



SOUTH
CAROLINA
CHAPTER

Quarterly Newsletter Winter January 2025



From NAWA SC Chapter President Meyriel Edge

As always, Susan Irish, our Membership Chair, is working out ideas to increase our membership. In November she talked to the Greater Augusta Arts Council, her focus being, “Celebrating Women Artists,” and she told them about NAWA SC. We could all help with membership if each Chapter member could bring in one NAWA juried member who may not have thought of joining the SC Chapter. That would double our base of volunteers and give us more opportunities to offer our Chapter members.

Also spreading the NAWA SC word is Deirdre Hayes who spoke to the Aiken Artists Guild this month. Our thanks to Susan and Deirdre. We look forward to some favorable feedback from artists in both the wider Augusta and Aiken areas.

We recently welcomed Exhibit Co-Chair Flavia Lovatelli to our Board, who will assist Staci Swider with our exhibits. When you read about her extensive volunteer work, in this newsletter, you will know how fortunate we are to have her expertise. Our thanks also to Lillie Morris, who has volunteered to assist with exhibits. These volunteers allow us to offer more opportunities to our members.

We are looking forward to our Brookgreen Garden exhibit this May, and you will see information about our Chapter’s Fall online exhibit, *Threads of Labor: Women’s Work*, in this newsletter. The Prospectus will be out soon.

At our December Board Meeting, we agreed to seek corporate and individual sponsorships in order to increase awards offered at the Brookgreen Garden Exhibit. Our members will be sent a letter that can be used to contact prospective sponsors. This is totally voluntary, but please review the letter to see if you can assist with sponsorships.

Welcome to our NAWA SC Board:
Exhibit CO-Chair Flavia Lovatelli



I was a single, working mother of four a good part of my return to the art movement. At some point I felt that I needed an outlet for myself, for I had usurped all of my energy on raising my children and doing all that life has to offer for them. I needed to replenish my coffers of soul light and art was there, like an old friend waiting. So, I dove right in, kids and all. I dragged them to my art events, to the art crawls, to my shows. I put them to work where I could and had them live and breathe the creative world.

I am not just an artist but a big supporter of artists around me and have always loved to raise up like-minded creative people. Before moving to Columbia, SC, I created a monthly art crawl for artists to meet and promote their craft in our North Carolina community. I then created ArtEcologie Group for Artists who worked with recycled materials. The Group's annual EcoFAB Trash Couture was a show where artists created a wearable piece from recycled materials and paired it with 3 and 2 D art to show the world how art influences and inspires different forms. EcoFAB Trash Couture began in Charlotte and continued its success in Columbia at the Tapp's Art Center. I inspired 15 new artists to join the movement, designed the show pamphlets, marketing materials, booked the venue, DJ, dancers, and the spoken word poet.

As a volunteer, I organized the Art Crawl in Mooresville for three years, a monthly event for which I wrote a newsletter, created a promotional flyer, and found artists to invite to the crawl.

In 2016 I joined the board of the BedRoll Project for the Homeless, where we taught various groups how to create plastic yarn and hand it off to volunteers to crochet blankets. We made more than 1000 bedrolls for the homeless.

I participated in the acclaimed Planned Parenthood Condom Couture Show in Charlotte three years in a row and brought this fun fundraiser to Columbia for one year. For four years, I participated and donated artwork to the *Art with Heart Fundraiser* to benefit the Alliance Group of Charlotte, NC, which ended when I moved to Columbia.

In 2020 I joined Seamstress with a Purpose, a group that made masks for at risk people. We made thousands of free cloth masks for law enforcement, post office workers, delivery people etc. I made over 200 masks for them and ended up selling some to the public via social media. I volunteered as a docent for a brief stint with the Columbia Museum as they recovered from 2020. I then joined the 701 Center for Contemporary Art (701 CCA) board of volunteers.

Welcome New Members

We are delighted to welcome new members this quarter: Jean Capalbo from Columbia, SC; Lindsey Daniel from Charlotte, NC; Christie Devereaux from Port Washington, NY; Jackie Lorieo from Yonkers, NY; Selene Paschoal from Simpsonville, SC; and Beau Wild from Orange, FL. We welcome all new members to contact a Board Member at art.nawasc@gmail.com to let us know how you would like to help our Chapter. Please put *new member volunteer skills* in the email subject line. Your participation in keeping our Chapter active and moving forward is always needed and appreciated.

How to Contact a NAWA SC Board Member:

When you wish to contact a member of the NAWA SC Chapter board, e-mail to: art.nawasc@gmail.com. Please put the name of the department you wish to contact in the subject line of your email, such as Membership, Exhibitions, President, Social Media, Newsletter, etc.

Celebrating Women in the Arts

Membership Board Member, Susan Irish, recently spoke at the Greater Augusta Arts Council's Arts Day Lunch, where the topic of her talk was "Celebrating Women Artists."

Susan said, "It is important to celebrate women artists, because male artists pop to mind quickly, while some better female artists are still barely known. We can imagine Rodin but not Camille Claudel or Picasso but not Francois Gilot for instance. We need to take every chance we get to celebrate all women artists and lift up our sisters." Susan noted in 2024 only 11% of museum art acquisitions were created by women artists.

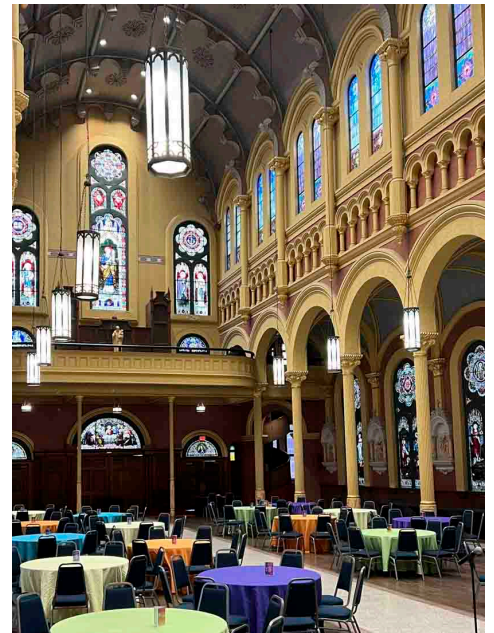
During her talk, Susan told how she built her art sisterhood and emphasized the importance of discovering sisters in art because they can influence and inform you. She added, "One of the best, yet least advertised, benefits of NAWA is the sense of sisterhood achievable through the briefest of meetings. Since we are women artists, speaking a similar language, friendships spark."

Issuing a call to action at the end of her speech, Susan urged guests to find an art friend, go on a field trip or host a show together - start a movement and disturb the status quo.

"The most rewarding part of giving the talk came at the closing, said Susan. An older woman brought a younger, very shy woman artist up to me and introduced her. She said my words reached her deeply and she promised to find her sisters in art. I was very touched by this and the generosity of the older woman's encouragement of the younger artist".



Susan Irish (center) with two of her Sisters in Art: Staci Swider (left) and Laura McRae Hitchcock (right).



Sacred Heart Cultural Center, where the Greater Augusta Arts Council office is located. The deconsecrated chapel is now a gallery, meeting space, and wedding and art class venue.

Major Upcoming Exhibit:

Brookgreen Inspires – Women Create **Exhibit at Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet, SC** **May 3 – July 20, 2025**

Exhibitors: Key Dates for Brookgreen Gardens Exhibit:

Submissions Open	February 3, 2025
Deadline for Submissions	March 28, 2025
Hand delivery of artwork to venue 10am - noon; 1:30 - 4pm	April 18, 2025
Shipped artwork to arrive at Coastal Shipping and Storage	April 14 - 18, 2025
Preview Reception and Award Ceremony, 4:30 - 7pm	May 2, 2025
Exhibition Opens (Gallery Hours, Daily: 9:30 - 5pm)	May 3, 2025
Curator Talk, artists stationed at their artwork to engage with public, 2pm	May 3, 2025
Sunday, 2pm, Program by Melinda Welker, "Inspiring Conservation through Art", Daise Auditorium, Lowcountry Center	May 4, 2025
Saturday, 2pm, Panel discussion with NAWA SC Artists, Daise Auditorium, Lowcountry Center	May 17, 2025
Exhibit ends at 4pm	July 20, 2025
Hand pickup of artwork, 10am - noon and 1:30 - 4pm	July 21, 2025
Lunch and Annual Meeting / Location and time to be determined	July 21, 2025

Please visit nawasc.org to see a link to the exhibit application/prospectus. This has pertinent information on such things as: Any work previously entered in a NAWA SC Exhibit is not eligible; photography taken and exhibited at Brookgreen can be entered, but must state: Not for Sale (NSF); also a notice that artwork is not shipped to Brookgreen Gardens but through a carrier. Please pay special attention to entry instructions.

Happenings - Looking Ahead

NAWA SC Exhibit - Fall 2025: *Threads of Labor: Women's Work*

Exhibit Overview: This online exhibit will explore the overlooked contributions of women during a pivotal period in American history: 1774 - 1781, and the lead up to the American Revolution. Through a diverse range of mediums - textiles, painting, sculpture, photography, and multi-media works - contemporary artists will reflect on the concept of "women's work," connecting historical narratives with modern artistic interpretations. This exhibit reclaims and reimagines the labor, creativity, and resilience of women who shaped the cultural and economic landscape of Colonial America. The full Prospectus will be out soon.

Member Feature: Saundra Renee Smith, Saint Helena, SC



Saundra Renee Smith in her St. Helena Island studio. The painting on the easel is titled, *Sing Hallelujah*, and has been on permanent display at Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet, SC.

Saundra Renee Smith is a native Gullah descendent, born in the house she grew up in, on the isolated island of St. Helena, SC. She is a self-taught, outsider, folk artist who picked up a paint brush for the first time late in life, following the loss of very close family members every six months for two years. Saundra Renee said, "The last to leave me was my beloved mother. We laid her to rest on a very cold Christmas Eve morning. I experienced a magnitude of grief and loss which were alien to me until that period in my life. However, since then I have come to understand something special about life. At our inception and birth into this world, there is a gift placed inside all of us, but sometimes it is only the hard things in our lives and the people who cross our paths that help us to discover our gifts."

How did it come about that you began painting late in life?

My husband Michael led me on my path of discovery when he bore witness to my grief. He surprised me one day with canvas of all sizes, paint brushes, apron, easel, and most importantly colorful paints of every hue imaginable! When I applied the first color, cerulean blue, to a brush and struck my first canvas with a wide heavy swath against a stark white background, I felt the artist inside me open new eyes, take its first breath of color and come to life! I painted my way out of the deep dark place of pain, and into a new life of color where my journey brings joy not only to me but to others who also enjoy my work. So “cum en go wid me” (Gullah language for: come and go with me).

What inspires your work and what medium do you prefer for your art?

My work is inspired by the bright hues born from a culture tempered in isolation. This makes my work authentically Gullah and is a tribute to the people who hold a unique place in American history. The Gullah/Geechee Corridor on the southeast coast of the US is where we thrived and are descendants of the Guale Indians and West African slaves.

My medium is acrylic and oil on canvas, wood, tin, or glass. I strive to capture the daily lifestyle of the Gullah people through visual art. Baskets, flowers, water, and sky; women and families with brightly colored dresses; colorful head rags and hats to cover unique nappy hair; and secrets of the land are inspiration for my paintings. My work is spiritual and transformative as I seek to provide a glimpse of Gullah life, and “de luk pon we island” (the look of our island home - through art).



Flowers fa de Fisherman: Gullah flower girl, by Sandra Renee Smith.

How does some of your volunteer work mesh with your art?

I retired in 2016 as a Registered Nurse Educator and hold a doctorate in Spiritual Christian Counseling, a Master's degree in Administration, and a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing. I am artist and owner of Gullah Art by Renee, LLC on St. Helena Island, and I am grant writer and secretary for the Saint Helena Gullah Community Housing Project (SHGCHP).

The Gullah community on Saint Helena are direct descendants of former enslaved African Americans. Homes have been handed down for generations and, although the homeowners own the land, the impoverished Gullah community often needs assistance to maintain their homes. The SHGCHP helps by rehabilitating homes and educating owners, tradesmen and women through volunteerism, apprenticeship programs and workshops.

My other community volunteer work includes: administrator of the Health and Wellness Ministry and Food Bank Program, which led to the establishment of an after school academy; initiated support to raise funds for a summer recreation camp for island children; developed the HEAL program to address mental health concerns along school-aged girls; supported reopening of a summer camp program (which replaced the playground that was there when I was a kid!); and developed a Hot Meals Delivery Program with partnerships from Beaufort Memorial Hospital and Gullah Grub Restaurant as a life-line for seniors and children.

Although challenging at times, I am surrounded by like-minded people who care about our community even though many are not from Saint Helena.



Saundra Renee Smith's painting hangs on the outside of a home that was rehabilitated by the St. Helena Gullah Community Housing Project. Saundra Renee says, "My art is a way of showing a community without hope, that we still care. The art piece is of Matilda Middleton, who died at age 105, and the children that were raised in the house. My hope in creating this art was to restore the memory of the woman who lived there, her legacy in the community, and to restore dignity to our neighbors."

Member Highlights this Quarter:

Members - please share your good news! We want to promote your art achievements in our newsletters and social media. Please send your information to: art.nawasc.org and put Social Media and/or Newsletter in the email subject line.

NAWASC Satellite Gallery: SC Department Commerce

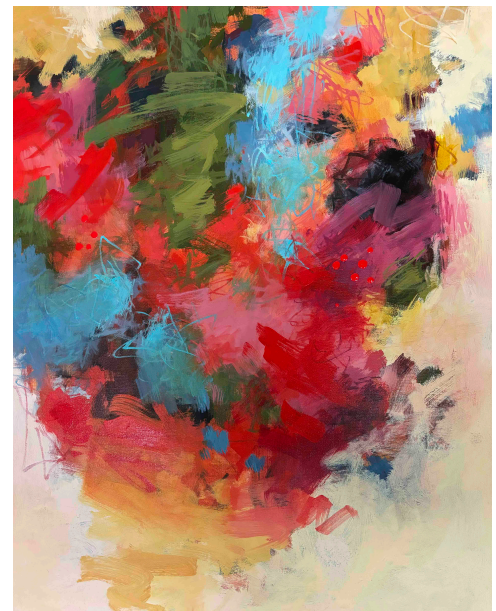
The artwork of Lillie Morris will be represented at the Department of Commerce Gallery in Columbia, SC this quarter. Lillie Morris is a native of Augusta, Georgia and studied art at Augusta College (now Augusta State University) with an emphasis in painting. She is best known for acrylic, collage and mixed media paintings, and occasionally works in cold wax and encaustic. Lillie says, “Each



step in my journey as an artist has yielded exciting discoveries. After years of working representational, I ventured into the realm of abstract painting. - never knowing what twists and turns a painting might take.” Lillie explains, “Abstract painting demands a letting go, the courage to surrender to chaos, the willingness to take risks, and the persistence to stay committed to each painting until it says ‘yes’!”

Cinnabar Study (left), acrylic on canvas, (36” x 36”) by Lillie Morris, on display at the Department of Commerce Gallery.

Lillie Morris also exhibited her art this winter at Sacred Heart Cultural Center in, GA. At right is *Full Bloom*, acrylic on canvas (30”x24”).



PAINTINGS BY RHIAN SWAIN

Breaking the Barriers

WOMEN WHO IMPACTED THE ARTS

Exhibit Extended Another Month!

On Exhibit Now thru Nov. 30, 2024 at the Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History

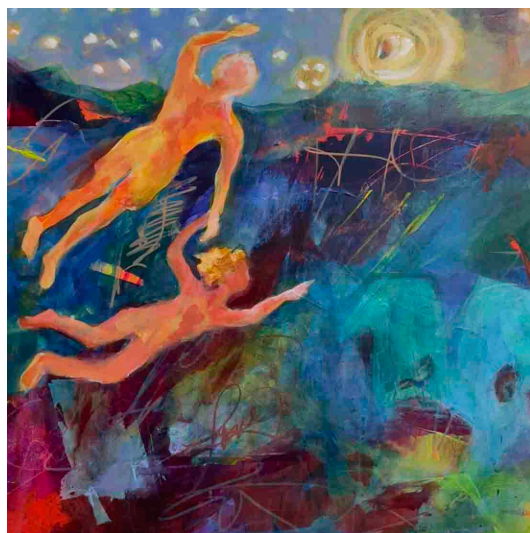
"Breaking the Barriers" is a touring exhibit of original portraits that shine a light on women who have made remarkable achievements in the visual arts. Artists include Louise Bourgeois, Augusta Savage, Berthe Morisot, Yayoi Kusama, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Hilma af Klint and Kara Walker. Those are just a few of the many faces, painted by local artist Rhian Swain, that will be found at the exhibition.

Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History
1116 Phillips Street, Augusta, GA 30901
LucyCraftLaneyMuseum.com

Rhian Swain's Traveling Exhibition, *Breaking the Barriers: Women Who Have Impacted the Arts* includes portraits of pioneer female visual artists from the past few centuries. Held last Fall at the Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History, Augusta, GA, the exhibit will tour the country at other venues for another three years.



Horizon, by Emi Sisk; acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 16" x 20" was awarded 3rd Place at NAWA FL Chapter's *Timeless* Exhibit at Marco Island Center for the Arts.



Laura McRae Hitchcock's, *Dreaming of Dad and Me*. Exhibited at Flushing Bank Gallery, New York, NY *Life's Journey Exhibit*; through January 26 2025.



Melinda Welker's photography, *Kingfisher on Lookout*, was juried into NAWA's *Petites Joies* online exhibition.

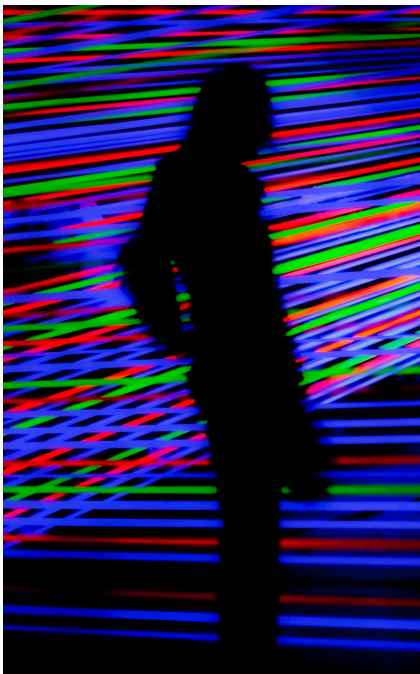
Four NAWA SC Chapter members were juried into NAWA's Stories in Frames photography online exhibit, which ran through October 2024.



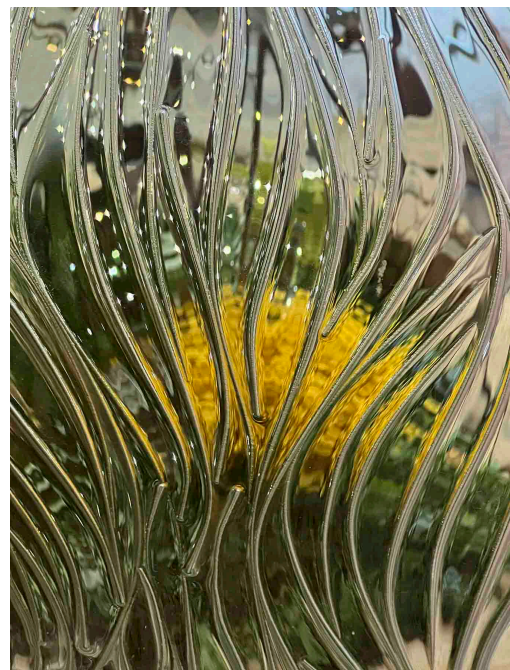
Essential, by Jill Cliffer Baratta



Solitude, by Jacqueline Lorieo



Self Aware, by Melinda Welker



Beveled Flowers, by Susan G. Hammond

Christie Devereaux's, *When Light Enters 2*, Aloft Hotel and NAWA Art Display, Juried Exhibit: Aloft Hotel Long Island, NY; through February 14, 2025.



Guardians of the Mill, by Flavia Lovatelli; Permanent Installation, Olympia Mills, Columbia, SC. Mixed media made of salvaged and recycled paper; porcelain dolls represent mill workers and the life of the 7' x 7' mill building that has no other use.



Guardian V, by Flavia Lovatelli, 37" x 24" x 11" mixed media assemblage sculpture, Exhibited at the SC State Fair; received First Premium Fine Art award.

Questions?

NAWA SC is proud to be a part of the National Association of Women Artists and further the national mission in our state of South Carolina - to promote awareness of, and interest in, visual art created by women in the U.S. Contact art.nawasc@gmail.com if you have comments or news to share. Please put "newsletter" in the subject line. To join the NAWASC Chapter and become part of our active membership, visit <https://nawasc.org>.