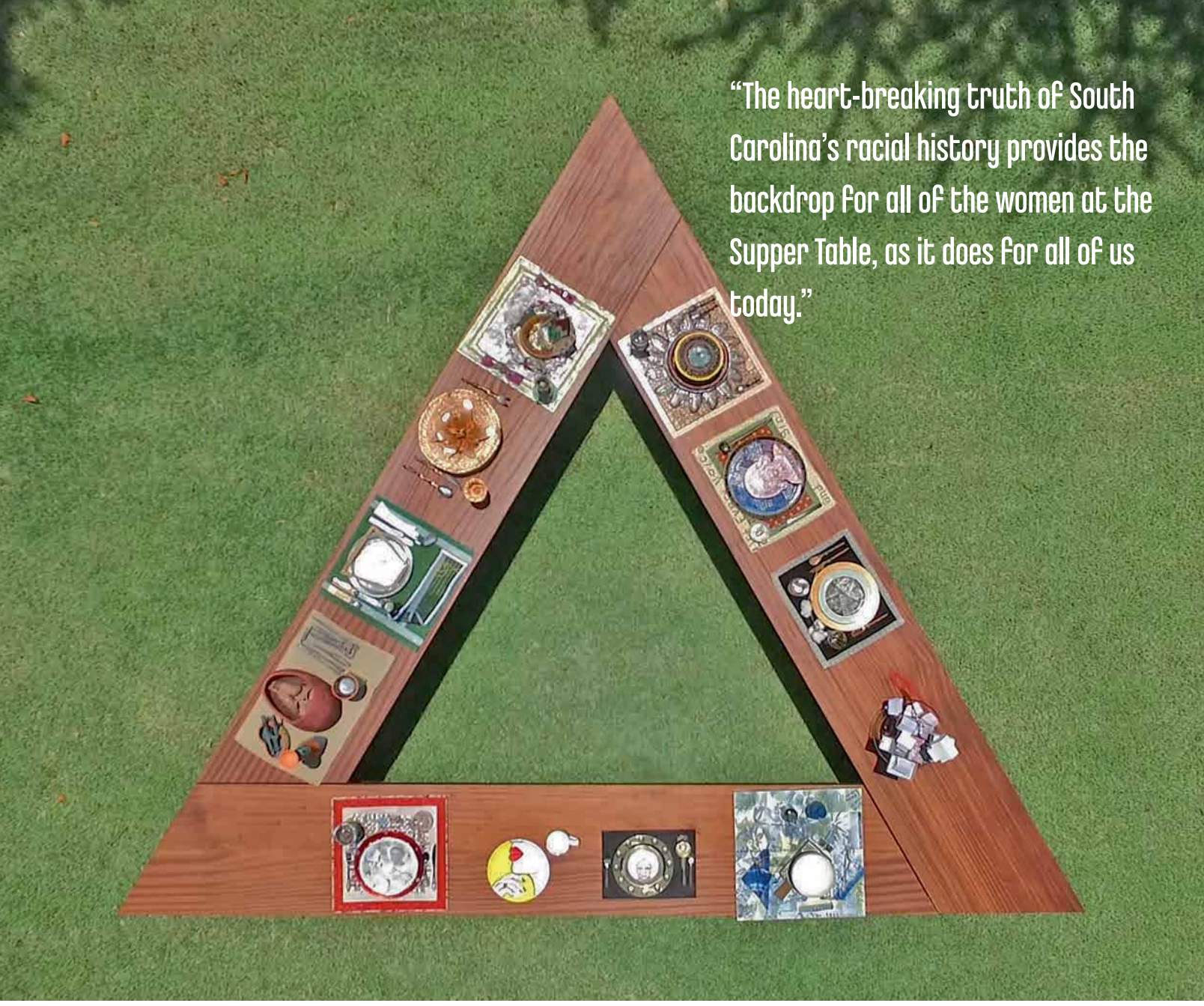
Women like novelist Julia Peterkin and playwright Alice Childress, both metaphorically seated at the Supper Table, wielded their pens in their personal crusades to respectively preserve the nuance of Gullah culture and illuminate the intricacies of the places in the middle where black and white cultures overlap.

For entertainer Eartha Kitt, who was born in the small town of North, near St. Matthews, SC, her favorite audiences were the members of society she identified with most, the disenfranchised, the people foolish and courageous enough to look at the world and see how it could be better, and eventually the LGBTQ community. "We're all rejected people, we know what it is to be refused, we know what it is to be oppressed, depressed, and then, accused, and I am very much cognizant of that feeling," she famously said. "Nothing in the world is more painful than rejection. I am a rejected, oppressed person, and so I understand them, as best as I can, even though I am a heterosexual."

The Supper Table also honors women like powerhouse attorney and civil rights advocate Sarah Leverette, who—only left us in 2018 having witnessed more than a single century that placed women in every position from flapper to happy homemaker to bra-burner (no bras were burned at the 1968 Miss America protest in Atlantic City, by the way) to pussyhat-sporting president protester—challenged every institution that tried to control her. Essayist Carla Damron writes of Leverette, "Sarah chose an unlikely path for herself. Born in 1919—the year Congress voted to allow women the right to vote—she never considered the traditional roles of women." Damron continues, "Not only did Sarah finish college like all the Leverette children, she was one of three women to pass through the door at the USC School of Law in 1940. These female students were not a welcome sight; nationwide, only about three percent of law school admissions were women. The law school dean made it clear to everyone that women were not wanted there. 'Are you still here?' he'd asked when seeing Sarah in the hallway. Yes, she was. And she remained there. Not only was she the only woman in her class to finish, she surpassed most of her male counterparts to graduate magna cum laude." Visual artist Olga Yukhno brings Leverette's message home

The Artists

Kathryn Van Aernum - Bohumila Augustinova - Jennifer Bartell - Eileen Blyth - Cindi Boiter - Jocelyn Walters Brannon - Trell Brennan - Claudia Smith Brinson - Michaela Pilar Brown - Carla Damron - Arisha Frierson - Mahkia Greene -Tonya Gregg - Annette Grevious - Kristine Hartvigsen - Malie Heider -Vicky Saye Henderson - Mana Hewitt - B. A. Hohman - Heidi Darr-Hope - Lori Isom - Meeghan Kane - Lee Ann Kornegay - Flavia Lovatelli - Elena Martinez-Vidal - Marilyn Matheus - Laurie Brownell McIntosh - Eva Moore -Jordan Morris - Betsy Newman - Brenda Oliver - Bonita Peeples - Renee Roullier - Jocelyn Sanders - Dewey Scott-Wiley - Kirkland Smith - Sebastian Sowell - Erica Tobolski - Patti Walker - Marjory Wentworth - Qiana Whitted - Candace Wiley - Christina Xan - Olga Yukhno -



"The heart-breaking truth of South Carolina's racial history provides the backdrop for all of the women at the Supper Table, as it does for all of us today."

in her place-setting which depicts a tiny porcelain fist (ironically, Sarah was just shy of five feet tall) bursting through the sea of glass she shattered throughout her lifetime.

In defying categorization, actively or not, the women honored at the Supper Table embraced the complicated lives they lived. Human rights advocate Modjeska Monteith Simkins, who never planned to marry but fell victim to Cupid's arrow when it was directed at her and future husband Andrew Simkins, was forced to leave her position as a sixth grade teacher of algebra at Booker T. Washington School in 1929 when she married, as married women were not allowed to teach. Candace Wiley, co-founder of the poetry collective The Watering Hole, writes, "It probably only took two days of marriage for Andrew to notice that the day-drenched shirts he tossed in the dirty clothes basket were still there and that there was never a new set of clothes pressed and waiting for him in the mornings. He might've glanced at Modjeska, who would have caught the look and said, 'Whoever was taking care of your laundry last week, let them keep on.' She would boast for decades, 'I've never ironed not even one of his dress shirts!'"

Writer and history professor Meeghan Kane writes of novelist Julia Peterkin, "Reading Julia's work, her stories, novels, essays, letters, and interviews today, she was nothing if not a contradiction. She dined with Communists and attended parties with activists like NAACP field investigator Walter White, an African American (about which her South Carolina friends gossiped endlessly), but she lived her entire life

benefitting from the exploitation of black labor in near feudal conditions."

The heart-breaking truth of South Carolina's racial history provides the backdrop for all of the women at the Supper Table, as it does for all of us today. There is no sugar-coating this cringe-worthy reality and, sadly, we still live today in the horrible amalgamation of pain, prejudice, disquietude, and economic and opportunity disparity that history bestowed upon our state and the South at large. In her essay on Eliza Lucas Pinckney, a Colonial plantation daughter who experimented with and ultimately developed indigo into a critical cash crop, former Free Times editor Eva Moore writes honestly that Pinckney could not have achieved the level of success she did without not only the labor of enslaved individuals but also the information they shared with the young botanist. Pinckney was charged with maintaining three coastal plantations when she was only 16 years old and had no more say in the economic institution in place during her lifetime than we do in the system of capitalism we practice now. Did she experience guilt or unease as she took authority over the lives of the women, men, and children who suffered on her South Carolina plantations? Moore points out that we have no indication she did. However, the first American abolitionists did not begin their campaign until 1780 in Pennsylvania when Pinckney was 58 years old and widowed for 22 years. Had she had the example before her of her neighbors in place, if not in time, the Charlestonian abolitionists, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, who were born in 1792 and 1805 respectively, we can only hope she might have made the brave move of renouncing the inhumanity of slavery, but there is no reason to suspect she would have other than to allay our own qualms and compunctions. Over 200 years after her death, Pinckney was the first woman inducted into the South Carolina Business Hall of Fame, and for that reason and more, we honor her and recognize that we are all products of the time and place in which we live.

In 2019, and for many of the people reading this text, it is tempting to minimize the obstacles the women seated at the Supper Table contended with as they fought and schemed for a better world, and even more tempting to overlook how recently these battles took place. Battles for freedom of expression, yes, but also battles for the freedom to exist in one's authentic form and the seemingly simple freedom to breathe deeply of what the world has to offer. But the reality is that the battles lull and rouse but they never go away and it's possible they never will. This is why we not only fight for what is right, but we also fight for equality with the most peaceful and precious tools we have at our disposal—our words and images and the finest and most priceless expressions of our souls.

As visual artist Heidi Darr-Hope quotes within her place-setting honoring the Grimke sisters, "The ground upon which you stand is holy ground; never, never surrender it. These are causes worth dying for." Make no mistake. This project, the Supper Table, is both a gift of beauty and history to the culture of South Carolina as well as a battle cry that, as we have known well since our state's founding in 1670, women will not stay silenced and we will use whatever our hands can reach to make better this place where we make our homes.

Supper Table place-setting details – left, artist Flavia Lovatelli, subject Mary McLeod Bethune; above, artist Michaela Pilar Brown, subject Modjeska Monteith Simkins

Kirkland Smith's Portraits of Honored Supper Table Women Add an Intimate Element to the Installation

Of late, Artfields award-winning artist Kirkland Thomas Smith has received a great deal of recognition for her assemblage portraits—evocative creations in which the artist employs cast-off and post-consumer elements of daily life to paint a picture of her subjects. Jasper previously featured Smith's portrait of Steve Jobs on our cover. Other of Smith's stand-out assemblage portraits include Columbia's own mayor Steve Benjamin, Smith's husband and recent Democratic gubernatorial candidate, James Smith, as well as Audrey Hepburn, Marilyn Monroe, and a firey General William T. Sherman. But Smith's initial passion, and one that she returned to for the Supper Table project, is in creating classical portraits with traditional mediums.

For the Supper Table, Smith created a total of 12 portraits of the honored women seated at the Supper Table. For the Grimke sisters, Sarah and Angelina, Smith portrayed both women on a single canvas, and for Eliza Lucas Pinckney, of whom there are no photographs or dependable existing portraits known, the artist depicted the indigo plant for which Pinckney was known for cultivating and developing as a buttress for the colonial economy. Each portrait accompanies the literary and visual art included in the commemorative book, *Setting the Supper Table*.

Kirkland Smith is a full-time, self-employed artist who has lived in South Carolina her entire life. She says her art is influenced by the world around her: the books she reads, the music she listens to, and the conversations she has with friends and strangers. She has received several awards including 1st place in the About Face Face-Off Portrait Competition from the Columbia Museum of Art as well as the Artfields People's Choice Award in 2013. Smith has a degree in studio art from the University of South Carolina and has studied classical painting and drawing at Studio Escalier, in Argenton, France.

Portraits pictured top to bottom – Elizabeth Evelyn Wright, Mary McLeod Bethune, Sarah Leverette, Julia Peterkin

LOCAL RECORD REVIEWS

CAYLA FRALICK

Anyway, Here

There's an undeniable sleekness to singer/songwriter Cayla Fralick's solo debut, but it's anything but light.

With a sharp, introspective pen, Fralick chronicles a fraught, protracted dissolution of a relationship over the course of these ten songs that find solace in shimmery rock guitars and 80s-indebted keys and synthesizers, a sound that exists in relation to The War on Drugs and Robyn as much as more obvious comparisons like Phoebe Bridgers or Lucy Dacus. Much of the credit can go to Fralick's chief collaborator here, producer/multi-instrument Eric McCoy, particularly on the breathy electronic rhythm beds of "Back to Water" and "In the Fire" and the many tightly-wound guitar solos that make the record so buoyant, but it's the way that McCoy's studio wizardry meets up with Fralick's voice that really defines the record. Whether it's twisting the reverb knobs and faders to calibrate the sense of distance and searching that's defined in the lyric or mixing in secondary and even tertiary vocal lines that provide a musical and psychological richness to the narratives and themes, each track feels like a showcase of the simpatico vision between songwriter and producer.

In the end, though, the record is a triumph because of the quality of the songs themselves. Whether crafting straight-ahead rockers like "Amsterdam" or elliptical narratives like "Some Hotel," these tunes are suffused with indelible images, richly evocative metaphors and lovely crafted lines that carefully balance intellectual introspection and emotional resonance so that neither gets short shrift.

In a popular music world where albums about heartbreak are a dime a dozen, such skill and execution, when combined with sympathetic studio treatment, feels quite rare and valuable. -KP

A SPOT ON THE HILL

A Need That Runs Too Deep

Apparently retiring from the alt-weekly grind agrees with Dan Cook.

The former Free Times editor has spent his time since leaving the paper in 2016 to good use, both in dusting off his bass guitar to reunite with some of his Lay Quiet Awhile compatriots for a one-off show and spending some serious composition time on his solo project A Spot on the Hill. A Need That Runs Too Deep is his second effort under that moniker and fields a similar blend of stoic piano melodies interlaced with minimal bits of violin, guitar and other sundry instrumentation.

Like on the project's debut full-length The Tenth Wave, there's a measured, meditative quality to these tunes which seem to exist in a kind of unpretentiously murky ground between post-rock, ambient and classical music. That liminal quality often extends to the direction each song takes as well, balancing peaceful solemnity with ominous or mournful undertones that seem constantly threatening to overwhelm the enterprise. For the most part, though, there's a remarkable consistency here that makes small deviations seem particularly dramatic. The warmly throbbing electric guitar strums on the end of "When All Things Were Possible," for instance, or the violin- and horn-accented funeral dirge on "Angelo's Window." It's small moments like this that given the new album a more confident sense of self, almost as if by so carefully defining the limits and aesthetics of the project on the first album, Cook can now play around the boundaries of the sonic world he's so skillfully created.

While A Spot on the Hill isn't most people's idea of party music, there's a definitive utility value to music that ebbs and flows so humbly and gracefully, and fans of Wave will find Need a more than agreeable companion piece for their late-night reveries, early-morning moments of calm and mid-day fumbles for peace. -KP

THE WITNESS MARKS

The Witness Marks

It can be a tad too easy to come across as tired or apathetic playing roots-rock music—there's the easy fallback on classic rock signifiers, a presumption of weathered indifference and the fact that turning up the volume can be a crutch for under-worked songwriting.

That's why you need a guy like Ethan Fogus helming the enterprise—you need somebody who really cares about the music in every fiber of his being. If you've ever seen The Witness Marks frontman unleash his nervous energy as he jumped up and down on stage or bite off the end of a couplet with glee, you understand intuitively that Fogus is a lifer, in the best way possible. That same energy is evident on this, his band's debut full-length, both in the way it bleeds into his backing band's supportive arrangements and in the way he delivers his story-driven tunes with scraping, unyielding conviction.

The 1-2 opening punch of "Better Man" and "Change Your Name" establish the group's core identity as heartland rockers by-way-of Bright Eyes or David Dondero, with arrangements gorged in organ and piano (thanks to drummer/multi-instrumentalist Moses Andrews) and fiddle (Kristen Harris) in the mold of something akin to early Wilco or the country-rock dalliances of the Stones. As the album progresses, though the band also works through some slower, more ballad-like tunes and longer narrative-driven material where the results can range from stellar (the spare, knife-twisting "Honey Hole") to a tad forced ("Birthmark").

Even in those moments of shakiness, though, that sense of conviction manages to hold the record together. And, at its best, as on a cut like the late-album highlight "Another Chance," it gives you that perfect Springsteen-esque ride to glory, tragic lyric be damned. -KP

THE RUNOUT

Ready or Not

Ready or Not, the debut album from the alt-country outfit The Runout, has the distinct challenge of translating the quiet fingerpicking meditations of singer/songwriter Jeff Gregory into full rock-band mode. This seems like it would be a tall order, given the attention both his delicate guitar-playing and inquisitive lyrics demanded.

Fortunately, the players in The Runout—Gavin Brown on drums, Daniel Gibbs on bass, and Travis Wright handling pedal steel and electric guitar—do two important things quite well: instead of simply notching up the volume and bombast of Gregory's songs, they shift and alter the arrangements in ways that bring swiftness and urgency to the proceedings, creating a more natural groove for their windswept brand of Americana-rock. While Gregory's introspection and earnestly aching voice are still on the forefront, they don't necessarily need to carry the load.

The second move, and perhaps the more critical one, is their show of restraint. There are fleeting moments of Southern rock histrionics or stratosphere-reaching solos on this album, but they are carefully doled out in proportionate scale to the songs they serve.

So on highlights like "Shoes," "Reach Out" or "Mama Put Your Record On," there's a lovely symbiosis between the singer/songwriter core and rock band accruements that is incredibly natural, feeling like an organic extension of Gregory's thoughtful tunes than like a tacked-on appendage.

In many ways, it's tempting to try and cast The Runout as a vehicle for Gregory or as a fully-formed and realized rock band, but it's really actually something in between, at least on Ready or Not. Which is kind of a bigger achievement than it sounds. -KP

KELLYMCLACHLAN

Misty Valley

It's tough to talk about the music of Kelley McLachlan without addressing the unique, bewildering quality of her voice. It's a true meld of deep-woods old-timey Appalachia, sly Billie Holiday jazz and indie/alt-rock angst, all put into an array of services depending on what the song calls for.

A stalwart of the local scene, she's appeared in a variety of guises over the years, but mostly as a ragtag duo with Sean Thomson in Post-Timey String Band and with fiddle player and harmony singer Kristen Harris in Prairie Willows and The Boomtown Waifs.

As a solo effort, Misty Valley shares a similar DNA with those acts at various times, but it differs both in the variety of material (traditional ballads, genuine folk-rock turns, and assorted duets are all given equal weight) and in the way McLachlan utilizes a broad array of friends and voices to color and shape these songs of struggle and heartache. An early highlight, the searing "Steady Hands," features lead guitarist Brahnan Lowther soloing as if auditioning for Robert Plant's backing band, while on the poignant "Only Thing We Share," it's Mario McClean on keys and vocals that gives the tune it's plaintive pop sweetness. Each song, it seems, draws color and contrast based on the collaborators, whether that's moments of chamber pop beauty thanks to accompanists like cellist Idris Chandler or elegiac country-folk with pedal steel player Ethan Fogus.

It's a credit to McLachlan's boundless voice that she can move so skillfully across these varied landscapes, as well as settle down for an elegantly rendered solo tune like on the closing title track. While the eclecticism of the production might make a similar solo effort a distant prospect, it's hard to argue that these kinds of results are worth the toil. -KP

WHAT IS THE JASPER PROJECT?

The Jasper Project is a project-oriented, multidisciplinary arts facilitator serving the greater Columbia and South Carolina communities by providing collaborative arts engineering and community-wide arts communication.

The Jasper Project is committed to four integrated priorities:

PROCESS

illuminating the unique processes endemic to all art forms in order to provide a greater level of understanding and respect for that discipline.

COMMUNITY/COLLABORATION

nurturing community both within and between arts disciplines.

NARRATIVE

creating a more positive and progressive understanding of SC culture.

ECONOMY

being efficient stewards of arts funding committed to creating more with less.

Visit JasperProject.org to learn more.

Columbia Summer REP Dance Company

PHOTOS – Kevin Kyzer

Bonnie Boiter-Jolley with Claire Richards Rapp

The Jasper Project is pleased to announce that the non-profit collaborative arts engineering organization is serving as the fiscal sponsor for a new dance troupe in the Midlands, the Columbia Summer Rep Dance Company, under the direction of choreographer Stephanie Wilkins. The purpose of this project is to provide dance experience for local audiences and professional dancers who, due to the abbreviated seasons of Columbia's professional dance companies, go without performance opportunities for 6 to 7 months out of the year.

The 2019 season of the CSRDC has been a test season—shorter in duration and with fewer dancers and performances—than we project future seasons will be. This season we engaged 7 dancers, dance director and choreographer Stephanie Wilkins along with 2 guest choreographers, Dale Lam and Angela Gallo.

After only a month of rehearsals the company performed a single dance performance on Saturday August 17th.

Dancers include Bonnie Boiter-Jolley and Claire Richards-Rapp, Maurice Johnson and Brandon Funk, Marian Morgan, John L. Green II, and Nicholas White.

Bonnie Boiter-Jolley with Claire Richards Rapp

Marian Morgan with Nicolas White

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Town Theatre celebrates a century of community and artistry

BY FRANK THOMPSON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GOFLASHWIN.COM

With any business, that of show being no exception, one of the secrets to success is identifying and serving your target market. Having recently completed its 100th anniversary season, Columbia's Town Theatre has clearly taken conventional wisdom to heart, offering a steady supply of family-friendly fare, staging mostly large musicals and mainstream comedies by such playwrights as Ken Ludwig, Larry Shue, and Neil Simon. With the exception of an occasional step into more adult fare with plays like Miss Saigon and Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, there's generally nothing on offer that would bring a blush to the face of even the most delicate of grannies or inspire any awkward questions from the kids. The last couple of decades have seen multiple productions of such G-rated classics as Peter Pan, Beauty And The Beast, Annie, The Music Man, and 2015's Mary Poppins, the latter of which's magical umbrella will bring her back to Cherry Tree Lane for a return visit in spring of 2020.

The recently-completed centennial season maintained that true compass, presenting a combination of the classic and the contemporary, with West Side Story, Arsenic And Old Lace, Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story, Newsies, and the recently-released ABBA musical, Mamma Mia! Keeping in stride with the atmosphere of family participation, Mamma Mia! Director Charlie Goodrich says that it was an "absolute joy" to direct his big sisters, Dell Goodrich (perhaps best known for her star turn in the title role of 2014's Stand By Your Man: The Tammy Wynette Story,) and Rebecca Goodrich-Seezen (well-remembered as The Lady of the Lake in 2015's Spamalot) in the roles made famous by Christine Baranski and Meryl Streep, respectively, in the hit film. Among the three, the Goodrich siblings have appeared in multiple dozens of shows at Town, going back to the early 1990s, bringing not only an established family name, but also a wealth of talent to the greater Town "family" at large. Charlie is the first of the trio to try his hand at directing, making his full-production debut in 2015 with A Christmas Carol, having first staged a fundraising concert version of Follies the preceding year.

In June, 1919, then-Secretary John D. Neal wrote: "A stage society has been organized in Columbia for the purpose of encouraging and developing musical, vocal, and dramatic talent in this city and to furnish entertainment to those who enjoy these things but do not care to take an active part in them." In the century that followed, the Town Theatre "family" has grown exponentially, with decades of actors, singers, dancers, technicians, and eager audience members all bound by the ever-expanding brother/sisterhood of Town alumni.

This year, Town Theatre received a Special Category

Town Theatre, Russell Maxey, 1968. Image courtesy of Richland Library.

The current Town Theatre building was constructed in 1924. It is the oldest community theatre building in continuous use in the United States and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Governor's Award for the Arts—the state's highest arts honor. In the presentation of the award, as well as on the historical plaque now adorning the building's exterior, the following was noted by the awards committee:

"The first home for the theatre was the Sloan House at 1012 Sumter St. The current Town Theatre building was constructed in 1924. It is the oldest community theatre building in continuous use in the United States and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. On the Town stage Carl Sandburg recited poetry; Academy Award winners Delbert Mann directed and Stanley Donen acted; Martha Graham danced; DuBose Heyward lectured; and famed artist Jasper Johns painted sets."

As the saying goes, you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family. While that may hold biological truth, there is absolutely no denying the bonds that are formed between "stage siblings," those people with whom we spend countless hours at rehearsal, show after show, season after season. All-day weekend tech rehearsals give rise to lunching together, social media friendship usually follows, and the next thing you know you've got inside jokes and stories not only shared, but created together. Bill DeWitt and Kathy Hartzog followed that exact path after meeting and working together for the first time on the Town Theatre stage in 2008.

As with all families, there are occasional losses, and Town Theatre takes pride in paying due respect to those who have left us, oftentimes much too soon. After the passing of the venerable Will Moreau, a staple not only at Town, but among most of the Midlands-area theatres, Town established a memorial fund in his name, allowing Moreau the ability to posthumously continue his support of the organization. In a similar vein, the late Walker Gaddy, another family member whose final bow came with 2012's 9 To 5: The Musical, was included in the 2014 revival of White Christmas, having become a minor celebrity with a small but hilarious role in the original 2010 version. An 8x10 photo of Gaddy was placed on the check-in desk of the show's ski resort hotel, allowing him to keep a figurative eye over the goings-on onstage. In a poetic touch, Gaddy's last appearance at Town was the final dress for Stand By Your Man: The Tammy Wynette Story, passing away only hours after rehearsal. His legacy continues through the frequent participation of his daughter, Anne Grace Gaddy Brasington, who continues to represent the Gaddy bloodline as well as its membership in the Town Theatre family.

William Arvay, who served for a time as Town Theatre's Business Manager, has observed the organization from multiple angles, some artistic, others administrative, and (as befits a graduate of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy) still others as an emissary and booster of the organization. Having encouraged his significant other, Therese "Resi" Talbot, to come out of a twenty-year hiatus to audition for 2013's Les Miserables, which has led her to featured roles in subsequent shows, Arvay is an advocate and booster for Town, as well as the Columbia arts community as a whole. On Town's longevity, he has these insights:

"What amazes me about Town Theatre is that no one "owns" it. Sure, the building is owned by a separate company, The Columbia Stage Company, whose stock is mostly owned by The Town Theatre Trust, whose trustees are elected by The Columbia Stage Society, a.k.a., The Town Theatre. It's a closed loop. But every generation,

local people come forward and fill those various roles, offices and board seats. It's truly a community theatre. It might very well go on another hundred years."

When longtime Executive Director Sandra Willis retired from leadership of Town in 2015, the Board of Directors offered the position to her daughter, Shannon Willis Scruggs, who grew up performing and later directing/choreographing on the very stage whose stewardship she now holds. Under her guidance, Town has met its centenary with an expanded youth program, upgraded landscaping and seating on the theatre's patio area, planned an extensive renovation of the backstage area, and a 100th birthday mantra-meets-mission-statement of "Honoring our past, with appreciation. Enjoying our present, with awe. Claiming our future, with anticipation." Commitment to Town Theatre is definitely a family affair for Scruggs, whose daughter is a frequent performer and student, growing up as a third-generation member of her birth family to make her theatre home at Town, no doubt collecting plenty of her own stage siblings along the way.

Education at Town is hardly limited to the pre-college crowd. As director of the Town Tappers, an in-house adult tap class, Christy Shealy Mills has brought her renown and expertise to the new century as a teacher to a group of Town family members, offering encouragement to beginners and challenges to the more experienced. And until recently, she was assisted by her daughter, Zanna Mills, who is now living in Orlando, following her dream of working for The Mouse. Fear not, however, as the Mills family is (almost) as large and far-reaching as that of the organization it loves and supports. Mills' son and daughter-in law, Andrew and Celeste Mills, are often seen onstage, with Andrew generally content to play ensemble parts in productions such as Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, while Celeste enjoys stepping into the limelight with ingénue roles, most notably that of Jane in 2014's Tarzan. Another Mills son, Matthew Mills, was a permanent fixture as a Sound Designer and general technical jack-of-all-trades in the sound booth until his move to Washington, D.C., a few years ago.

Though Jamie Harington recently left her position as Director of Youth to return to full-time classroom teaching, she was on hand to direct the 100th season's production of Newsies, with scenic design by her husband, Danny Harrington, who has been Town's Technical Director for over a decade. Newsies was the realization of a long-time dream for Jamie, who had been eager to bring the story of singing, dancing, and labor disputes to the Sumter Street stage ever since seeing the original film version. No stranger to tackling large and challenging productions, Jamie has taken the director's chair for productions as wide-ranging as Little Shop of Horrors to Shrek: The Musical, as well as the out-of-Town's-comfort-zone

production of Miss Saigon, which won the Columbia Free Times "Best Of…" competition for Best Stage Play in 2013. On working for almost ten years alongside her better half, Jamie laughingly admits that while there may have been occasional "artistic differences," the couple had far more high points than low, and expresses her gratitude for having had the opportunity to share a work life with her husband, touting Newsies as one of their most successful collaborations (with the exception of their two children, of course.)

The anniversary season also included an appearance by Town favorite Chip Collins (who has made a name for himself with character roles ranging from The Music Man's cantankerous anvil salesman Charlie Cowell to Dr. Chumley in Harvey,) as Mortimer Brewster in Arsenic And Old Lace. Collins can truly define himself as a "family man" in both the literal and theatrical senses, having met his now-wife, Cortlin Collins, in Town's 2004 production of Peter Pan, in which he played the role of the pliant and put-upon Mr. Smee. Since then, both Collinses

have been prominent figures on the Town stage, with Cortlin appearing in such coveted roles as Nellie Forbush in South Pacific and Flotsam in The Little Mermaid. The acting bug has clearly bitten at least a couple of their children, leading to great confidence that the Collins family will continue to bring their collective talents to the stage for generations to come.

Even the demands and limitations of old age can't break the family ties forged at Town Theatre. Anyone attending a show over the past fifteen or twenty years will, no doubt, be familiar with the name and voice of John Wrisley, Town's "Backstage Announcer." Alongside old friend Al McNeeley (father of Town's Artistic Director, Allison McNeeley,) Wrisley was no stranger to audiences of the 1970s and 80s, turning in legendary performances in a myriad of roles, including Sherlock Holmes and Henry Higgins, among many more. Wrisley, now in his golden years, doesn't get around as much as he used to, but still pre-records an opening greeting to the audience, reminding them to turn off their cell phones while promoting whatever may be next on the schedule. Wrisley made a rare personal appearance for the centennial performance of Joint Owners In Spain, finally giving a lucky few a rare glimpse of the voice they know so well

And for the century to come? Well, don't count on Town Theatre slowing down anytime soon. Online ticketing has recently been offered on the theatre's website, and improved lobby accessibility is a priority project for the coming months. Moving ever forward, the 101st season includes the above-mentioned Hello, Dolly!, in keeping with Town's philosophy of presenting recent hit Broadway revivals, a long-awaited production of Into The Woods, the Ken Ludwig farce, Baskerville, a return engagement of Mary Poppins, and the local premiere of A Gentleman's Guide To Love And Murder. The respective directors, Allison McNeeley, David Swicegood, Melina Herring, Shannon Willis Scruggs, and Jeffery Schwalk, all have "family ties" both within and to Town. In addition to McNeeley and Scruggs, Swicegood is no stranger to local audiences, having directed shows all over Columbia for years, most recently Town's centennial opener of West Side Story. Herring, daughter of legendary Town actor/director Bette Herring, returned to directing with Town's 2015 production of A Christmas Story, and Schwalk, who made his Columbia directorial debut last season with Workshop Theatre's Other Desert Cities, is the husband of Clayton P. King, a Town staple known for roles such as Gomez in The Addams Family: The Musical and Harry in Mamma Mia!.

Though the family may be large, indeed, there's always room for another chair at the table. Town holds open auditions for each show, and newcomers often find themselves in leading roles right off the bat, especially those with significant performance experience. Youth and adult classes are open to all, yet tend to fill up quickly, so those wishing to get their youngsters involved are advised to call early on the first day of registration.

Frank Thompson is proud to serve as Theatre Editor for JASPER.

BEYOND THE CANVAS

How Columbia Artists' Careers Contribute to our Community

BY CHRISTINA XAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DREW BARON

Artist Laura Garner Hine

Artist Michael David Dwyer

Michael David Dwyer and Laura Garner Hine , above and below respectively

Columbia is home to a plethora of talented artists. From the Columbia Museum of Art, to the galleries across the city, to Soda City Market, you don't have to go far to see local art. But what do these artists do when they aren't creating art? Artists like Laura Garner Hine, oil painter and painting restorationist; and Michael Dwyer, acrylic artist and gallery preparator, answer these questions every day.

Though many people struggle to decide on a career path, Hine knew she was going to be an artist for as long as she can remember. "It's my strongest sense," Hine says, "There was never a question, my whole life."

Hine started seriously studying art as soon as she became cognizant of her choice to commit to it. Upon graduating high school, when she got a scholarship for USC, she knew immediately she was going to major in art studio. "I didn't know what I was going to focus on yet," she recalls, "but eventually it became oil painting. You can make it so many different things."

Hine is indebted in large part to her mentor, Pam Bowers. She remembers her and Bowers harvesting dirt from which they would make their own paints: "I felt like I was doing alchemy," she said. This is when she ended up minoring in art history.

After Hine graduated, she studied abroad in the Netherlands. While there, she heard of a conservation course happening in Maastricht, and she decided to go – a decision that would change her life. Hine reflects on her first experience with conservation: "It was the marriage, to me, of all the things that I'd loved: art history, that alchemy, and the science behind art."

Although this trip was the first time Hine had experienced conservation hands-on, she believes she was always meant to conserve art. She remarks that, "I think I'm in the business of seeing. Everybody has the capacity to look, but there's merit and thought behind really seeing. It's kind of a fantastical thing."

Hine believes her relationship to seeing beyond the surface of an image or object is really what led her to first her path as an artist and then her job as a restorator, a process she is incredibly lucky to be a part of: “It's quite meditative,” she ponders, “I think it transcends you into this moment of this dissolving of perception, and you become one with it.”

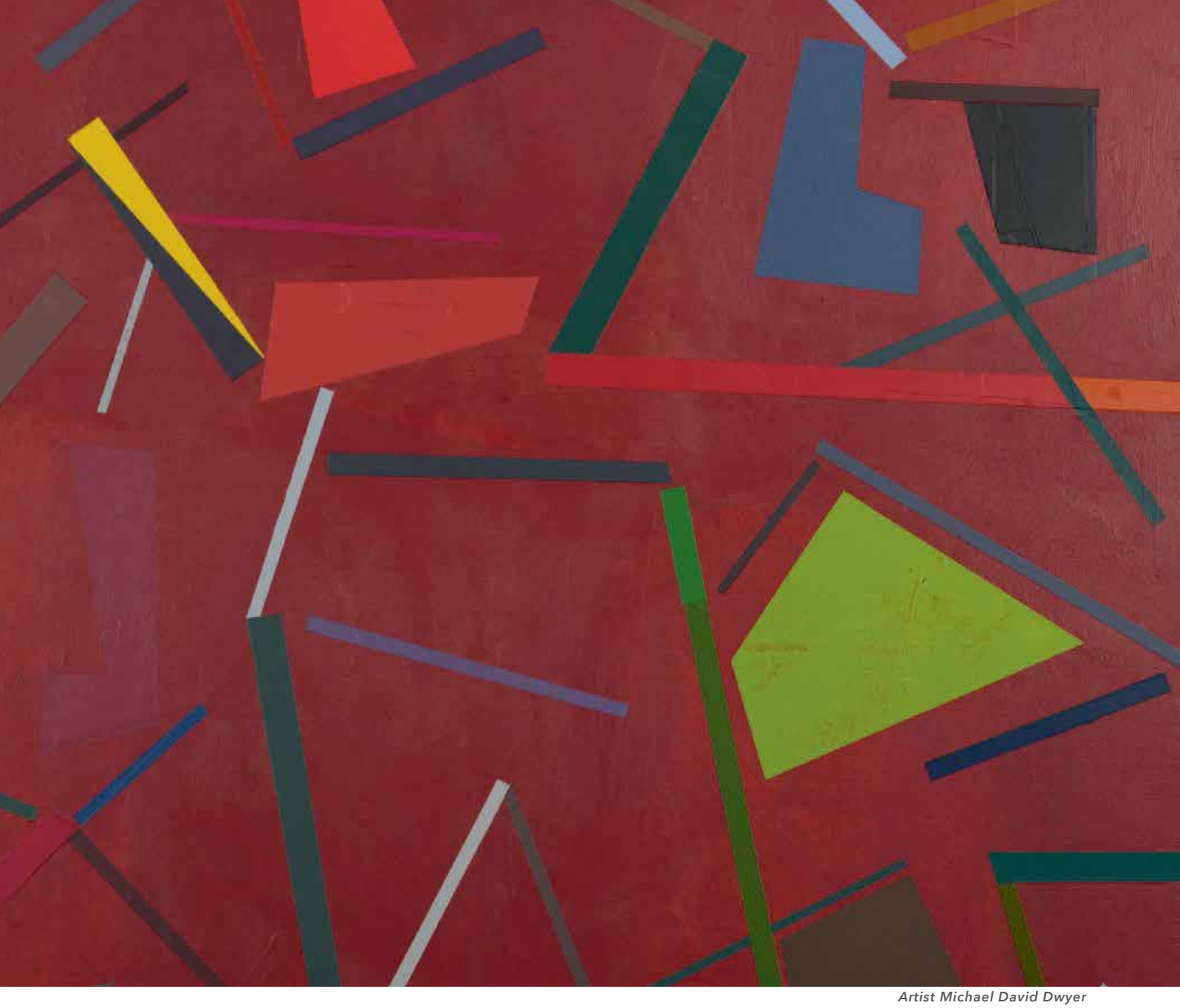
The process of conserving and restoring art is a multistep process, and it’s not formulaic. However, there is a system to work through. First, Hine has to do research, find out what the materials are and what they're sensitive to. After preliminary research, Hine begins testing to deduce what would be safest to use on the art piece. Grime or dirt can be removed with something as simple as distilled water to something as damaging as toluenes, but Hine avoids using anything toxic unless it’s absolutely necessary.

Sometimes, though, the painting is further compromised. If there is a tear or severe damage, Hine must remedy that first. These losses need to be fixed by covering cracks and shaping areas that have lost texture. Last, it’s time to color correct, which is where “the fun starts” for Hine, and where her jobs as artist and restorator most closely overlap. When just a little color is missing, she looks at the surrounding area and mimics, but if something major like a face is missing, then she has to do more detailed research to create an impression as close to the original as possible. From start to finish, on average, it takes Hine around 8 hours to restore a painting.

Hine worked at the CMA as an Assistant Preparator for two years, but now she works full time for Carolina Conservation. For her, restoring art is just as intimate as creating it: “I want to hear the paintings talk to me. I want to know what they've seen. I'm a firm believer that energy never dies. People always come back through the ethers.”

Hine laughs when trying to pinpoint herself as an artist, claiming people will go into a show of hers and think the art is from multiple different artists. One continual tether Hine has with her art, however, is its sensitivity; once something has touched her, she has no choice but to create in inspiration of it. “My

“Any moment that arrests you, whether it's disgust or awe, I like those moments.”



Artist Michael David Dwyer

inspiration can be pretty; it can be grotesque," she muses. "Any moment that arrests you, whether it's disgust or awe, I like those moments."

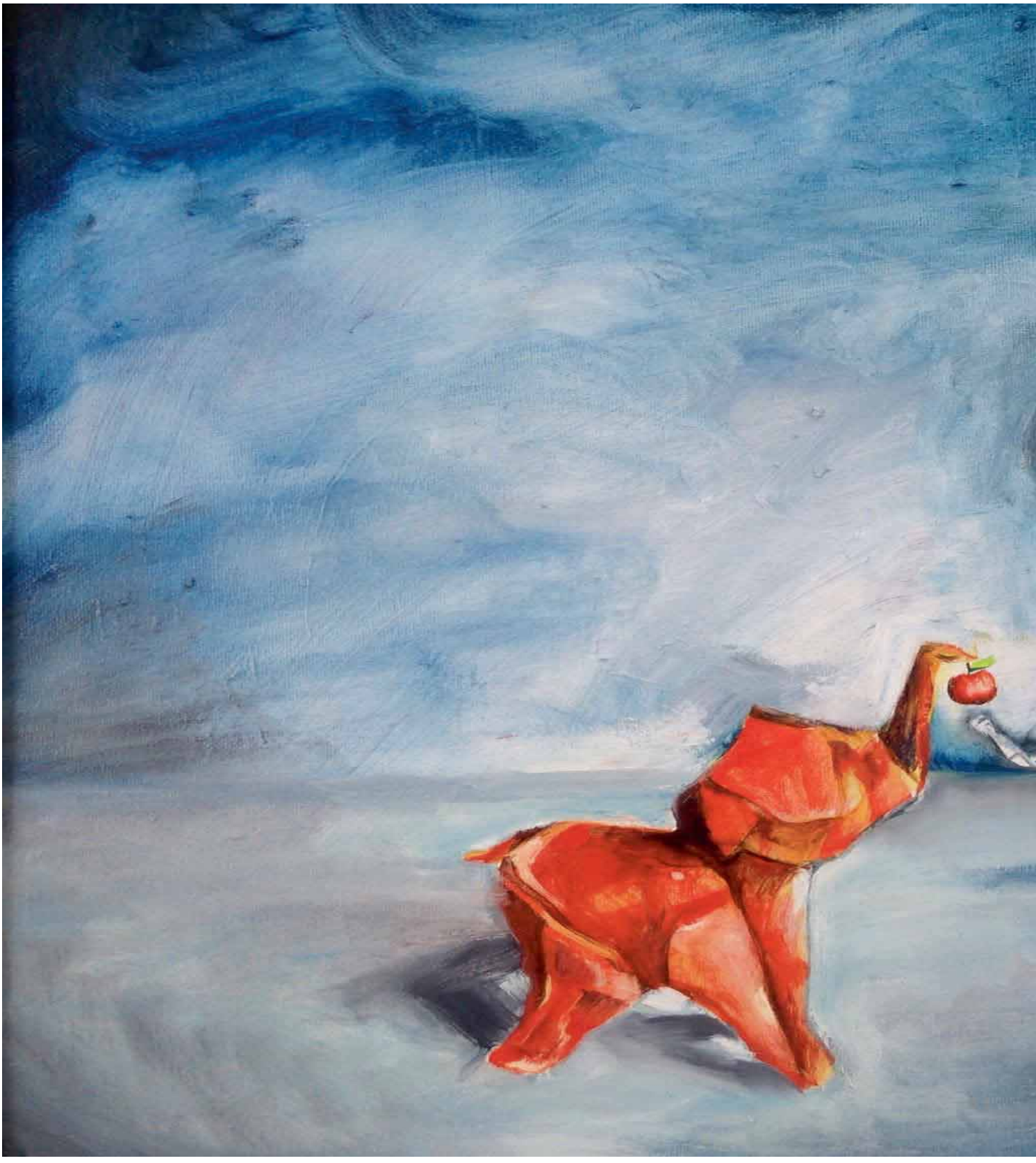
Like Hine, Michael Dwyer has been telling his stories in art since he was a child. In fact, he can't remember a time he wasn't surrounded by art. Both of his parents were artists, and his father was even an abstract painter, the type of painting Dwyer would eventually fall into as well.

Growing up, Dwyer always thought he wanted to teach art as well as create it; however, after getting through grad school, he realized the world of academia wasn't for him. In looking for part-time jobs, his job as a preparator would fall into his lap. Dwyer started at the CMA as a part-time security guard, before moving up to Preparator, and then Exhibition Designer, a job he still holds to this day.

Most of Dwyer's training has been real-time, on-the-job training. He's learned from the curators and preparators around him, from the exhibits he puts up himself, and from every time he steps in a gallery. For him, "the best way to learn about art and to figure out what you want to do is to look at a lot of art."

Just as in restoration, there are many facets to setting up a gallery that many people might not realize. First step goes all the way back to the logistics and planning, but once the art arrives, that's really where Dwyer's work begins. He has a three-dimensional model that he uses before the pieces come to get an idea of where they should go, but there's no way to really know how they work until you're there in the room.

After the preparatory work, which includes removing



Artist Laura Garner Hine

previous art in the gallery and painting the walls to match the new exhibit, the hanging begins. Dwyer lists off some of the aspects he must take into consideration: “We pay attention to the layout and the flow, how there's a rhythm of pieces on the wall,” he explains. “There's sight lines. If I look through a door, I want to see something that's going to pull me into the next room and make me excited to keep moving.”

Of all of this, what Dwyer always believes is most important is lighting. “It's really towards the end where you start putting the light on it that suddenly that painting that just looked pretty good, looks unbelievably good because it's properly lit,” he smiles, “It's always kind of thrilling to see that, [when] that's exactly right.”

Beyond the larger arrangement aspects, there are small details to think about, like fonts for the labels, their color and shape, how they work with the painting and chosen wall color. Hopefully, when the viewer walks in, they're not noticing all this work. They're just walking in and going, "Wow, this feels right.” Typical turnaround time for this process is three weeks.

For Dwyer, though, it’s not just about creating that atmosphere for the people who enter the galleries. The work he does as a preparator helps with his art, art that is also reliant on space: “It's educational. It's inspiring. It helps feed my own work.” He shares how witnessing the conversations works have in the museum reveals new conversations between his own paintings and allows him to see them in a new light.

While Hine may feel as if her paintings look as though they come from multiple different artists, Dwyer experiences quite the opposite. He laughs when reminiscing about the first time his father came to one of his shows and commented that everything looked the same. While there are many similarities in Dwyer’s abstract paintings, there’s always something unique in how the shapes play off of one another.

Dwyer has played with many mediums before, even dabbling in collage, but for him, it’s seemingly always really been about acrylics and abstraction: “As soon as I tried making something that was truly abstract, something kind of clicked.”

Dwyer’s paintings deal frequently with shapes, and he sees a strong parallel between his art and music:

Artist Laura Garner Hine

“If you ever listen to music that doesn't have lyrics in it, it's just sounds and spaces between sounds, which is sort of like if you take a painting and take out the imagery, the representational part of it that connects you to the real world, you're left with shapes, colors, lines, direction, energy, movement.”

Regardless of what people think of his work, he hopes that whoever sees it, “has that kind of feeling that I have when I'm looking at a really good piece of artwork. That they feel something strong, whether it makes them happy or sad.”

For both Hine and Dwyer, it’s important to be able to walk into a job every day that still lets them improve themselves as artists, still lets them converse with the paintings they hold so dearly. The work they do as artists feeds our souls, and the work they do for art, allows us to build that same intimacy with other artists, whose control over the lasting power of their work may not be up to them anymore.

Although their jobs might seem quite different on the outside, both are in the business of taking care of art in a way that allows people to witness it without ever knowing they had a hand in it. In many ways, they are silent, unsung heroes of the art world.

Want to know where you can find these artists’ work? Hine has a show coming up this fall that will involve the art of herself; CMA Chief Curator, Will South; and Sara Cogswell. “I think it's a wonderful gathering of three individuals that are in that process of seeing,” Hine said about the event. The show, called Triple Play, will open this October at Stormwater Studios.

Dwyer isn’t prepping a show for himself right now, though he just showed at Anastasia & Friends’ closing event. For now, he’s focusing on “painting, painting, as much as I can.” He’s also in the midst of preparing to set up for the Van Gogh exhibit coming to the CMA this fall.

INTIMACY VS EXPOSURE

A Conversation with Songwriters Cayla Fralick & Kelley McLachlan

by Kayla Cahill Machado

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS HAMMOND & KATI BALDWIN

On a recent muggy summer night in a Cottontown backyard, two songwriters who just released beautiful, heartbreaking albums opened up about their work.

Kelley McLachlan, who released the 11-track Misty Valley (her first solo effort) in June, and Cayla Fralick, who just a month earlier released the ten-song Anywhere, Here – also a first-time solo project – easily bonded over their similar backgrounds over a medium-sized bag of Cromer's popcorn. Fralick grew up in Columbia in a "house full of guitars," learning to play from her dad. She admits to harboring garage band aspirations, a la a tie-wearing Lindsay Lohan in Freaky Friday, something a lot of women who were teens in the early aughts can likely identify with. At 15, she would start playing open mics at a coffee shop in the former 116 space on State Street (McLachlan chimes in: "I had my first red-eye there!") and The Watershed in Lexington. The formation of her college band, kemp ridley., marked a shift from playing alone to playing with others, where "I had people pushing me, and I'm grateful for that," she says. "People like Cam [Powell, who continues to play bass with Cayla] and Trey [Lewis]. They did the booking, the schmoozing—they would book a show, and I'd be like 'I'll write the songs. I'll be there.'"

McLachlan started playing music in high school shortly after moving to Paxville, SC, which she notes, "is an hour away from important cities and 30 minutes from everything else." She was 15 years old in a new place, feeling alone, and decided that "music would be [her] friend." She moved to Columbia for college and started playing music with her cousin Punch. Her now-steadfast collaborator Sean Thomson came into the picture when they played in a band that fell apart and was born again comprised of its backup musicians: Kelley, Punch, and Sean, thus beginning the Post-Timey String Band.

Fast-forward a few years and we have two songwriters, both in their late twenties, who after years of writing music and playing in bands, find themselves going through major life changes and writing deeply personal songs.

For McLachlan, these songs were more personal than any she had written before. While she found that she didn't feel confined to one style, a thread of situational trauma ran throughout. "It wasn't necessarily intentional for it to be a solo album," says Kelley. "I just started writing songs that didn't necessarily fit with The Prairie Willows [Kelley's former band with Kristen Harris and Perrin Skinner], at the time, or Post-Timey." She describes writing a song previously, showing it to Sean or Kristen, and "being like 'do whatever you want with it.'" This time, though, she could hear where the music was going and who needed to be on each song. Kelley recorded Misty Valley with the help of people who were not only there for her as musicians, but as friends during a difficult

time. “I felt a necessity for them to create something with me.” During a period of emotional upheaval amid the dissolution of her marriage, these songs were solid ground. “At that time, the only thing that was stable was music. …Everything else might be going wrong, but I was probably going to go to this open mic and sing this song on Tuesday night.”

Fralick’s album, like McLachlan’s, was written from a hard place, as tension in her relationship rendered the future uncertain. “Back in the day, the songs I was writing were easier to show to somebody else. These songs, not so much.” To McLachlan, she says, “I would do the same thing as you. I would finish a song and be like, ‘alright, well, what do we do with this?’” But with this record, Fralick felt like she had control over the sound. “I heard in my head what I wanted the song to be and what I wanted it to sound like.” It’s a natural time for her to bring up Eric McCoy, a vital player in Anyway, Here. She describes how well they work together, how he understood and helped her execute her wants for each song, and how, production-wise, “he’s a wizard.”

To be clear, these albums are both excellent: beautifully dark and lyric-driven, hinting at each musician’s obviously strong foundation as a writer. Fralick’s use of place to punctuate her storytelling is enormously effective, like in “Amsterdam,” in which the story begins in a house and opens up into a bustling city. This evokes in the listener a sense of change in time and the point of view of the protagonist/singer, a feeling that carries throughout the tracks on Anyway, Here. This is a person watching their worldview shift from a place outside of herself, and Fralick’s expert use of location gives the listener a reference point that makes this shift all the more heartbreaking. Much like Fralick milks beauty out of place, McLachlan does so with nature. Listening to “Too Many Ghosts” conjures a shadowy forest, the singer skipping stones in a murky body of water and contemplating the past. The Rosh Hashanah tradition of tossing pieces of bread into a river to atone for one’s “sins” comes to mind in a visceral way, which is interesting considering McLachlan’s connection to faith and its presence on Misty Valley. The title track is a love song to the darkness that McLachlan was able to draw light from to create this gorgeous album.

Fralick started thinking about songwriting differently over the last few years, to the point that she “was terrified to write songs,” pointing to her time in grad school as a specter that made her more wary of making her work public but eventually allowed her to refine her process. She now has the tools to approach songwriting in a more methodical way, “but only when I get stuck.” Some songs, like “Some Hotel,” one of the highlights from the LP, came much easier. “I sat down, I wrote it, and I didn’t change much after that. After I finished it, I thought, ‘I told the story I wanted to tell.’”

This isn’t surprising, given the gutting narrative that Fralick renders, much like the kind of concise short story or standalone episode of television that makes you feel like you’ve lived a whole life in ten pages. “I love repetition that progresses a narrative,” Cayla explains. “Each verse is about a different hotel, and

“I sat down, I wrote it, and I didn’t change much after that. After I finished it, I thought, ‘I told the story I wanted to tell.’”

something entirely different is happening in each one to the people in each verse, assuming the verses are about the same people." She interrupts herself, "Which they are. This is definitely an 'I'." (Sample lyric: I'll check into some hotel / while you make new arrangements for yourself)

Kelley also approaches songwriting from an English-major background, adding, "On every album I write, there's a nightmare song." On Misty Valley, it's "Just a Name." The lyrics "I shared my bed with a faceless man / such secrets hid underneath his skin" came directly from a nightmare Kelley had in which she woke up to a man without a face sitting on her bed, rendering her immobile. While this might be the only designated "nightmare song" on Misty Valley, dark themes and imagery are woven throughout. In one of its most memorable tracks, the haunting duet "Only Thing We Share," McLachlan and duet partner Mario McLean sing "There's a roar of emptiness inside me / that plays harmony with your unchained needs / and begs in minor key."

"I think there is a lot of darkness in everyone's life, and I think everyone has a certain hesitation about how much they should share and how vulnerable they should be… As a writer, that's my biggest question," McLachlan explains, as she tries to walk a line of being honest while always leaving room for hope, for light to come in. "Sometimes though, you realize either for the sake of honesty or for the song that it just needs to be sad. Trying to lie about a happy ending, or trying to give it an ending – it isn't necessary."

Fralick cuts in to ask McLachlan, "When do you share what's actually going on? Do you veil that? Hide it in your lyrics?" Fralick says she tends to feel like she's taking a somewhat direct approach. She tells the truth, but she tells it on a slant. McLachlan agrees, explaining that slant as a way to avoid harming the people involved. "But also, remembering that the intention of music, of good poetry, good books, art of any sort," she says, "is to connect with somebody in some way, to make them feel something. So, withholding, to some extent, would create an obstruction between you and your audience."

"I don't know when I made that decision, that I was going to let people in," acknowledges Fralick, but she found herself listening to several wildly personal records and connecting with them, giving her the guts to write this record. "I'm a private person. I don't like to be a burden." But she recognizes that isn't what she or McLachlan are doing with these collections of songs. Then McLachlan then says something really interesting: "I think there's a difference between being intimate with an audience and being exposed with an audience. You can go through something traumatic, and you're always looking for a way to talk about it that's helpful to other people but also allows you to get it off your chest, because you're like, 'I can't have this all inside of me all at once.'"

The conversation could go on for hours, but it's late, and we're running out of popcorn; however, it's clear that these two songwriters and the albums they have created, both available on streaming services like Spotify and Bandcamp as well as the many local shows each plays, are worth cherishing. Columbia is lucky to have these artists: for their talent, for their truth, and for the stories they tell.

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6 QUESTIONS WITH FILMMAKER & SUPPER TABLE ARTIST BETSY NEWMAN

photo credit - Lynn Cornfoot

One of the most exciting aspects of Jasper's Supper Table project is the caliber of artist enlisted to honor the women seated at the Supper Table. Jasper asked Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Betsy Newman to tell us a little more about herself and her experience working on the Supper Table.

Tell us about your background.

I was born in Florence, SC because my mother, Anne Royall Newman, was from Florence and went back there to deliver me - she was only twenty-one and I was her first child. When I was very young my parents were communist labor organizers and I spent my first few months in Mississippi where my father was working to organize cotton mill workers. He traveled around the state with Pete Seeger, and when his name was published in the newspaper, he and my mother starting getting death threats. They decided to leave the South and went to the University of Iowa to go to graduate school. From then on we moved every few years, and lived in Chicago, Puerto Rico, Kansas, North Myrtle Beach and Charlotte, NC. I went to Antioch College and got a Masters in Theater from UNC-Chapel Hill.

How did you first get into film making?

I lived in San Francisco for most of the '70s, doing theater with various experimental theater companies, and moved to Eugene, Oregon in '79 to work with the Oregon Repertory Theater. In '81 I moved to New York City with some West Coast friends, and we produced some original shows, including a short piece called Debate of the Dead, in which John Wayne and Susan Hayward argue over the cause of their cancers (they were both in The Conqueror, which was shot in a nuclear fallout zone). We videotaped Debate of the Dead at Young Filmmakers, a community-based TV studio

on the Lower East Side, and it won a prize at the World Wide Film and Video Festival in the Netherlands and the rest is history.

You've come a long way since your first documentary, which was Rebel Hearts: Sarah and Angeline Grimke and the Anti-Slavery Movement. When was this produced and what led you to that project?

Around the mid-eighties I was looking to do a theater piece based on the journals of women who made the trek to California in the 1900s. While I was researching that project I found a book about the Grimke sisters in the NY Public Library and became fascinated with them because they were from South Carolina, were abolitionists, and I had never heard of them. I raised some money from state humanities councils and the NEH and completed the film several years later here in Columbia, at SCETV. That was during the years before computerized video editing, when a professional quality edit could only be done on expensive tape-to-tape systems. ETV provided independent producers with an editor and free editing time in exchange for the rights to air the finished program.

Now that you are working on the Supper Table, with the Grimke Sisters having a place-setting there, there's almost a full-circle feeling about your work. Who is your subject for your supper Table film and what has been one of the most surprising or rewarding parts of being involved in the Supper Table?

My Supper Table subject is Elizabeth Evelyn Wright, the woman who founded Voorhees College. I'm thrilled to have learned about her – she was one of those people who blazed brightly for a short time and contribute an enormous amount. From the time she boarded a train by herself at the age of 16 to go to the Tuskegee Institute, to her death at the age of 34, she had built and rebuilt several schools for black students. Though two of her schools were destroyed by arsonists, she was undeterred by the racist violence of the Jim Crow era. She raised funds from wealthy white philanthropists and named her successful school for her most generous supporter, Ralph Voorhees. It's fun to work on a short video about Wright, and inspiring to be part of the Supper Table cohort. I love hearing about the approaches that the other women are taking to their films, and the ways in which the visual and literary artists are treating the same subject matter.

photo credit - Mark Adams

You recently won an Emmy for your film, Charlie's Place. Congratulations! What is Charlie's Place about and how long did you work on the project?

Charlie's Place is the story of a black nightclub that operated in Myrtle Beach from 1937 – 1965. The owners, Sarah and Charlie Fitzgerald, welcomed whites to the club, and in 1950 it was attacked by the KKK. Charlie Fitzgerald was beaten and left by the side of the road, but he survived. Today the club property and adjoining motel are being renovated to serve the historic Carver Street community of Myrtle Beach.

What's next for Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Betsy Newman?

I'm currently working with Beryl Dakers, Thelisha Eaddy, and Aimee Crouch on a project for SCETV about South Carolina suffragists that will air as a special on Palmetto Scene in 2020, the anniversary year of the 29th amendment. I recently completed a prototype of a 360° video project about Reconstruction called Reconstruction 360 and am waiting to hear about further funding. Keep your fingers crossed for me!

Setting Stories Free with Short Story Dispensers

by Tony Tallent
photos courtesy Richland Library & Kickstand Studio

Who doesn't love a good story? Especially a surprising or unexpected one. Last summer, Richland Library quietly unleashed three story-sharing vortexes into the Columbia area. These "story vortexes" are actually sleekly designed Short Story Dispensers that allow curious community members to retrieve literary bursts at the push of one of three buttons. Make your pick, and then you'll receive a one, three- or five-minute story that spills out of the machine like something between an ancient scroll and a recognizable store receipt. It's that simple. And that magical.

The Short Story Dispensers are the invention of the ingenious French company Short Édition. The dispensers created quite the buzz when information and articles about them began to emerge online a couple of years ago. They seemed almost too good to be true. We now know clearly how true this tale of technology and literature is. Having the story dispensers in our community has created its own buzz, bringing a new type of interest in the written word, particularly with very short stories.

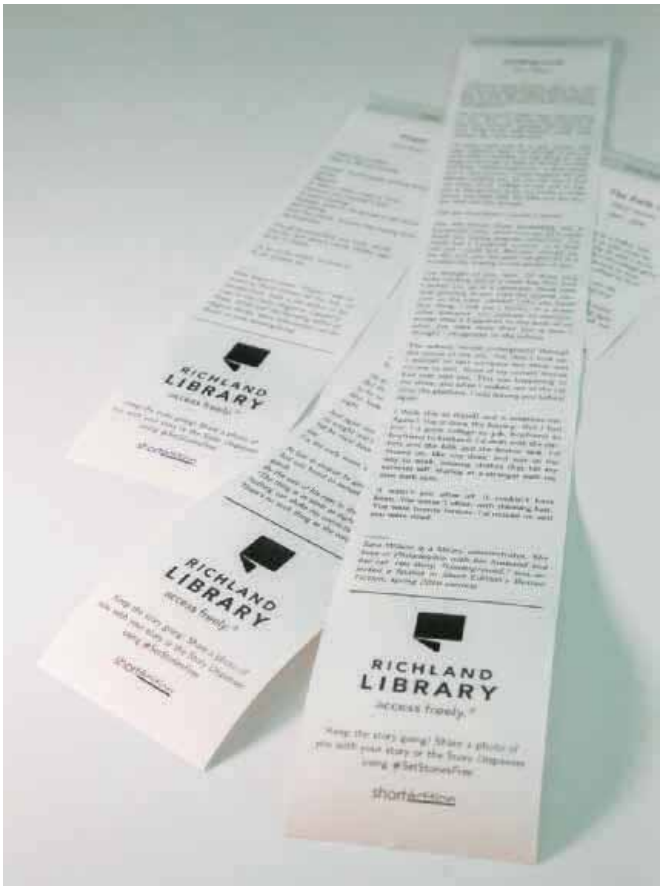
Richland Library wanted to share the joy of discovering the Short Story Dispensers outside the walls of the library itself. Partnering with the Columbia Museum of Art, Drip on Main, Historic Columbia, Mast General Store and other community locations, the dispensers have taken up residence in unexpected places. The story dispensers at the Museum and at Drip have been in place for almost a year. One of the dispensers is typically deployed to different locations, and occasionally it's brought back to the library to be featured during events. Community members who happen upon the dispensers are encouraged to print a story (or several) and share about it on social media using

#SetStoriesFree. By searching #SetStoriesFree, you can find out about the current location of the dispensers as well as enjoy the reactions of those who have discovered them.

To broaden awareness of the Short Story Dispensers and encourage writers and story lovers, the library took helped promote a national short story writing contest last autumn. The contest encouraged writers to submit work that touched on the topic of courage. Hundreds of submissions from across the county came through, and three of the finalists in the contest were from the Columbia area!

Interest and questions about the Short Story Dispensers range from how many stories are in the machine (answer: the stories aren't actually in the machine, they are being pulled randomly from a database that currently holds about 100,000 stories in multiple genres) to how much ink it takes to print all those stories (answer: no ink is used at all; in fact, the stories are printed using inkless technology on sustainably-sourced paper). There is also the frequently asked question about how local or regional writers can have their stories be a part of the Short Story Dispenser network. The answer to this question is emerging; in the spring, Richland Library launched a website that mirrors the Short Story Dispenser content and experience (and functions great on your mobile phone!). Having this site will enable the library to put out calls for story submissions that connect with programs and highlight writers in our region. Please stay tuned at richland-library.short-edition.com to find out more about submitting stories.

By the time this article is printed, and you are reading it, well over 20,000 short stories will have been dispensed from Richland Libraries Short Story Dispensers – in roughly one year. We hope you happen upon a dispenser and find that perfect short story that is waiting for you.

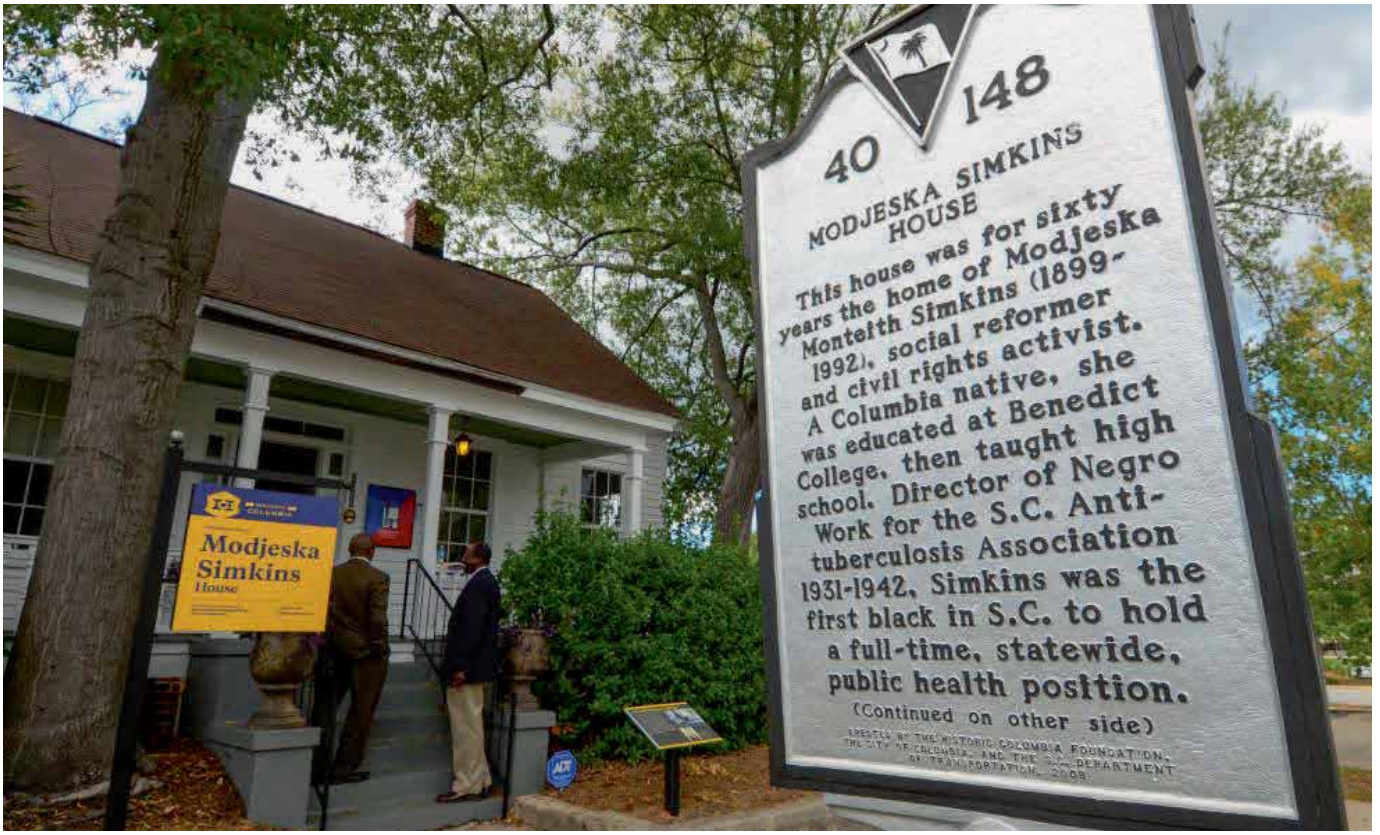


Tony Tallent is the Chief Program and Innovation Officer for Richland Library. He loves a good short story and has shared his own in many journals and literary platforms.

A note on funding: As a part of the Fostering Creative Connections Initiative of the Public Library Association (PLA), Richland Library is one of four library systems in the U.S. that receive Short Story Dispensers to promote reading, literary joy and creative expression. The project is funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and managed by the PLA, with support from community publisher Short Édition.

New Life for the Modjeska Monteith Simkins House

South Carolina matriarch of civil rights' home to once again become a site for human rights activism



From 1934 until her death in 1992, Modjeska Monteith Simkins' home in Columbia, SC served as the center for civil rights and social justice activities. Historic Columbia took over the stewardship of the site in 2006 and, until September 2018, utilized the home for educational tours and public meeting space. From last fall until this spring, the site underwent a comprehensive, museum-grade rehabilitation thanks to the support of a grant from the National Park Service. This grant allowed Historic Columbia to bring the site back up to code, repair original windows, patch plaster, and make the house ADA accessible with a new ramp in the rear of the house. However, for the Simkins home to realize its full potential, Historic Columbia raised additional funds through its annual campaign, support from the Richland County Conservation Commission, the State of South Carolina and other generous supporters to redefine the site's interpretation and public programming.

The new interpretation and educational activities will focus on Simkins' life and work from 1929 to 1956 under four major themes:

CITIZENSHIP AND ACTIVISM;

HEALTH DISPARITIES AND REMEDIES;

ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY;

AND POLITICAL INEQUALITIES AND ACTION.

The themes will be addressed using interactive exhibits, dynamic classroom and maker-space activities, and public programming focused on understanding historic and addressing contemporary civil rights issues. By using her life as a lens through which we view historical inequality, the role of organizing and the power of protest, the home of Modjeska Simkins will once again become a center of engagement and action for the community.

Inspired by Simkins' legacy, Rabbi Meir Muller's students at the Columbia Jewish Day School, together with his social studies methods class at the University of South Carolina, made a successful case for the renaming of the 2000 block of Marion Street to "Modjeska Simkins Way." The resolution was signed into effect in May 2019, and a celebration was held in September.

HISTORIC COLUMBIA

fall lines

2020 CALL for SUBMISSIONS

Fall Lines – a literary convergence is a literary journal presented by The Jasper Project in partnership with Richland Library and One Columbia for Arts and History.

Fall Lines will accept submissions of previously unpublished poetry, essays, short fiction, and flash fiction from January 1, 2020 through April 15, 2020. While the editors of Fall Lines hope to attract the work of writers and poets from the Carolinas and the Southeastern US, acceptance of work is not dependent upon residence.

Publication in Fall Lines will be determined by a panel of judges and accepted authors (ONLY) will be notified by June 30, 2020, with a publication date in August 2020. Two $250 cash prizes, sponsored by the Richland Library Friends and Foundation, will be awarded: The Saluda River Prize for Poetry and the Broad River Prize for Prose.

Simultaneous submissions will not be considered.

Each entry MUST be submitted as a as a WORD FILE and include its own cover sheet, also submitted in WORD in one email.

Submit each individual poetry submission, along with its own cover sheet, to FallLines@JasperProject.org with the word POETRY in the subject line.

Submit each individual prose submission, along with its own cover sheet, to FallLines@JasperProject.org with the word PROSE in the subject line.

Cover sheets MUST ONLY include your name, the title of your submission, your email address, and mailing address. Authors' names should not appear on the submission. Do NOT send bios. There is no fee to enter, but submissions that fail to follow the above instructions will be disqualified without review.

Please limit short fiction to 2000 words or less; flash fiction to 350 – 500 words per submission; essays to 1200 words; and poetry to three pages (standard font.) Please submit no more than a total of 5 single entries. One entry per email.

The Columbia Fall Line is a natural junction, along which the Congaree River falls and rapids form, running parallel to the east coast of the country between the resilient rocks of the Appalachians and the softer, more gentle coastal plain.

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JASPER project

ONE COLUMBIA
ARTS AND HISTORY

The New Boy by Debra Daniels

He arrives for his first day without a parent. The principal knocks on your door, hands you a folder, introduces Jonathan Breen, and walks away. Jonathan owns a speckled face and dark curly hair that rushes forward. He stares unblinking.

Your class is at recess, so you can assign a desk, stack some textbooks, orient the boy before they return. You have his folder, but it's inappropriate to read his record with him right there. It's best to talk, hopefully ease any apprehension about being the new kid.

You ask about his last school.

He says, "I wasn't in school."

You say, "Did your mom teach you at home?"

The boy picks at a long thread unraveling from his buttonhole. He says, "She did one day. Now I teach myself."

Jonathan jerks the thread which pops loose. He takes the ends, ties a minuscule knot, several knots and says, "When I swallow this, I'll explode my magical powers and spin toward my astral destiny."

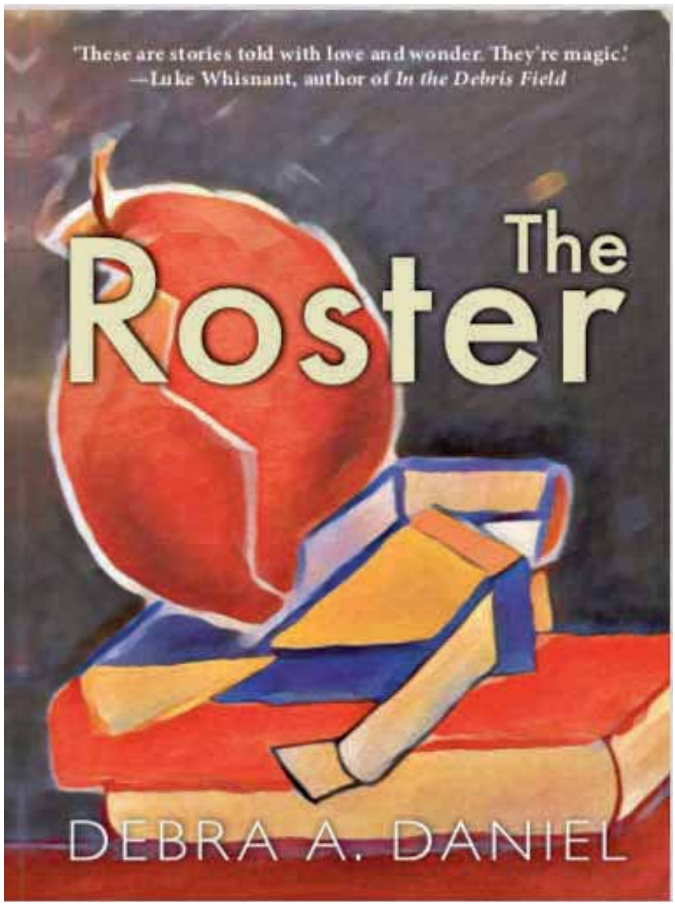
He stands up and shakes his head, his hair frantic. He says, "My sister died."
Before you can speak, he continues. "Don't cry. It happened almost so long, long ago that my mother doesn't even know herself."

Jonathan walks to the window, stares into the sky, placing his palms on the glass. "Sometimes I remember but sometimes I forget all about her."

You say, "How long ago did your sister die?"

"Today is Thursday. She died Sunday, a million lightyear Sundays ago when the earth was a void and the void was darkness and darkness was upon the earth."

As he speaks his words enter the air. You see them frost the windowpane, old-fashioned, beautiful cursive letters that no one teaches anymore, that no one so young as the boy can ever hope to understand.



Debra A. Daniel, (*Woman Commits Suicide in Dishwasher*, Muddy Ford Press, poetry chapbooks, *The Downward Turn of August*, Finishing Line Press, and *As Is*, Main Street Rag), is a Pushcart nominee and has won awards in fiction from The Los Angeles Review, Bacopa, the SC Fiction Project, and was twice named SC Arts Commission Poetry Fellow, won the Guy Owen Poetry Prize, as well as awards from the Poetry Society of SC. Work has appeared in journals and anthologies including: *The Los Angeles Review, Fall Lines, Smokelong Quarterly, Kakalak, Emrys Journal, Pequin, Inkwell, Southern Poetry Review, Tar River, Gargoyle*.

INTERVIEW WITH A TABLE MAKER

SUPPER TABLE WOOD SCULPTOR JORDAN MORRIS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATHRYN VAN AERNUM & BRIAN HARMON

Jordan Morris has been a maker most of her life. Grade school consisted of macaroni ornaments and sugar cube igloos, but it wasn't until she met an inspiring high school teacher that her creative mind was ignited and took flight. That journey continued on through college at the University of South Carolina where she earned a BFA in sculpture. She continued with ceramic work and expanded into woodworking and computer numerical control production. Jordan's professional journey led her to an art museum, tech startup, and teaching, but nothing felt quite like home until landing at Richland Library as the Maker Coordinator in February 2016.

Jasper caught up with Morris, who fashioned with her own hands the impressive table upon which the Supper Table project is set. Here's what we learned.

Jasper: Your background is in studio art, is that right? Did you ever think you'd be working in wood? Was that a goal you set for yourself or was it an opportunity that presented itself?

Jordan Morris: Yes, I graduated from the University of South Carolina with a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Sculpture. I began my education with 3 years of ceramics, but decided I wanted to play with more materials and not just clay. I never anticipated teaching woodworking. I figured it would always be a part of my artistic career though; I always preferred mixed media. Teaching woodworking at the library was an opportunity that opened up and allowed me to move from a marketing career to return to teaching and making art.

Jasper: What were the biggest challenges in creating the massive table for the Supper Table installation and how did you end up solving them?

Morris: Size. The size of the table. The size of the vehicle I needed access to for transportation. The size of the workshops available to me, and trying to work in them. I wanted minimal glue ups, so I needed larger lumber to make the tables the requested dimensions. I managed to find a great place out in Summerville, SC, called Custom Woodcrafters where Tom and Marty, the only two employees there, helped me find the perfect pieces of lumber. We milled them up and loaded them in a large truck I borrowed from my parents, and I drove it back to Columbia. At this point. I didn't have a location secured, so I unloaded the lumber into the main hallway of my home. It's been quite a ride.

I connected with local artist Clark Ellefson who had equipment that I could use in his shop, but there wasn't much room for storage, so there was a lot of moving the large pieces back and forth. When it came time to fine-tune the tabletop angles, so the table would be a proper equilateral triangle, I needed to lay out the tabletops but that studio was not large enough. I searched around and found another location that was barely large enough – Billy Guess's Guessworks Studio. I set up shop there and started sanding and staining. Unfortunately, this shop had a much higher humidity than the other one. The deadline was approaching, and the finish wasn't drying for me to complete the sanding and apply the final coat of finish. The table had to be moved again, to another location, one that was climate controlled. It's a solid beast of a table and takes a lot of effort to move, but I'd say that's very much like the will and spirit of Southern women when they set their mind to something.

"THE TABLETOP IS SAPELE. THIS IS AN EXOTIC WOOD MOSTLY IMPORTED FROM NIGERIA. IT HAS MANY PROTECTIVE/ NURTURING QUALITIES THAT REPRESENT WOMEN."

Jasper: Tell us about the design you created.

Morris: I wanted to make an equilateral triangle without having to cut deep angles at the end, to make them meet up nicely. So I made each tabletop have 60º angles on both ends creating three isosceles trapezoids. This allowed me to "nest" them within each other, creating a cyclical, flowing path for your eyes to follow if viewed from above.

Creating three of the exact same tables also allows for multiple variations of setup: They can be set up in a straight line, a wide U-shape, or, if you need something smaller, just put two of them with the long ends meeting and you have a glorious banquet table.

All the table tops are put together by two 12" x 14' long boards of sapele. I was lucky enough to find two boards that were bookmatched and this is, by far, my favorite out of the three.

I decided to go with a simple base for the tables. The two posts that support the tabletop are tapered downward, to ty to create a lighter effect for something that's so substantial in weight and size.

Jasper: Now please tell us about the wood you chose and why you chose it?

Morris: The tabletop is sapele. This is an exotic wood mostly imported from Nigeria. It has many

"I MADE EACH TABLETOP HAVE 60 ANGLES ON BOTH ENDS CREATING THREE ISOSCELES TRAPEZOIDS. THIS ALLOWED ME TO "NEST" THEM WITHIN EACH OTHER, CREATING A CYCLICAL, FLOWING PATH FOR YOUR EYES TO FOLLOW IF VIEWED FROM ABOVE."

protective/nurturing qualities that represent women. It is tall (100-150ft) and provides lots of shade. The trunks are hollowed out and used as canoes, and also used structurally as the main support for roofs. The bark is believed to have anti-inflammatory properties and is used for medicinal purposes.

The posts are cherry. Cherry becomes more golden with time, and the grain appears richer. These trees are also used for medicinal purposes. The inner bark is used for cough syrups, sedatives, and tonics. The fruits of the trees are eaten by 33 species of birds and many different mammals.

Both species are hardwoods. They are strong, medicinal, and so beautiful when a simple Danish oil is applied, to bring out the stunning grain.

Jasper: Now that it's done - what did you learn from the process that will make you a stronger artist?

Morris: Always stay true to yourself and your vision. Plan and prepare to make sure the quality is something you're proud to present.

Jasper: And what words of advice can you share with artists working in wood?

Morris: Branch out (pun intended) and have patience with yourself as you learn new things.

JASPER BRINGS THE CITY 24-HOUR ART VIA THE MERIDIAN BUILDING STREET-SIDE GALLERY

BY ED MADDEN

PHOTOS BY BERT EASTER

A new 24-hour gallery space appeared earlier this summer in downtown Columbia. Since 2004, when The Meridian building first opened, two long display windows have stood empty on Sumter and Washington Streets. Like shop windows for an imaginary or defunct department store, the empty display areas flanked either side of the building's private parking garage. In April, in partnership with the Jasper Project, the Meridian Building opened both those display windows and the main building lobby on Main Street for the display of local art.

Organized by Bert Easter, a member of The Jasper Project board of directors, the new galleries showcase local art, highlighting the work of emerging and student artists alongside established artists. Easter says he saw the empty windows as "a missed opportunity" for both the city and the arts community, and he praised Meridian management for their enthusiasm for the project.

According to Amy Reeves, Property Manager for the Hertz Investment Group, they were "thrilled to partner with The Jasper Project" on the galleries. "The art has brought life to our windows," she says," and we enjoy seeing the increased foot traffic."

Easter rotates the art on a quarterly basis. The first installations, April-June, included visual art by Thomas Crouch and Kirkland Smith, ceramics by Betsy Kaemmerlan, assemblages by Susan Lenz, and sculptures by Andy Smith. Work by ceramic artist Virginia Scotchie and students from the USC School of Visual Art and Design, were featured in the building lobby as well as the windows. While the street galleries are open 24 hours, the lobby is only open during regular business hours. During First Thursday in June, Jasper hosted Meet the Maker sidewalk conversations with participating artists outside the Washington Street gallery windows.

In early July, Easter installed a second show, featuring work by Eileen Blyth, Michael Krajewski, Paul Moore, Scotchie and her students, Nick Brutto, Robert De Leon, Aldric Morton, Stephanie Polk, and Bri Sparks.

Scotchie said the opportunity has been "a fantastic experience" for her students. "I especially like the beautiful space," she said, since it gives access to art "in a location where many people work every day."

Art by Kirkland Smith, Andy White, and Susan Lenz

"The art has brought life to our windows."

Time Signature by Susan Lenz

Randy Spencer
Poet Physician

Chapin, SC's Randy Spencer is not the first poet physician by any stretch. In fact, there is quite a history of physicians who practiced poetry on the side, some to greater degrees of success than others.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator, of course, of Sherlock Holmes and his many adventures, was also a writer of romance, historical fiction, plays, and, yes, poetry. John Keats left a successful career as a surgeon to exclusively write poetry. And American modernist William Carlos Williams managed to marry a life of poetry with one of pediatrics, producing what many consider the greatest example of early 20th century Imagism in "The Red Wheelbarrow," published in his 1923 collection, Spring and All.

The Red Wheelbarrow
By William Carlos Williams - 1883-1963

So much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens

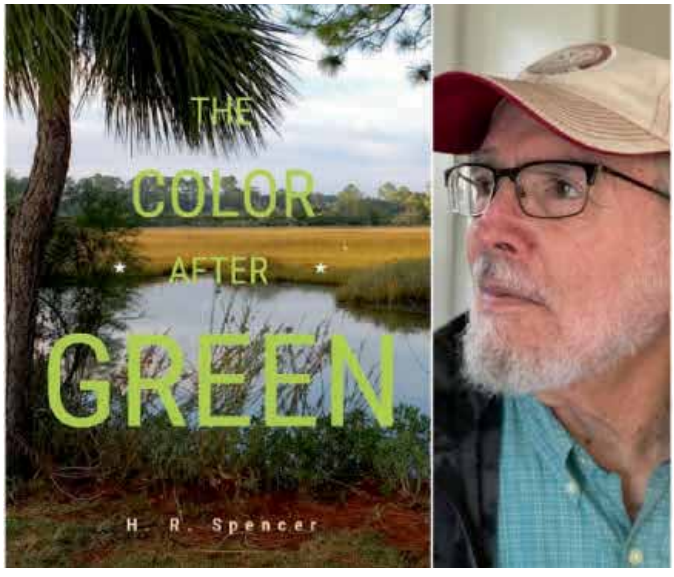
H. R. Randy Spencer was born and grew up in coastal Virginia, much of those years in his family home on the James River, a locale recalled in much of his writing. For the last forty-plus years he has lived in central South Carolina, the last thirty on a quiet cove on Lake Murray. Kayaking, birding, and cautiously watching deer from his windows form the inspiration for much of his most recent volume of poems, *The Color After Green*, published this year by Finishing Line Press.

Spencer attended the College of William and Mary, followed by Emory University School of Medicine. As a physician he practiced in psychiatric hospitals and clinics in Northern California and South Carolina, working primarily with children until his retirement in 2017. Both very early and toward the end of his career he concentrated his practice on work with severely autistic children.

Spencer received his M.F.A. in Poetry from the University of South Carolina in 2002. His interest in poetry and healing led to work with the South Carolina Humanities Council where he was a leader in the Literature and Medicine program, and his experiences as physician and teacher are reflected in the core of his writing. Previous publications include the chapbooks, *The Failure of Magic* and *What the Body Knows.* He has been included in several anthologies: *The Art of Medicine as Metaphor, A Sense of the Midlands, The Limelight*, and *The South Carolina Collection.* Individual poems have appeared in literary journals, including Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review, Fall Lines, and Yemassee. Also a playwright, Spencer's three-act verse drama, Becoming Robert Frost, has received staged readings and a portion was read in Piccolo Spoleto Festival's Sundown Poetry Series.

About *The Color After Green*, Ron Rash says, "Randy Spencer has a keen eye for the natural world and he possesses the vivid language that allows his readers to share in seeing the world anew, as we see in such lovely images as 'sloths hang like large fruits in umbrella trees.' *The Color After Green* is a book I greatly admire."

Columbia's own Tara Powell says, "Randy Spencer's *The Color After Green* brims with the 'dimpled symmetries' of human expression and the dynamic, surprising landscapes from which a poet takes a lifetime of soundings. These intelligent, compelling poems sing of a living engagement with the natural world, its winds and waters and small, wild creatures rendered here with brushstrokes as painterly as they are poetic."



Dust

So much studiously observed,
now more, these corals, these great sea fans
dying off Antigua and St. John,

and knowledge it is only
in brown grit that whirls
from its dry bowl in Africa,

a poison crossing the Atlantic,
a yellow cloud spotted overhead by satellite.
Where it salts the Caribbean

a sample sifts into our cone filter,
dust that carries the thready aspergillus,
innocuous, a soil fungus everywhere

yet somehow its conveyance toxic
among these friable polyps, their immune response
breathtakingly purple even underwater,

an unsuccessful response. It is possible
a core drilled now into this reef gives us a text,
would read for us which were the drought years below the Sahara,

would reveal how everything is connected, a chain,
life being how we manage the particulars.
Until now, without clear reason,

these deaths had seemed surrounding and obscure,
the sea's lacy needlework
falling victim mysteriously. Only now, underwater,

where we can watch the fans sway, their incredible undulations
straining plankton from the current, do we know
how this brown death settles around them.

The Color After Green

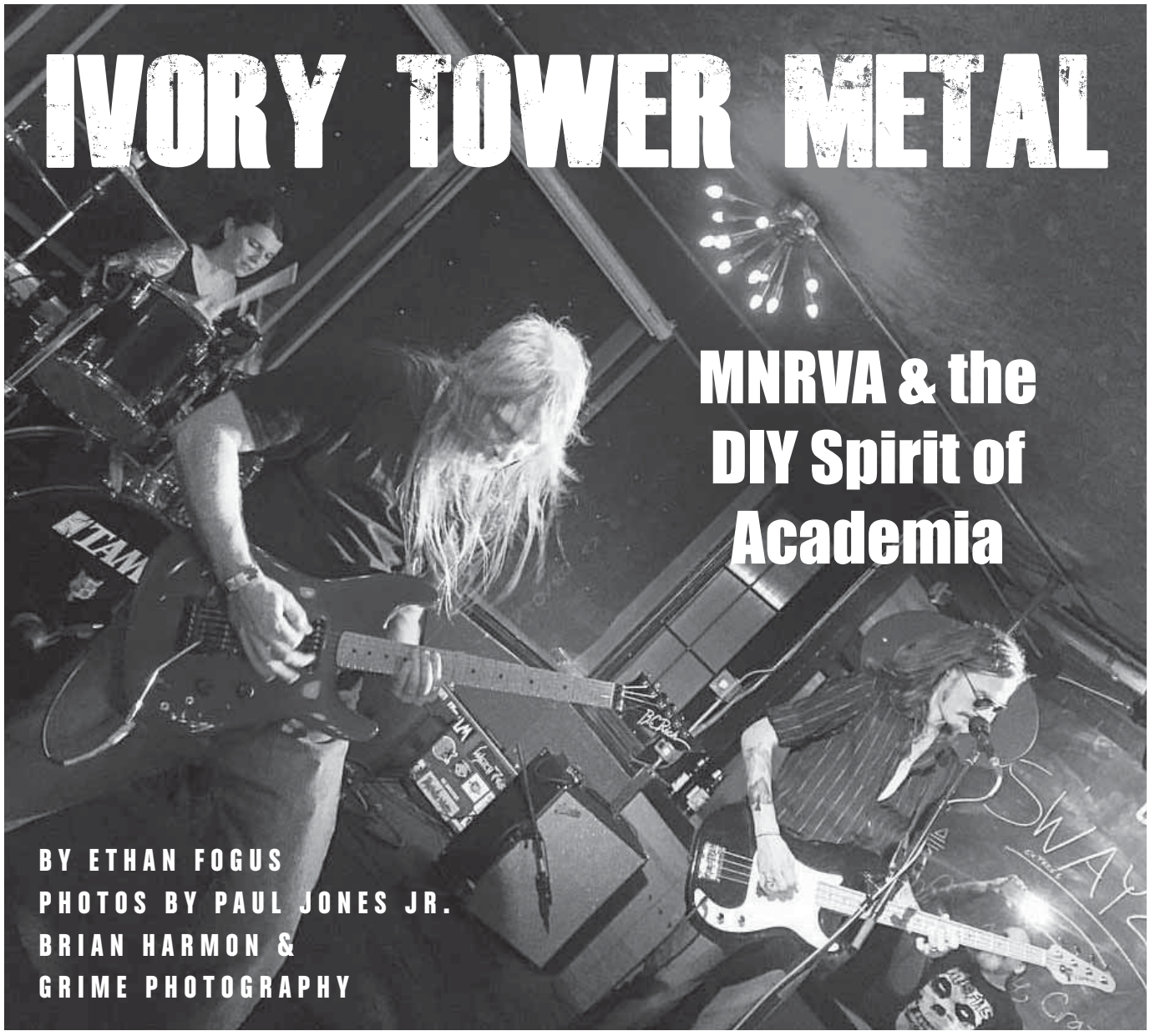
I will know how green is spelled
when it is not green
--W.S. Merwin, "Tracing the Letters"

Last night the shrill frogs' chorale
was more like tinnitus
than tinnitus itself, indistinguishable
from the dreaming mind's meandering,
This morning bumblebees,
hundreds cover the bottlebrush..
All is not well.
It is early May. Ninety degrees.
Geese are punished into a listless shade.
A purposeful heron stalks a bream
in slow motion at the water's edge.
Spring's ducklings, even mayflies
have yet to appear. Song birds,
finches and chickadees,
no longer at the feeder, summer further north.

I'm up at seven, house painting early
to avoid the heat. Taupe, the dealer calls it,
but really green with a twist of brown.
Leaves, too, brown along their edges
and the lakebed already
starts to show through like an old sore.
Another summer coming like the last--
a grim test of survival.

The nights are stifling. At three a.m.
the frogs, in unison, go suddenly silent.

IVORY TOWER METAL



MNRVA & the DIY Spirit of Academia

BY ETHAN FOGUS
PHOTOS BY PAUL JONES JR.
BRIAN HARMON &
GRIME PHOTOGRAPHY

There's a stereotype about English professors who go out between lectures and play the banjo on the campus lawn in their resplendent tweed. I suppose something about waxing poetic about Shakespeare makes folks want to imagine the tintabulations of a gentle banjo. At the USC English Department, this stereotype rings true as well. With one difference. Here it's all about the metal, y'all.

Byron Hawk, professor and lead guitarist and co-vocalist of the power-doom trio MNRVA, is one such professor. Hawk, with fellow professor Dr. Gina Ercolini and Kevin Jennings (of Historic Columbia), delivers dark stoner metal under the MNRVA moniker.

The name — pronounced "Minerva" — is a tribute to the Roman god of wisdom. Gina has written about the Owl of Minerva in her academic research. She tells me that the owl "flies over and assesses history after it's already passed." The owl is also a symbol of knowledge, wisdom, perspicacity, and erudition.

The Owl of Minerva seemed an appropriate mascot to Byron and Kevin. Especially since co-songwriter Kevin found himself enamoured with apocalyptic scenarios while writing their most recent EP. "I worked a depressing job for 8 years" (he no longer works there) and I'd have a lot of downtime to think about stuff. When we started writing the band stuff I'd say, 'what's the most really out there, end of the world thing I can write about?'"

"I like to look up old history and see what everyone believed in 5000 years ago," he continues, "then mix it in with other religious stuff. Then throw in end of the world scenarios, or killing your friends or something like that."

MNRVA was formed one late night over a conversation about Motörhead. Iconic singer Lemmy Kilmister had recently passed away, and the three friends began plotting friends a tribute show to the icon. "Tequila was

involved," adds Kevin with a grin.

After their hangovers wore off they began practicing in earnest as the outfit Iron Fist. It was a blast. They shared chemistry with an ability to complement each other's playing style. They did a few shows as Iron Fist before deciding to write their own original material.

The record was written as a collaborative effort. Byron would write riffs at home. These were skeletal versions of MNRVA material. He'd record them on his phone and sort through the files. Then he'd go back and separate the wheat from the chaff. When he found a riff he liked, he'd bring it to practice. "Sometimes I'd come to practice with two riffs that go together. Sometimes I'll have spent more time mapping it out and I'll come with something close to being finished. And then we'll start jamming. And see how it gets put together and work it out through the practice room."

In Kevin, Byron found a lyrical partner that nicely complemented his style. "The lyrics I've written so far have been kind of misanthropic," he admits, but notes that Kevin's are "sort of narrative-driven and horror story-driven, end-of-the-world kind of scenarios. He'll write them out as a narrative, and he'll take it to me and I'll see how it fits whatever music I'm working on."

And the communal drive is really at the heart of MNRVA. Gina and Kevin also form the dynamic duo behind Turbo Gatto, and also triple-moonlight as bookers for shows at the Art Bar. For his part, Byron has booked some shows at Conundrum and if Art Gallery and provides students with the opportunity to interact with musicians and the theory and materiality of audio production. For all involved, music is a way to connect with the local Columbia scene.

And that's really the point for Byron. He adds "by investing your time, you become part of that music community — you get the fellowship with everyone. You get to meet all these people with similar or different interests, but you're all together in one place having a good time sharing the scene."

"If you're able to play music in Columbia or outside of Columbia, you're investing yourself in each place and spending time with everyone, seeing what their scene is like. It really does create camaraderie between everyone."

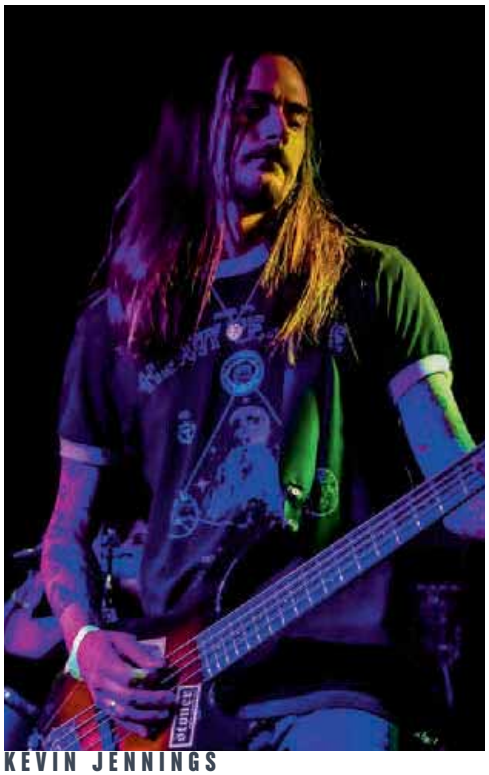
Gina mirrors Byron's enthusiasm saying "at least 75% of the whole fun of doing music is playing with other bands--bands from out of town, bands from in town--playing different bills, talking to other bands — that is most of the joy for me. That's a lot of the point."

In the upcoming year, MNRVA is planning on releasing an EP. They made a record with Jay Matheson at The Jam Room last April. MNRVA has big ambitions and they're hoping to shop a full-length around and release it next April.

For the band, putting out the album is also a milestone in that it represents how much they've grown as friends and bandmates. DIY culture is all about making connections with each other. It's the spirit of the punk ethos; why MNRVA and Turbo Gatto are both interesting and inspirational acts.

Where there's a will, there's a way. And the metal trio of MNRVA prove that what you need is good friends and a good attitude. Maybe the messenger for an ancient god of wisdom, too.

Or as Kevin puts it succinctly, with a shrug, "if we can do it, you can."



KEVIN JENNINGS

GINA ERCOLINI

BYRON HAWK

WEST OF EDEN

POEM BY FRED DINGS

Childhood is the springtime of humanity,
the eternal Eden through which we're forced to pass,
which is why, perhaps, even frozen adults
in the presence of children may thaw into smiles,
restored for a while to their own first days
when happiness came easy and even rage
was pure and brief like a harmless summer squall
at sea.
  And so my son, even on the hardest days,
dazzles me, as he flowers in my gaze—as all children
flower when looked upon with love.

He is a redbud bursting from a winter branch.
He is a yellow crocus thrusting through the snow.
Joy-light wells inside him. His skin glows.

Laughing-eyes, wind-racer, he surges with the force
of Life, as yet undimmed by our shadows and strife.

I guard the borders of his land, the flaming
sword of knowledge heavy in my hand.

Fred Dings' books of poetry include *The Four Rings* (New & Selected poems, not yet released), *Eulogy for a Private Man* (TriQuarterly Books), *After the Solstice* (Orchises Press), and two chapbooks, *Vespers* and *The Bruised Sky*. His work has appeared in *The New Republic, The New Yorker, The Paris Review, Poetry, TriQuarterly, World Literature Today*, and many other periodicals. He teaches at the University of South Carolina.

NOT KNOWING FROM ADAM

POEM BY DEBRA A. DANIEL

She disliked his bristled chin,
his thick, whiskered ankles,

would have preferred
something different,

though she knew not what,
only something other than.

Eyes blue and smooth instead
of his as dark as river ooze.

Hair with curving softness,
not his head of needles

prickling against her palms
when she suggested washing.

She tired of his nonchalance,
how he took for granted

their very existence
his and hers.

She thought,
maybe, if she got out more,

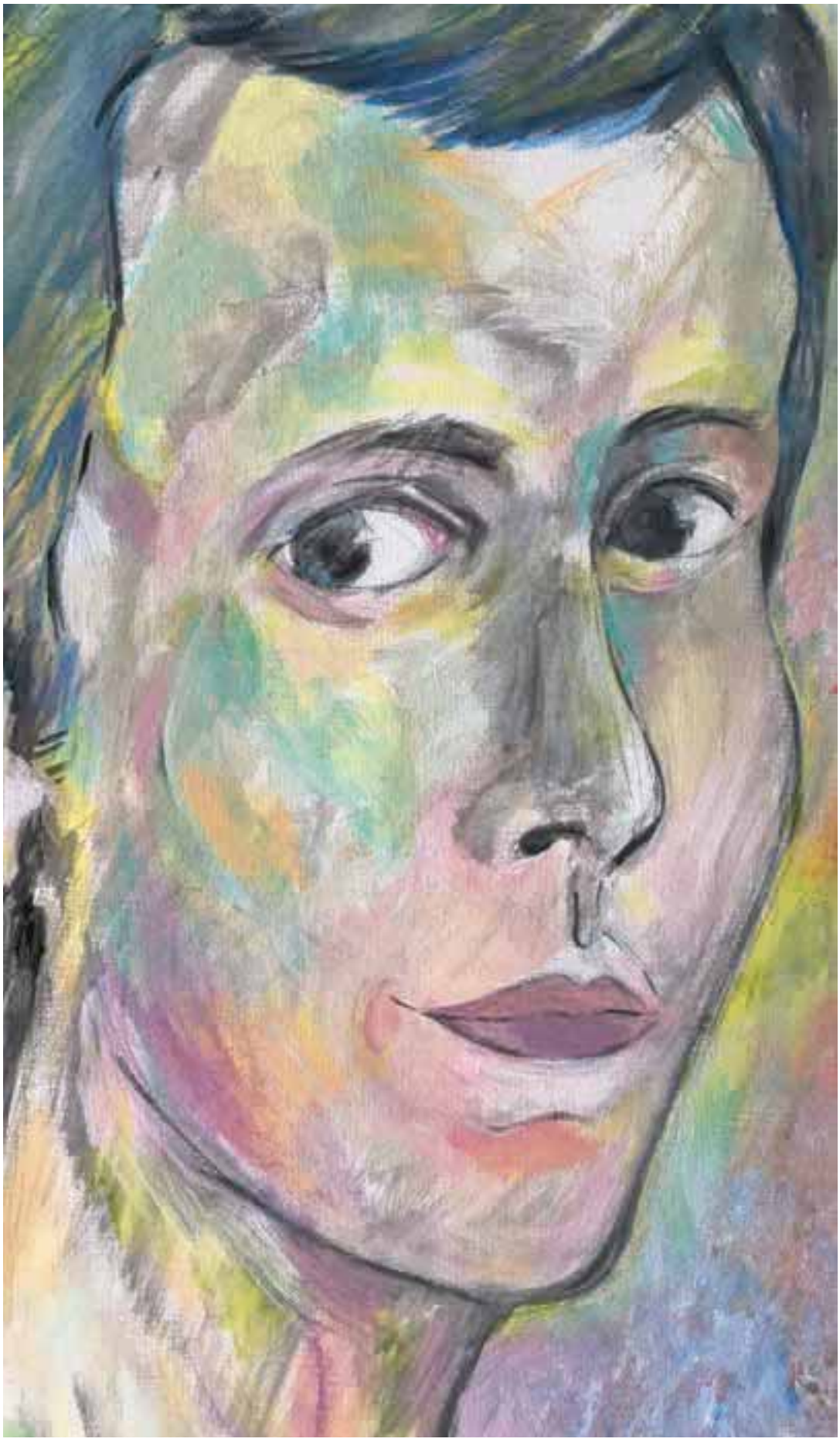
registered for night classes,
found a job where she

would be appreciated,
then she could dress the part,

get her own place,
meet someone new,

shake off the taste
of dirt.

Debra A. Daniel, author of *Woman Commits Suicide in Dishwasher* (Muddy Ford Press), and two poetry chapbooks, *The Downward Turn of August* (Finishing Line Press), and *As Is* (Main Street Rag), has won awards from *The Los Angeles Review* and *Bacopa*. She was twice named SC Arts Commission Poetry Fellow and won the Guy Owen Prize from the *Southern Poetry Review*. Her new novella-in-flash, *The Roster*, (Ad Hoc Fiction) was a highly commended entry for the Bath Flash Fiction Award in the UK.



Remembering Aaron Graves

If there's one thing that I insist
It's that the group of us not exist
Without the helping hands we lend to one another

When he broke the loaf he said,
"Do this and think of me when I'm dead
Then he passed it 'round and shared it with his brothers."

Now I'm doing things, the way I want to be
Doing things, not thinking about
If I'm doing things, the way you want things done.

If I could just get the nerve, I'd say "I know that I don't deserve
All of the things I own and the gifts that you've been giving."

I'm feeling so embarrassed of myself
And so incapable of accomplishing the things I know I'm supposed to
So, if we could help each other out, I know our bodies will begin to sprout
And we could raise our arms and start focusing on growing.

And now I'm getting old, and I can feel my hands getting cold.
It's hard to hear when we're getting told
Our hearts can stay warmed up.

We're doing things together now, when we do those things
We're thinking about if we're doing things the way you want things done.

We'll miss you, Aaron. You were our superhero.

"Exist" by Those Lavender Whales from the album *Tomahawk of Praise*

"Portrait of Aaron Graves" (opposite) by Lucas Sams. Photograph (above) by Thomas Hammond.

More than 50 SC Women Artists Have Set a Table
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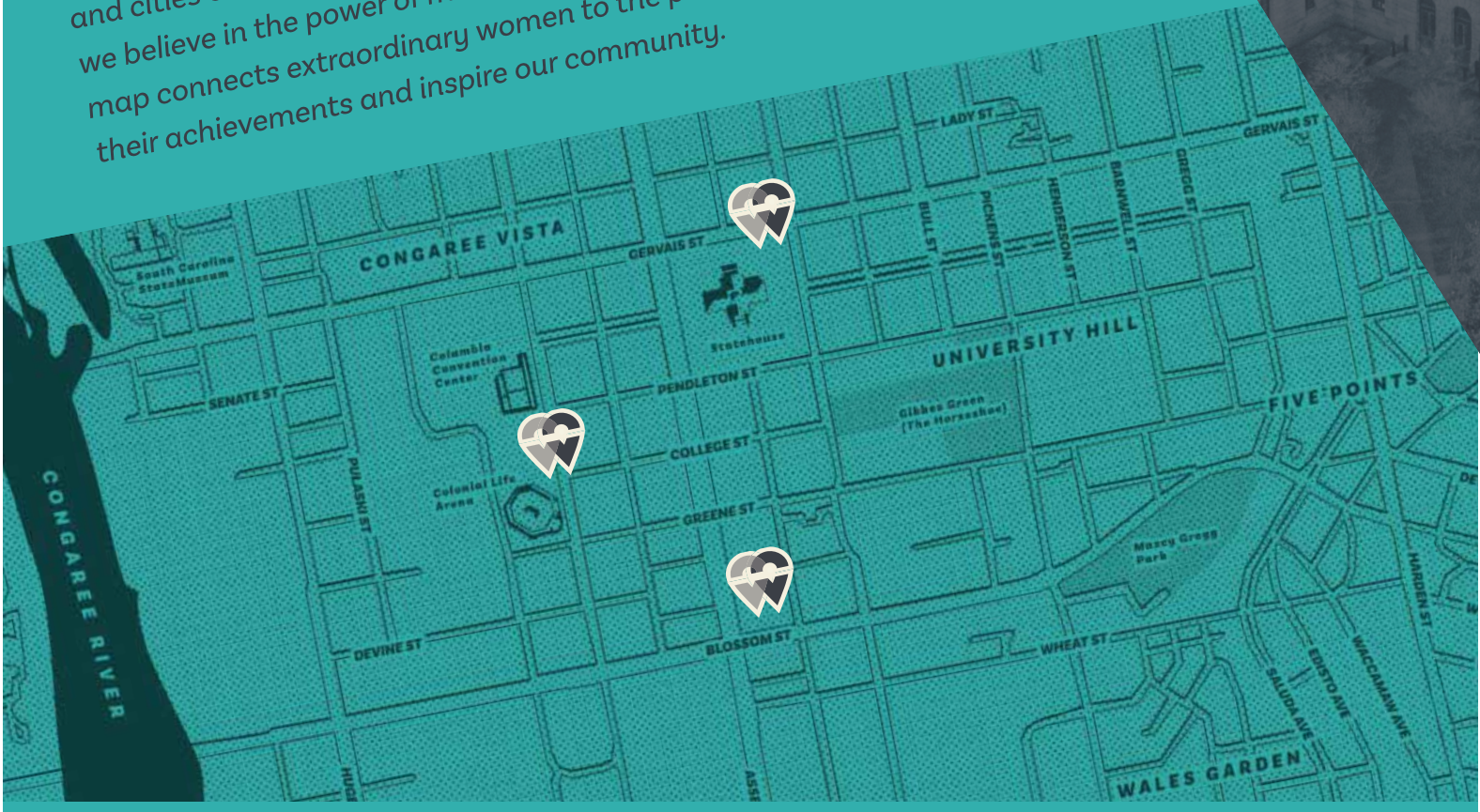
Columbia
City of
Women

PUTTING WOMEN ON THE MAP

Only a small percentage of streets, monuments, and landmarks in Columbia, and cities everywhere, are named for women. We've come together because we believe in the power of moving through a city that recognizes women. Our map connects extraordinary women to the places we know and love to honor their achievements and inspire our community.



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