

City of Charleston, SC, Offers Art Exhibition Focused on Preservation

The City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs presents *Preservation Through Art: Charleston*, an exhibition at City Gallery that presents new interpretations by Charleston area artists of 150-year-old etchings of local vistas, on view at City Gallery, from July 19 through Sept. 8, 2024. A reception will be held on July 19, from 5-7pm, and an artist's talk on Aug. 10, beginning at 2pm. Both events are free and open to the public.



Henry Fenn, "Live Oak on the Ashley" 1880s, etching, from "Picturesque America"



Elizabeth Hasegawa Agresta, "Drayton Hall, Live Oak on the Ashley", oil on art board.



Scott Varn, "Live Oak", ink wash

around America and paint any scene you found to be inspiring and picturesque; to create tales of adventure along with beautiful visuals to share with a nation recovering from the Civil War. This scenario became a reality in the late 1800s when Appleton Press employed prominent artists and writers to venture across the country in search of amazing natural and historic landmarks. Their stories and artwork resulted in the creation of a comprehensive travelogue publication known as *Picturesque America*. The artists and writers were captivated by the bountiful beauty they discovered and inadvertently became part of a new movement - one sparking the idea that we should protect these landmarks.



Karyn Healey, "Three Sisters Sewing Together"

Over 150 years later, Preserving A Picturesque America (PAPA), a non-profit organization, endeavors to continue their mission to enlighten and protect these special places through the power of the arts. PAPA collaborates with local artists and historians, environmental, and cultural groups in areas across the country to raise awareness of natural and historic landmarks in need of protection. For *Preservation Through Art: Charleston*, artists have retraced the footsteps and brushstrokes of celebrated *Picturesque America* artist Harry Fenn, who visited Charleston in 1870.

For this exhibit, the artists have created new works to portray the original sites as they appear today. This "then and now" demonstrates if we have been good stewards of these natural and historic treasures.

Artists participating in the exhibition include: Elizabeth Hasegawa Agresta, Yoshiko Agresta, Mahogane Amiger, Chris Bell, Kay Bilisoly, Jennifer Black, Claudia Boyce, Louise Britton, Marcie Cavanagh, Morgan Conklin, James Daniel, Debbie Daniels, Fran Davies, Joyce Erb, Mary Edna Fraser, Jonathan Green, Hannah Hall, Mark Harmon, Giselle Harrington, Karyn Healey, Mary Hoffman, Rebecca Hoyle, Sha Huang, Cynthia Huston, Stephanie Marzella, Rich Nelson, Jacki Newell, Jeanne O'Neal, Richard Oversmith, Kathy Parker, Fallon Pepper, Linda Pepper, Rosie Phillips, Leslie Pratt-Thomas, Sheila Preston-Ford, Ann Reames, Connie Rigdon, Deborah Rosato, Patricia Sabre, Nicole Seitz, Olivia Seitz, Francis Sills, Amelia Spade, Sheryl Stalnaker, Mary Kyle Stuckey, Patricia Sweet, Susan Trott, Barbara Rawson, Scott Varn, and Barbara Yongue.



Henry Fenn, "From the Bay" 1880s, etching, from "Picturesque America"



Mary Edna Fraser, "Charleston Peninsula" oil on canvas

The non-profit organization Preserving A Picturesque America (PAPA) collaborates with artists, writers, historians, environmental organizations, and like-minded individuals to use the power of the arts to protect and preserve natural and historic landmarks across the country. PAPA strives to shift public perspective towards the importance of the natural landscape through art experiences and opportunities to reconnect with nature and use those opportunities to raise funding that will facilitate the protection and preservation of Picturesque America sites across the country.

Founder and Executive Director Scott Varn is an artist and longtime conservationist. While searching for prints depicting his home area of Western North Carolina, he found some classic engravings of the French Broad River at an online estate auction and ordered them. He discovered they were from the publication, *Picturesque America*. Created by Appleton Press between 1872 and 1874, *Picturesque America* was a serial released in 48 parts and eventually bound into two large volumes which included over 900 engravings of natural and historic landscapes.

Publishers asked celebrated writers and artists of the time who created "travelogue" style tales describing wondrous places across America. Their work raised public awareness of our country's bountiful beauty and has played an important role in the protection of natural lands and historic places. PAPA aims to follow in the footsteps and brushstrokes of the original writers and artists, to rediscover the same places and document their current state of existence, to bring awareness to others that places important to people from the past should be protected and preserved for those in the future.

City Gallery, located at Joe Riley Waterfront Park, is owned by the City of Charleston and operated by the City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs, presenting an annual program of exhibitions and events featuring the finest contemporary art from local, regional, national and international artists, with a focus on the Lowcountry. City Gallery is located on Prioleau Street in downtown Charleston. City Gallery remains open during the adjacent construction on Prioleau Street. The entrance to the gallery can be accessed via stairs from Waterfront Park, or by walking down the drive on the north side of the building. Elevator access can be found inside the construction fences,

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MedShare
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Other (cash/cash vouchers, logistic supply)

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Americares
Samaritan's Purse
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