

Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, SC, Features Works by Mary Whyte and Vaughn Sills

The Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, SC, will present two special exhibitions including: *Mary Whyte: Working South* and *Places for the Spirit: Traditional African American Gardens of the South*, on view from May 4 through Sept. 9, 2012. In the Main Gallery, renowned watercolorist Mary Whyte captures the essence of vanishing blue-collar professions from across ten southern states in *Working South*. The Rotunda Gallery will feature the work of fine art photographer Vaughn Sills and her stunning collection of photographs documenting African American folk gardens and their creators in the exhibition *Places for the Spirit*.

"The pairing of these exhibitions underscores our mission to promote American art from a southern perspective. This is a splendid opportunity to discover the uniqueness of the South through the eyes of two stellar artists," stated Angela D. Mack, Executive Director.



Shoe Shine, 2008, By Mary Whyte (American, b. 1953), Watercolor on paper, H. 25-1/4 x W. 23", Courtesy of Beth and Don Martell

Mary Whyte: Working South features 50 watercolor portraits, sketches, and drawings that focus on vanishing rural and industrial workforces that were once ubiquitous throughout the region but are now declining due to changes in our economy, environment, technology, and fashion. From the textile mill worker and tobacco farmer to the sponge diver and elevator operator, Whyte documents the range of southerners whose everyday labors have gone unheralded while keeping the South in business. By rendering these workers amid scenes of their rough-hewn lives, Whyte shares stories of the grace, strength, and dignity exemplified in these images of fading southern ways of life and livelihood. The exhibition is accompanied by a full-color publication that includes an introduction by the artist.

Whyte is a teacher and author whose figurative paintings have earned national recognition. A resident of Johns Island, SC, Whyte garners much of her inspiration from members of the Gullah community of coastal South Carolina, who number among her most prominent subjects. She has published several books, and her portraits are included in numerous corporate, private, and public collections, including the Gibbes Museum of Art.

Mary Whyte: Working South is sponsored by the member auxiliary group Gibbes, etc., BlueCross BlueShield of SC, TD Bank, and *Charleston* magazine.

Vaughn Sills began photographing folk gardens in 1987 after visiting Mrs. Bea Robinson's garden in Athens, GA. Sills recalls that she "became entranced by Bea's garden" and felt a magic or spirit

surrounding her. Over the next twenty years, Sills traveled throughout the Southeast and photographed over 150 yards and gardens - and often their creators. These gardens found in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina represent an important element of the American landscape that is quickly disappearing.



Pearl Fryar's Garden, Bishopville, South Carolina, 2002, By Vaughn Sills, Inkjet print, 16 x 19 1/2 in., Courtesy of the artist

The landscapes that Sills documents have a unique historical significance due to the design elements and spiritual meanings that have been traced to the yards and gardens of American slaves and further back to their African heritage. The gardens are places to socialize and be creative, but they also have mystical purposes: bottles and plant pots are put on the tree branches or intentionally placed in the garden to capture evil spirits; pipes are placed vertically in the ground to allow the spirits of ancestors to communicate with the living. These seemingly whimsical arrangements are actually subtle and symbolic reminders of the divine in everyday life and the cycles of the natural world. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog titled *Places for the Spirit: Traditional African American Gardens*.

A fine art and documentary photographer, Sills' work has been exhibited widely in museums and galleries. She has recently been awarded grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the New England Foundation for the Arts, and the Polaroid Foundation. She is a professor of photography at Simmons College in Boston, MA.

Places for the Spirit: Traditional African American Gardens of the South is sponsored by AT&T Real Yellow Pages.

The Gibbes Museum of Art will present many related programs in conjunction with these two exhibitions. Contact the Museum for further info and details.

Established as the Carolina Art Association in 1858, the Gibbes Museum of Art opened its doors to the public in 1905. Located in Charleston's historic district, the Gibbes houses a premier collection of over 10,000 works, principally American with a Charleston or Southern connection, and presents special exhibitions throughout the year. In addition, the museum offers an extensive complement of public programming and educational outreach initiatives that serve the community by stimulating creative expression and improving the region's superb quality of life. Visit highlights of the Gibbes collection on Google Art Project at (www.googleart-project.com).

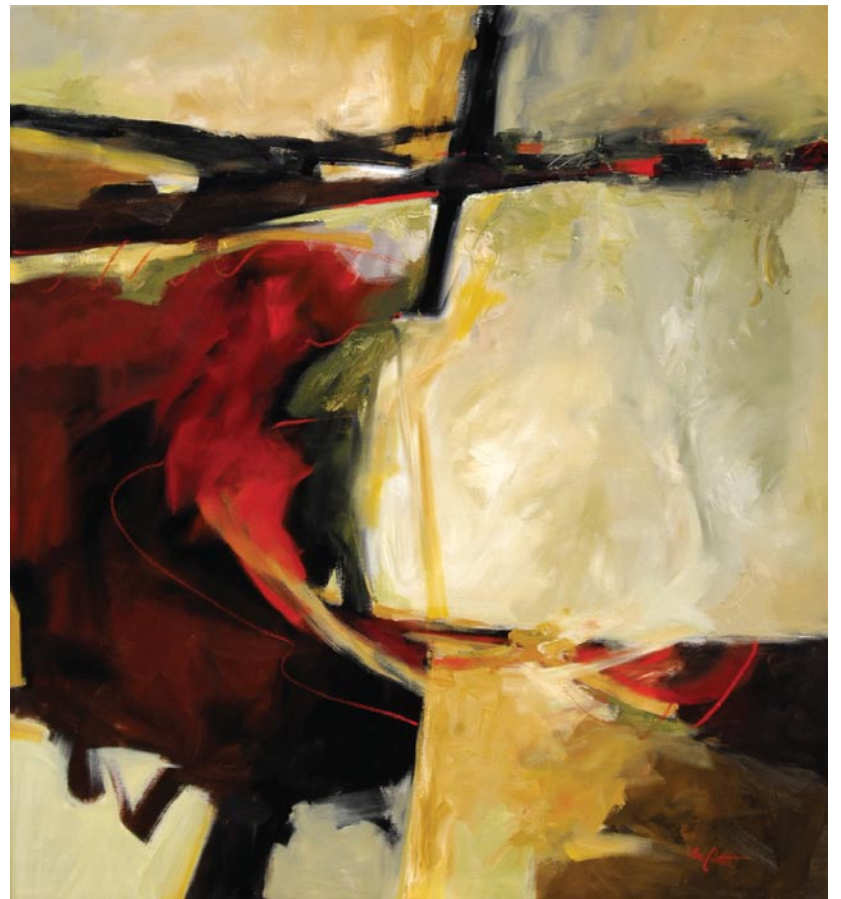
For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 843/722-2706 or visit (www.gibbesmuseum.org).

City of North Charleston, SC, Features Works by Elena Barna

The City of North Charleston will present the exhibit, *Works by Elena Barna*, on view May 1 - 31, 2012, at the North Charleston City Gallery, located in the Charleston Area Convention Center in North Charleston, SC. A reception will be held on May 4, from 6-7pm.

Page 6 - Carolina Arts, May 2012

Barna's acrylic painting, *My Muse*, was selected as the 2012 North Charleston Arts Festival design. As the winner of the statewide design competition, Barna's piece is used on all promotional materials for the 2012 North Charleston Arts Festival. In *continued above on next column to the right*



Intention
Oil on Canvas, 72 x 66 inches

Eva Carter

Plan a visit to the new Downtown Studio for a private showing of latest works.

New Downtown Studio
6 Gillon Street, Suite 8 (second floor)
Charleston, SC 29401
Just north of the Old Exchange Building

By Appointment Only
Please call (843) 478-2522
www.EvaCarterGallery.com



Work by Elana Barna

addition, the piece has become part of the City of North Charleston's Public Art Collection. T-shirts and posters featuring the winning design will be available for sale.

Barna gathers inspiration from the Impressionism and Post-impressionism art movements, as well as Art Nouveau, and cites Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, Gauguin, Monet, Degas, and Alphonse Mucha as artists she admires. Preferring to work in acrylic and oil, her work features vivid

colors, thick application of paint, distinctive brush strokes, and realistic subject matter, mainly people. Form and color are central to her aesthetic and shimmering surfaces and rich dabs of paint characterize her paintings. Her art is an emotional vision of the world. She uses color as a means to express feelings about a subject or her memories - a way to express emotion and communicate to the viewer a spiritual message.

Born in 1987 in Volgograd, Russia, Barna began her art education in high school. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Painting and Art Education from Volgograd State University of Education in Russia. In 2008, Barna came to Charleston to work for the summer and learn about life in America. To her surprise, she fell in love with the city, the Carolina Lowcountry, and resident Josh Barna. After returning home to complete her education and the long process of legal immigration, Elena and Josh were married following her return to Charleston in 2009. She currently lives and works in North Charleston with Josh and their bull mastiff, Phoenix.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Cultural Arts Department at 843/740-5854 or visit (www.northcharleston.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 May 24th for the June 2012 issue and June 24 for the July 2012 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) or mail to:
Carolina Arts, P.O. Drawer 427, Bonneau, SC 29431

THE TREASURE NEST Art Gallery

Extensive selection of high quality oil paintings and frames at truly wonderful values.

1055 Johnnie Dodds Blvd.
Crickentree Village Shopping Center
Mt. Pleasant, SC • Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm
843 216 -1235 • www.treasurestartgallery.com

The Finishing Touch

Original Art, Fine Prints,
Custom Framing, and
Interior Design by appointment

140-A West Richardson Ave.
Summerville, South Carolina 29483
843/873-8212
Mon. - Fri., 10am-6pm; Sat. 10am - 5pm