

Visual Arts at N. Chas. Arts Fest

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South Carolina based artist Brandon Shull creates installations that reference or are influenced by the natural world. His art explores aspects of time, repetition, pattern, and artistic process. Using clay, tree branches, and other natural materials, this temporary public art installation is a manifestation of the artist's personal journey navigating grief, loss, healing, and transformation.

Shull earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics and Sculpture from the University of South Carolina and has attended workshops at Penland School of Craft in

Penland, NC.

Complete information on all 2023 North Charleston Arts Fest offerings and participation opportunities is available at (NorthCharlestonArtsFest.com). Entry instructions for the Festival's Judged Fine Art Exhibition, Judged Photography Exhibition, Tri-County Youth Art Exhibition, and Tri-County High School Sculpture Exhibition, as well as volunteer sign-up forms are also available. Forms can be downloaded at (NorthCharlestonArtsFest.com/apply).

College of Charleston in Charleston, SC, Features Works by Carla Gannis

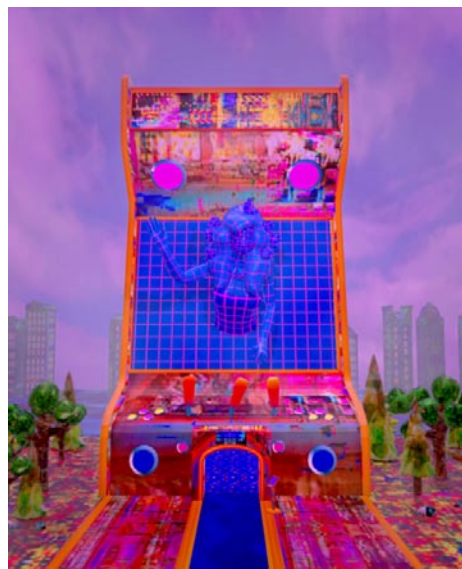
The College of Charleston in Charleston, SC, will present *Carla Gannis: wwwunderkammer*, on view at the Halsey Institute, from May 19 through July 15, 2023.

In *wwwunderkammer*, Carla Gannis aims to decolonize the Wunderkammer (and by extension—the museum) by using various technologies to conflate the real and the virtual. Her exhibition *wwwunderkammer* is a real-world manifestation of her ongoing project of the same name, which exists online via social VR on Mozilla Hubs and in a high-resolution desktop VR.

The ongoing project consists of different “chambers” that focus on specific aspects of our contemporary life, such as increasing threats to our environment and animals in it, how technologies alter our perception of ourselves, and how our language has shifted with the advent of the internet and advanced computers. The gallery installation will use augmented reality to obfuscate what seems real and what does not. These strategies help Gannis explore what it means to be a human in the age of the internet while also endeavoring to make information and knowledge accessible to all.

Carla Gannis is a transmedia artist based in Brooklyn, New York. She produces works that consider the uncanny complications between grounded and virtual reality, nature and artifice, science and science fiction in contemporary culture. Fascinated by digital semiotics, Gannis takes a horror vacui approach to her artistic practice, culling inspiration from networked communication, art and feminist histories, emerging technologies and speculative design.

Gannis's work has appeared in exhibitions, screenings and internet projects across the globe. 2022 projects include “Welcome to the *wwwunderkammer*,” at the Pérez Art Museum Miami and “The Elevated Line” at Ryan Lee Gallery, New York, NY. A regular lecturer on digital art and extended reality, in March 2019 Gannis was a speaker at the SXSW Interactive



Work by Carla Gannis

Festival on the panel “Human Presence and Humor Make Us Better Storytellers.” Publications that have featured Gannis's work include *The Creators Project*, *Wired*, *FastCo*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *El País* and *The LA Times*, among others. In 2015 her speculative fiction was included in *DEVOURING THE GREEN:: fear of a human planet: a cyborg / eco poetry anthology*, published by Jaded Ibis Press.

Gannis holds a BFA and MFA in Painting from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Boston University, respectively. Currently, she is Industry Professor at New York University (NYU) in the Integrated Design and Media Program, Department of Technology, Culture and Society, Tandon School of Engineering. She is also a Year 7 Alum of NEW INC, in the XR: Bodies in Space track, New York, NY.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Institute at 843/953-4422 or visit (<http://halsey.cofc.edu/exhibitions/>).

City Gallery in Charleston, SC, Offers Exhibit Focused on Black Mermaids

The City Gallery at Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Waterfront Park in Charleston, SC, will present *Celebrating Black Mermaids: From Africa to America*, on view from May 26 through July 9, 2023. A reception will be held on May 27, from 2-5pm.

On Mar. 29, people around the world will celebrate mermaids. But in Charleston, Cookie Washington does that every day. Washington is an artist, curator and folklorist who recently led a sold-out art quilting presentation at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. She has long been drawn to and inspired by the rich folklore and historic significance of black mermaid mythologies, and is currently preparing for the opening of *Black Mermaids: From Africa to America*.

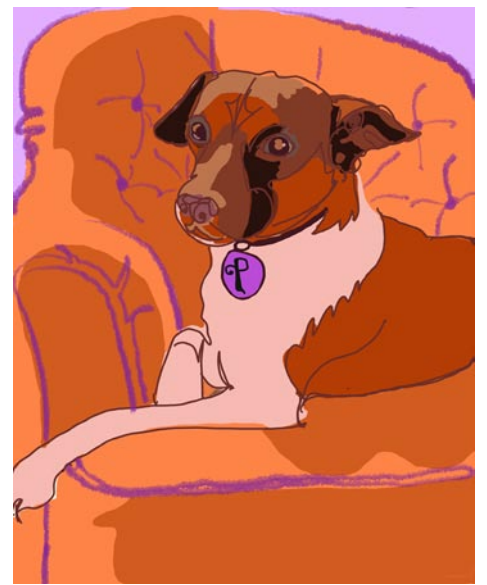
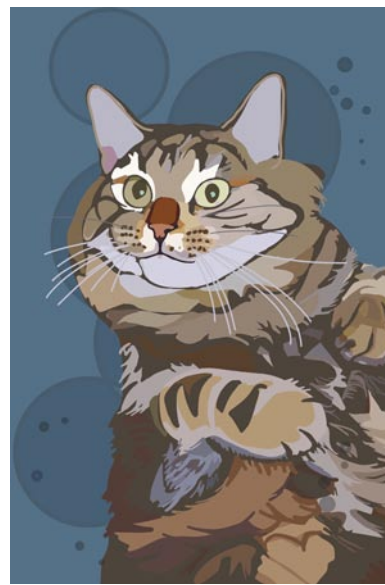
The exhibit features the work of dozens of esteemed and award-winning fiber artists from across the United States, whose mixed-media works celebrate African goddesses as mermaid and water spirit, honoring the past and exploring them anew. The show's theme contextualizes black mermaids through the history and

belief systems of those forcibly removed from Africa and carried across the ocean.

“Black mermaids traveled with enslaved Africans from Yoruba, West Africa, to distant lands, comforting them in the holds of the slave ships that took them far away from their homeland in Africa,” says Washington. “Because of the rich oral traditions of these peoples, few if any of these stories were written down until they were recorded by collectors of folk tales toward the end of the 19th century. The fine artistry in *Celebrating Black Mermaids: From Africa to America* is griot in nature. Each piece is a storyteller, using color, texture, form and embellishment to express a narrative.”

African merfolk first appeared in the millennia-old belief of the dwelling of water spirits in Western Africa, she explains. With the increasing contact between Europe and Africa of the time, these legends eventually combined with traditional European myths of mermaids. Thus, African water-spirits evolved from a representation as half-human, half-

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creature, to being popularly depicted as a half-fish, half-woman. With the arrival of enslaved Africans on the Atlantic slave trade, the traditions, beliefs, and practices of honoring ancestral water deities were transplanted into the United States. Tales of capricious female water spirits evolved into stories describing anything from wrathful sea creatures brewing great storms to harm the Carolina Sea Islands to mermaids acting as obliging “fairy-godmothers.”

Asked why an exhibit focusing only on Black Mermaid myths, Washington said, “As a mother of daughters and now grand-

daughters, I wish to reinforce the knowledge that the story of black women did not start on a plantation in America. We are not coming ‘up from slavery’ we are descended from Black Goddesses whose worship predated the worship of Jesus by more than a thousand years.”

Related cultural programming and events will take place during the exhibit and will be announced in the coming weeks.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the gallery at 843/958-6484 or visit (www.charleston-sc.gov/citygallery).

Visual Arts Offerings During the 2023 Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC

Editor's Note: This is the best we could find just weeks before this Festival starts. We are never sent a press release by the City of Charleston's Office of Cultural Affairs.

This year the 2023 Piccolo Spoleto Juried Art Exhibition, held at the City Gallery at Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Waterfront Park, on Prioleau Street, Charleston, was being presented before the Piccolo Spoleto Festival even opened. It remains on view through May 7, 2023, and will be down before Festival visitors arrive.

This annual juried art exhibition highlights the recent work of artists across South Carolina featuring painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, and photography. Artworks receiving prizes are presented alongside a limited selection of pieces identified by the juror as meriting display. This year's juror was Harriett Green.

The City Gallery at Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Waterfront Park will be presenting *Celebrating Black Mermaids: From Africa to America*, curated by Cookie Washington, on view from May 26 through July 9, 2023. A reception will be held on May 27, from 2-5pm.

The exhibit features the work of dozens of esteemed and award-winning fiber artists from across the United States, whose mixed-media works celebrate African

goddesses as mermaid and water spirit, honoring the past and exploring them anew. The show's theme contextualizes black mermaids through the history and belief systems of those forcibly removed from Africa and carried across the ocean. “Black mermaids traveled with enslaved Africans from Yoruba, West Africa, to distant lands, comforting them in the holds of the slave ships that took them far away from their homeland in Africa,” says Washington. Hours: Wed.-Sun., noon-5pm.

Redux Contemporary Art Center, on King Street in Charleston, will present the *GAP GALLERY At Redux Studios*, on May 26, from 5-8pm. Gap Gallery is back and hosting another legendary pop-up art exhibition in partnership with the City Gallery and Redux Studios for the 2023 Piccolo Spoleto Festival! The one-night event offers an opportunity for emerging artists to showcase their work while connecting with the vibrant visual arts community in Charleston.

Marion Square, located at the intersection of King, Meeting and Calhoun Streets in downtown Charleston, will once again host the 42nd Annual Piccolo Spoleto Outdoor Art Exhibition, on view from May 28 through June 12, 2023. Hours are: Mon.-

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