

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

It Takes A Pandemic

People like to say "It Takes a Village" to raise a child, to build a town, or to pull off any project. In this case, It takes a Pandemic to bring people together - at least most of us.

This COVID-19 Pandemic has taken the visual art community to its knees, by closing galleries, art museums, and shutting down art festivals, but we're not down yet. Like the creative folks they are, many have found ways to still serve the public, that is mostly locked down at home, by providing art on websites, on social media, in virtual exhibitions, delivering work to your door, offering curb side service, and now in some cases access, one or two people at a time. It's not what some would call anything like normal, but it's what we can do for now.

People who have been downright lazy when it comes to Internet shopping are all over it now, as it's one of the only ways to reach many people in the safety of their homes. The no more than 3 people in a space at a time probably isn't that much different for most commercial galleries on a regular basis - unless it's a reception or the ever popular art walk. It will likely be a while before people are willing to get elbow to elbow with the general public again. Galleries may have to get used to the old-fashion way of dealing with their customers one by one.

But these creative folks won't take this Pandemic sitting still for very long - like in Charleston, SC, a city used to dealing with disasters, earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding, mass shootings, and now a Pandemic - again.

As I write this commentary the Charleston Visual Art Community is coming together to benefit the Food & Beverage Community and Local Farmers with the About Artists for Feed the Need art auction. A wonderful opportunity for all of us to help! An auction began on Sunday, April 26 at 5pm and closes Saturday, May 2 at 8pm. See the work being donated and make your bids at

(<https://www.32auctions.com/artistsfor-feedtheneed>) or you can purchase a work at a set price, which many people have already done. The Feed the Need folks are hoping to raise \$20,000, but as of this writing on Apr. 26, just a few hours after the auction began, \$59,139.00 of artwork has already been sold to people who couldn't wait to see if they were going to be the top bidder on May 2. And, there are lots of great works available.

It's sometimes an over used tradition in Charleston, going to the visual art community and asking them to help raise funds for various causes. Especially when they are usually the last to get help when they need it. Usually the performing arts community gets helped first in Charleston and then what little is left over goes to the non-profit side of the visual arts, but little if any goes to the commercial side of the visual art community. I've yet to see the local orchestra, theatre company or dance company offer their talents to the highest bidder or sometimes the only bidder during one of Charleston's disasters or for a good cause that isn't their own. But the visual artists keep giving. They complain from time to time, but they keep giving.

I have a policy of not mentioning one of these art auction without the names of every participating artists and that holds for us too. They are: Francis Sills, Kris Manning, Paul Ferrari, Robin Joseph, Scot Rittenbaum, Susan Trott, Alana M Knuff, Amanda McLeon, Angela Trotta Thomas, Ann Balzac Keane, Anne Blair Brown, Anne Brownyard (2), Anne Darby Parker, Anne Jervy Rhett, Beth McLean, Beth Tockey Williams, Betsy McDonald (2), Betty Anglin Smith, Brenda Orcutt, Rrian Rego, Carmen Osborn (2), Claudia Boyce, Colleen Parker, Connie Rigdon, Cynthia Huston, Daphne vom Baur, Dee Beard Dean, Dorothy Shain, Eleanor Parker, Elizabeth O'Neill Verner, Fallon Peper, Fer Caggiano, Fred Jamar, Ginny Versteegen, Gloria Smith. Heather MacQueen

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Duo by William Halsey, oil on paper, 11 x 15 inches

Both artists are recipients of the Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Award

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