

# Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

## ArtFields© 2016

ArtFields© 2016 will take place in Lake City, SC, from Apr. 22 - 30, 2016. The event turns Historic Downtown Lake City into an arts mecca for 9 days, celebrating artists and art from twelve Southeastern states.

ArtFields© is one of the largest celebrations of Southeastern artwork in the United States, with competition artists vying for \$110,000 in prizes. ArtFields© will award prizes of \$50,000 for the Top Prize, \$25,000 for Juried Panel prize, two \$12,500 People's Choice (one each for two- and three-dimensional work), and ten special merit awards for \$1,000 each from the good folks at Citizens Bank in Lake City.

This all happens by people coming to view the art offered at ArtFields©, registering to vote - then voting for works they like. It is said that 20,000 people come to view the art, but only about 25% of them register to vote and not all of them then vote.

I don't get it. It's not like registering to vote in this art competition will put your name on a list of potential jurors for a major capital crimes case in Washington, DC, where you'll be sequestered for months, on a list for tax audits by the IRS, or to be put on a list of people who will escort protesters out of a Donald Trump rally. No, it's just for voting on who you think should win some of the \$110,000 in cash awards. You don't even need to take up time in Lake City to cast your votes - you can do it at home - as long as you do it before the deadline for voting.

Look, a lot of money and hard work goes into producing ArtFields©. And a lot of money is at stake for the artists who entered this competition and were lucky to get selected to display their work. Some came from as far away as Arkansas or Florida. You owe them the time to register and vote.

If you came to look, you should follow through on the other half of this art event.

Here's my recommendation for how to do ArtFields©. Start at The R.O.B., which is the largest venue for ArtFields©, located at 245 South Church Street. If you've never been there before set your car's navigation system or smart phone for that address. You'll see the largest selection of works in one place at The R.O.B. There you'll also find info on the event, public rest rooms, ample free parking, and a bus that takes visitors anywhere you want to go throughout Lake City - for free.

When you're on the bus, say hi to Carl McFadden - the unofficial tour guide of ArtFields©. Carl is not your average bus driver. Ask him questions - if he doesn't know something, he'll find out for you.

From The R.O.B. you can ride over to the ArtFields© Welcome and Registration Center at 124 Main Street (a new location) where you can register to vote and pick up your official guide for ArtFields©. You have to register to get the guide. You don't need the guide to enjoy ArtFields© but it sure helps. Without it, I'm sure you'll miss some pretty great works of art. You can also buy an ArtFields© T-shirt or other items with the ArtFields© logo on it.

This year, if you register your cell phone number you'll be able to cast a vote while standing in front of an artwork you like. Technology marches on.

After registering to vote and picking up my guide, I usually head over to the Jones-Carter Gallery, to check out the works there and perhaps get the inside scoop on what I shouldn't miss at ArtFields©. Gallery folks usually know what's best to see.

From then on it's helter skelter - unless you're the kind of person who makes plans ahead of time. On the ArtFields© website found at ([www.artfieldssc.org](http://www.artfieldssc.org)) you'll find

an art gallery of all the works on display during this year's event at (<http://www.artfieldssc.org/art-gallery-2016/>).

There you can check out the works you might be most interested in seeing. And once you're registered to vote and have your guide, you can match your list of must see works with where they are located. Unless you're planning on visiting Lake City several times or staying there for a couple of days you won't see them all, so it's good to make a plan ahead of time to make sure you spend your time seeing the works you want to see.

For the last three years I've spent at least two days viewing ArtFields© and I've never come close to seeing it all. I always miss something that I later wish I had seen, so I'm making a plan this year of works I want to see. Of course my problem with any plan is that I'm surely going to run into a lot of folks - viewers and artists who I'm going to get in conversation with and the more I talk the less I see, which is OK - some conversations are well worth missing a few works of art. I've seen a lot of art in my day.

And don't be an art snob when you're in Lake City, some of the best works and award winners have been displayed in barber shops, restaurants and children's dress shops. The main reason for Lake City to put on this event is to get you to discover their small Southern town and the people who make it special. Why else would they let their town be invaded by art and artists? Tell me if you've got it figured out.

If you're short on time I'd at least check out The R.O.B. and the Jones-Carter Gallery and then as many shops and stores as you can. But make sure you register to vote and then vote on what you saw. If for some strange reason you didn't see anything you liked - you're a hard art critic and the best thing you can do for ArtFields© is to go home and encourage the artists you like to enter the competition next year. ArtFields© and its jurors can only work with the pool of entries they receive and there is always room for more entries.

And don't forget ArtFields© has also planned a number of events to take place

during this 9-day celebration of art. Check them out at (<http://www.artfieldssc.org/attendees/events-old-2/>).

And, don't forget to leave a little money in Lake City, eat, drink and be merry while you're there - and maybe spend a night there sleeping off that food and drink.

For more info visit ([www.artfieldssc.org](http://www.artfieldssc.org)). Maybe I'll see you there.

## No April Fooling

Well, if you're waiting for an April Fools joke in this issue - got you.

The only trick played this month was that on those art galleries and art spaces, both commercial and non-profit who didn't send us info about their exhibits taking place in April - this month I didn't go looking for it.

Usually I go looking for that info if I haven't seen an e-mail come from those who I know usually have shows. Sometimes they send us info, sometimes they don't. This month if they had something showing but didn't bother to send us a press release - they got left out. I try to keep our readers informed, but this month I just got tired of the slackers.

What's not very funny is that if you were to go to most of these folks' websites you won't find much info either. A lot of them seem to take pride in being able to tell you all the exhibits they have had in the past, but they can't seem to tell you what they'll be showing the next month. And some can't even post info about their current exhibit. I'm not sure why they have a website.

And as far as Facebook goes - I won't take info off of Facebook as an official press release - as most of that info is incomplete. All they seem to be interested in is getting people to receptions and after that they don't really seem to care if anyone comes to see the exhibits they offer.

I just wish they put as much effort into promoting exhibits as they do the art classes they offer or info about fundraisers. It doesn't seem very fair to artists if they don't intend to promote the exhibits they present. But then I'm not an artist. Lucky me.

## Trey Finney



Mindful Moment

Oil on Panel

24 x 24 inches

  
**THE SYLVAN GALLERY**  
171 King St. • Charleston • SC • 29401

For additional information  
**843•722•2172**  
[www.thesylvanguard.com](http://www.thesylvanguard.com)