

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

On Our Cover This Month

On our cover this month is a work by Alix Hitchcock, who is part of the exhibit *Feathers, Leaves, & Trees*, featuring works by Alix Hitchcock and Lea Lackey-Zachmann, on view at the Artworks Gallery in Winston-Salem, NC, through Feb. 25, 2023. Receptions will be held on Feb. 3, from 7-9pm and Feb. 12, from 2-4pm. Hitchcock is exhibiting new hand colored and hand pulled dry-point prints. These one of a kind monoprints are based on initial drawings from shadows of trees and foliage. You can read all about the exhibit on Page 22.

Directing A Spotlight

I'd like to direct a spotlight on a couple of exhibits we're presenting in this issue. You'll find them both on Page 26 and they both are taking place in Raleigh, NC, an area we don't hear from that often. I've tried to reach out to venues in that area, but except a few, my pleas don't seem to be sinking in to many there.

The first is an exhibition taking place at Meredith College in Raleigh, NC, which is presenting *In-Rage*, featuring works by Megumi Naganoma, on view in the Frankie G. Weems Gallery in the Gaddy-Hamrick Art Center, through Mar. 12, 2023. A reception will be held on Feb. 9, from 5-7pm, with a Gallery Talk, from 5:30-6:30pm, in room 137 at the Center.

The second is an exhibition taking place at the Diamante Arts & Cultural Center in Raleigh, NC, which is presenting *ALCHEMY: Visions In Color*, an exhibition by Puerto Rican artist Adriana Ameigh, on view through Mar. 12, 2023.

These two venues seem to have heard my pleas and sent us press releases about both these exhibitions. They both still have

a way to go in providing us all the info and materials we would like for our readers, but I'm happy to be on their radar. So I hope if you live in the area, you go see these two exhibitions to show them it pays to promote your exhibits.

Not A Fan Of Dedicated Months Of The Year

I don't like dedicated months in respect to the arts, mainly the visual arts: Black History Month where all the public venues try to present an exhibit featuring a Black artist or a group of Black artists, Hispanic Heritage Month, Youth Arts Month, Women's History Month, etc.

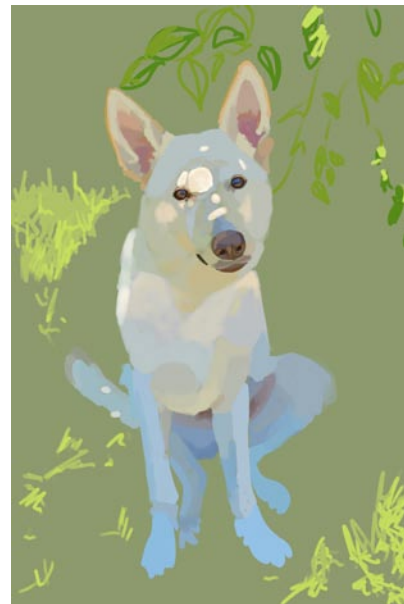
What I don't like is that many venues think that is the only time they should present such artists and ignore them the rest of the year. In some instances these venues show works by the same artists over and over, only during those special months.

In one instance the shows got so repetitive, featuring the same artists over and over again, that the presenter eventually allowed any artist to enter the show as long as their artwork looked like it fit the month's theme.

I don't like that some artists might be thinking that the only time they can or will be shown at a venue is during one of these special months. There are just not that many open opportunities out there that any artist (emerging artists especially) can afford to not try to enter their work in a show. Exposure is everything in the arts, even open juried shows. And, don't get me started about the selection of "special" jurors to jury "special" exhibitions.

I'm not against shows with special themes, or a special focus, as long as everyone can take the chance of being included - any time of the year.

I'm for open shows all year long.



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History of The Charleston Museum

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(left) Gabriel E. Manigault, curator, 1873-1899, oil on canvas by John Stolle, 1894. (right) Museum collections on exhibit at the College of Charleston, c. 1900, including the North Atlantic right whale skeleton that now hangs in the Museum's main lobby.

popular with local citizens as well as "distinguished naturalists" from other states who came to view its collections. The Civil War put an end to this brief golden age. With federal troops threatening the city, Professor Holmes prudently moved most of the collections to Edgefield for safekeeping, a fortuitous decision since some pieces left behind were destroyed after the Union occupation in 1865.

The post-Civil War period was a time of economic decline for Charleston, and the Museum fell on hard times. Fortunately, the College Trustees appointed Gabriel Manigault as the curator in 1873. Despite limited funding and a seeming lack of interest in the Museum by the College, he expanded the collections and improved the exhibits. He was responsible for the acquisition of some of the iconic pieces in the collection, including the North Atlantic right whale skeleton that hangs in the Museum lobby, the Egyptian mummy, and the casts of statuary from the British Museum.

After Manigault's death, the College installed George Hall Ashley as curator

but it would be Ashley's successor, Paul Rea, who would bring the Museum into the modern era. Named the Museum's first official "director," Rea oversaw the move of the Museum from Randolph Hall to Thomson Auditorium on Rutledge Avenue, which had been built for a Confederate veterans' reunion and which would later be affectionately remembered by many locals as the "old Museum." Rea also spearheaded the effort to make the Museum independent of the College of Charleston, and in 1915 the South Carolina Secretary of State issued a charter for the incorporation of The Charleston Museum, the first time it would be known by that name.

Rea also hired Laura Bragg, who would succeed him as director. Bragg was influential in the acquisition of the Heyward-Washington House and in expanding the Museum's education programs, which she insisted also be available to Blacks in the era of Jim Crow. She, her successor Milby Burton, and capable administrators such as Donald Herold and John Brum-

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Originally the town home of Thomas Heyward, Jr., the Heyward-Washington House (right) had been turned into a bakery with a storefront in the late 19th century. Director Laura Bragg (left) helped raise the funds to purchase the building in 1929 and return it to its original floor plan. One year later, the first museum created in North America produced the state's first house museum when it opened the home to the public.

gardt continued to expand the collections and appropriately steward the Museum throughout the twentieth century.

By 1907 the Thomson Auditorium, built as convention space for the United Confederate Veterans reunion in 1890's, became the home of The Charleston Museum, which remained there until the collection was moved into a new building on Meeting Street in 1980. Within a month, the old building burned. A bequest from John Thomson to the City of Charleston was used to finance the auditorium construction. Although designed by the architect Frank Milburn, who was selected early in his career for this commission, the structure was built in a temporary manner with a cast-iron frame and exterior stucco with applied ornamentation in the Beaux Arts style. The original semicircular colonnade has been preserved as an architectural folly. The city partially restored the plan of the original Cannon Park, and much of the site remains as open green space.

Despite the many transitions that it went through in 250 years, the purpose behind its founding - to educate - would

remain. Today, The Charleston Museum, which had its beginnings in the efforts of South Carolina's wealthy elite, is a resource for learning for people from all walks of life from around our state, the country, and the world.



Thomson Auditorium built in 1899, as a convention space for the United Confederate Veterans reunion, later became the home of The Charleston Museum in 1907, which was located at 121 Rutledge Avenue. (Source: The Buildings of Charleston by Jonathan Poston.) The featured color photographic postcard was published by Colourpicture Publishers, ca. 1960s.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 843/722-2996 or visit (<https://www.charlestonmuseum.org/>).

The deadline each month to submit articles, photos and ads is the 24th of the month prior to the next issue. This will be December 24th for the January 2023 issue and Jan. 24 for the February 2023 issue. After that, it's too late unless your exhibit runs into the next month.

But don't wait for the last minute - send your info now.
And where do you send that info? E-mail to (info@carolinaarts.com).