



jasper

THE WORD ON COLUMBIA ARTS
PHOTOGRAPHY ISSUE

JAN // FEB 2013
VOL. 002 NO. 003

Snow White

“...flawless dancing...
perfection...”
-The State



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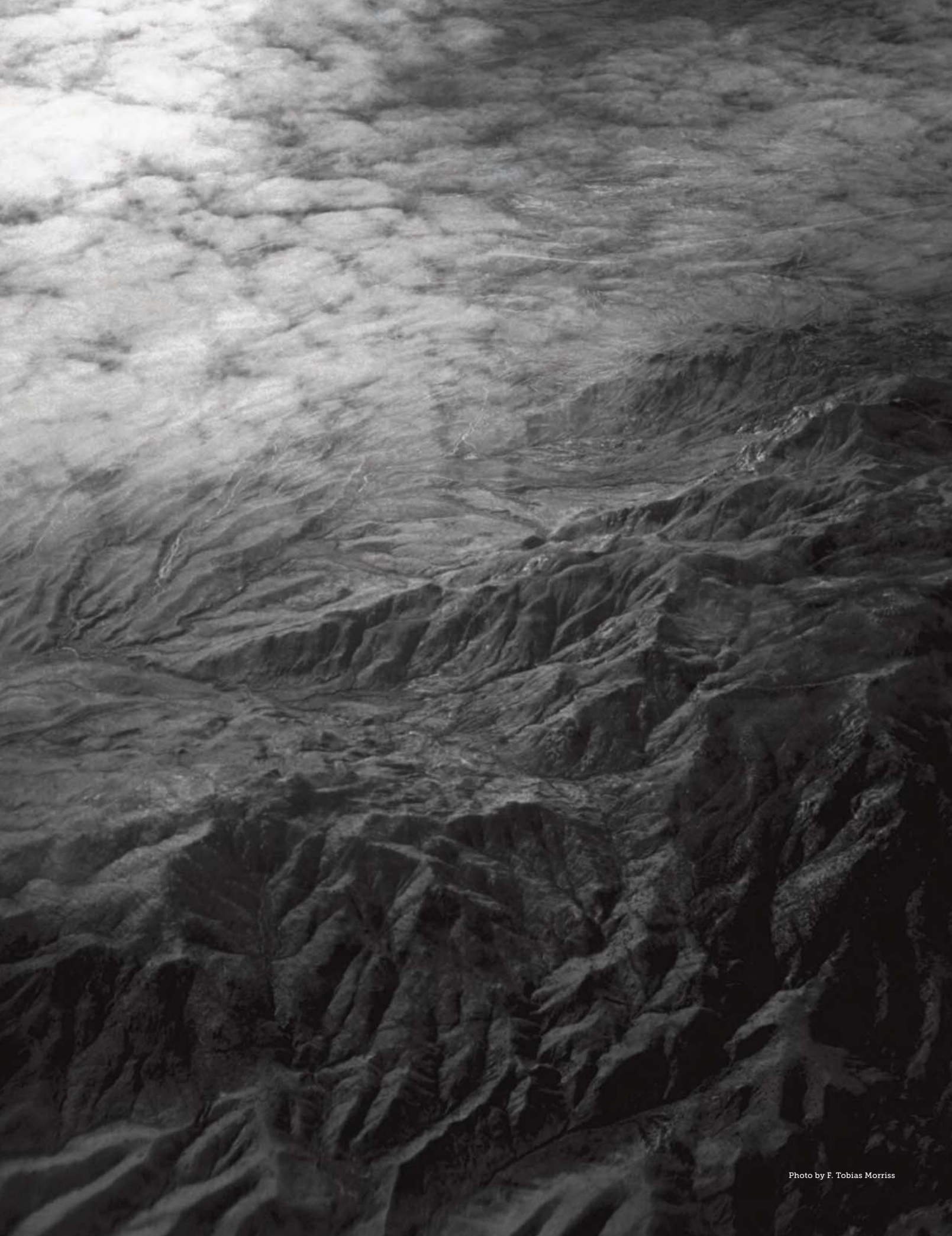


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JASPER IS

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DEAR FRIENDS,

This issue has been a thrill to put together, though a bit more nerve wracking than I thought it would be when *Jasper* editor-in-chief Cindi Boiter first approached me about helping to put together a photo centered issue of the magazine. What started as a grand vision of contests and juries, coalesced down to a highlighted selection of some of Columbia's best photographers; some well-known, and others out on the edges of our sight. Columbia has no shortage of tal-

ent when it comes to photography and I hope the following pages will help to prove this point.

In the age of iPhones and Instagram, we come across innumerable images in a single day. We've all taken incredible photos of our cats, and the sandwich I had for lunch would have looked amazing with an x-pro filter shooting it. While photography is often about documentation and sharing, it's also about secrets, narratives, perspective, and a personal vision. The stories and images we've gathered here serve as a small sampling of what Columbia has to offer.

The first challenge of this issue has been this opening letter. I'm pretty sure I've written at least five different versions so far. At one point, I had hoped to create a compelling piece on technology and photography; at another, I thought I'd write about starting and running an art based business. But it's all been said by those much more eloquent, knowledgeable, and experienced than I am. So I'll leave that to the experts.

I want to say thank you to our boss, Cindi Boiter, for choosing to highlight our photographers. And thank you, also, to my staff photographers for giving me the challenging job of choosing which of their images is the best. It gets harder with each passing issue, and this time was by far the hardest. Part of Cindi's request to highlight the photographers required a picture, or pictures, of the four of us; Thomas Hammond, Sarah Kobos, Jonathan Sharpe, and myself. We set out with the goal of all collaborating on a single image. We met on a Sunday afternoon at the *Jasper* studios in the Arcade with this goal in mind. A few PBR's, some fried chicken, and three hours later, we left with what

some would call "okay" images. While we created some interesting photos, they all rang hollow in their ability to reflect our group. By putting all of us into one image, we'd managed to remove the identities we each craft through the images we make. So we did what any normal group of people would do the week of the Mayan Apocalypse. We decided to redo the whole thing shooting individual portraits of one another.

I do want to say thank you to Toby Morriss. Every once in a while I catch a glimpse of a beard going by on a motorcycle and for a brief moment I forget that you're gone. Your ability to make anyone feel welcome in an instant is sorely missed these days, but I'll never forget the lessons and laughs you shared in the photo lab of McMaster, nor will I ever let go of my jealousy over your totally awesome ninja apron. Thank you, also, to Eric Plaa for remembering Toby in the eloquent manner that he did. And thank you to our readers. Thank you for reading, thank you for indulging us, and thank you for supporting us.

It has been an awkward treat for us to be in front of the lens, and we'll be happy to be hidden behind the shutter in the next issue.

SINCERELY,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Forrest Clonts". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Forrest Clonts, Photography Editor
Jasper Magazine

Jasper // as in Johns, the abstract expressionist, neo-Dadaist artist
as in Sergeant, the Revolutionary War hero
as in Mineral, the spotted or speckled stone
as in Magazine, the Word on Columbia Arts

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Connie James will perform with the Sandlapper Singers

WHEN ARTISTS COME HOME

Since her last performance in her hometown, singer Connie James has toured with Bob Newhart, appeared on the television program *Law & Order*, and established a reputable performing arts career in New York City. On February 8th, James will bring her soulful, sincere brand of singing back home to Columbia for a concert at the Koger Center for the Arts. Seeing James perform in combination with other local artists is sure to show audiences what Columbia-based musicians are capable of, both locally and nationally.

Born and raised in Columbia, James took the first steps of her singing career when she was in the 9th grade. She immediately met with resistance, but quickly learned the power of persistence. "I was rejected as a contestant in a talent show at Fairwald Jr. High," she recalls. "Hurt and dismayed, later in the year there was a talent competition at the Township Auditorium for grown-ups. I auditioned, was accepted, and won third prize in a field of all adults, other than myself." In high school, James began to study her art form more seriously, singing in the school choir as well as studying privately with Shirley Teuber. As a result of her efforts, she was awarded a DAR Vocal Competition award and a Concert Choir scholarship at the University of South Carolina.

In college, James continued to expand her horizons as a performer. She became the first African-American cast member of a production by the South Carolina Drama Association, appearing in productions of *The Liberty Tree* and *Annie Get Your Gun* under the direction of Russell Green. She also sang with the concert choir under the direction of Arpad Daraz, as well as part of the folk trio Jim, Lee, and Connie.

After she finished college, James worked during the day as a claims adjustor, while gigging around town with Dick Goodwin's band on nights and weekends. However, her best friend and former piano accompanist, who had just relocated to New York City, told James she should make the move as well. James took the suggestion. While her friend ended up leaving the city, James has stuck around for 30 years, working independently to carve out her own place in New York's music and acting worlds.

February's concert will feature James alongside Goodwin's Jazz Quintet and the Sandlapper Singers. Dr. Lillian Quackenbush, the conductor and artistic director for the Sandlapper Singers, hopes the concert gives local artists a sense of pride about where they come from. "I really want people to know that there's a wealth of talent that lives here and works here, but there's also a wealth of talent that comes from here," she says. "Putting those things back together for an evening could make us all feel good about what it is we love to do and where we live."

James hopes that the town's young people with big dreams will remember that, "Columbia, South Carolina is a geographic location; it is not a mindset, it is not an education." She is optimistic about what her homecoming concert can show audiences about the potential for Columbia residents to be great artists, both in town and the rest of the world. // *Andy Bell*

ART AT THE LIBRARY

Following up on a fascinating look at the art of the egg—*An Egg a Day: Drawings by Phil Burns*—the newly re-branded Richland Library, (formerly known as RCPL or Richland County Public Library), is continuing to entice art lovers as well as readers into the stacks and gallery spaces by offering another quirky art exhibition downstairs on the walls of the Gallery at Main Library. This time, the art features the digital art of North Carolina-based artist, Brandon Reese and is called *Laughter and Raindrops*.

A poignant example of art translating to commercial applications, Reese's exhibit *Laughter and Raindrops* features retro-inspired imagery as well as a contemporary edge, full of humor, emotion and delightful moments. Reese's work has been highlighted in *The Boston Globe*, *Highlights*, *Nick, Nick Jr.*, *The Utne Reader*, and *Westchester Magazine*. In the past several years Reese has designed the album covers of some of the best indie rock bands including Lunch Money, the Jelly dots, and the Okee Do-kee Brothers. According to Tony Tallent, Richland Library director of literary and learning, "Brandon Reese represents a new way of both creating art and exhibiting it. The art presented in *Laughter and Raindrops* represents the skill, humor, and heart of a very talented digital illustrator." While the Richland Library has hosted nearly 200 local and international artists in the Gallery at Main since 1993, given the recent resurgence of grass roots arts and the continuing demand for more walls to hang local art on in Columbia, *Jasper* would like to see the library focus more on our local artists. As interesting as the recent exhibi-



tions have been, we believe that supporting local artists would bring in more local patrons both to the gallery walls and the stacks.

Think local, and all that.

Brandon Reese's *Laughter and Raindrops* shows now through January 31, 2013. // CB

OPERA

Opera is a big-city game. Opera is an oddity among America's medium-sized cities, practically absent in small towns. Charlotte's opera company puts on three productions a year, as does Atlanta's. Opera is expensive. Across the country, the price of an opera ticket is about half the total cost. In New York City's Metropolitan Opera a center-orchestra seat ticket price approaches \$300, but that is still just about half the cost of production. The difference is made up with community and commercial support. In South Carolina opera is produced by the state's only opera company, the Palmetto Opera based in Columbia, where all the seats on the Koger Center orchestra level are \$43. Opera touring companies can be seen sporadically at the Peace Center in Greenville and at the Gaillard Auditorium in Charleston. During Charleston's Spoleto Festival an opera is usually part of the program. The Palmetto Opera, however, is targeting a three-production season in a few years, putting Columbia on a par with Charlotte and Atlanta.

Opera began under the assumption that classical Greek theater was sung, not spoken. In 1597 in Florence, Italy, opera was first performed in the town palace of Ja-



copo Corsi. Opera soon became the preferred entertainment of the aristocracy, but it was performed in private homes, hardly an appeal to the masses. The first public opera house was built in Venice in 1637, the San Cassiano Theater. Less than a century later, in 1735, opera was first performed in America, the same year ballet was first performed, both in Charleston, South Carolina.

Puccini's *Tosca*, the Palmetto Opera's third production in as many years, is coming on March 2, Saturday night in the Koger Center. In the previous two years, Palmetto Opera met with successful audience response to *Madama Butterfly* and *La Traviata*. As in the two most recent productions, the Palmetto Opera will produce *Tosca* in partnership with Teatro Lirico D'Europa, an international opera company with 5,000 performances since 1988. And since 2000, Teatro Lirico D'Europa has performed in over 100 American cities. What for most South Carolinians could be a language problem, the *Tosca* production has supertitles above the stage, translating into English all that is said and sung.

Tosca premiered at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome in 1900. Based on Victorien Sardou's French-language dramatic play, *La Tosca*, the opera is set in 1800 Rome when the King of Naples's control of the city is threatened by Napoleon. Italy was still divided into small states, as the reunification was another 70 years away.

At the turn of the last century, a Puccini opera premiere was a national event in Italy, and *Tosca's* opening night drew the prime minister and several members of his cabinet. Queen Margherita arrived after the first act. The premiere was immediately followed by 20 performances, all sold out.

In the present, some performing arts are seeing slight declines in attendance. Symphonies, for instance, are getting creative to hold on to audience loyalty while recordings and broadcasts are available just about everywhere all of the time. Opera, however, is growing, probably due to the grandness of the art and the scale of operation, together hard to appreciate playing on a disc. With opera, as in *Tosca* at the Koger Center, the audience comes for the drama and the music. The drama is intensely enjoyed because the orchestra seats at the Koger Center all have a close proximity to the stage. The music comes with high impact because it is delivered with a huge orchestra in the pit between the stage and the audience. Performers on the *Tosca* stage and in the orchestra pit include many South Carolinians among the world-class members of Teatro Lirico D'Europa.

South Carolina and its capital city Columbia want opera, as proven by the ticket sales for the Palmetto Opera's productions of *Madama Butterfly* and *La Traviata* in the past two years, but South Carolina, and Columbia in particular, need opera as part of the quality of life package presented to people thinking about relocating homes and businesses.

That's the economic development appeal in a competitive environment: A big-city game played by Columbia.

The performing arts appeal is more obvious.

As Palmetto Opera board chair Kathy Newman puts it, "Opera is a 400-year-old art form that reflects 21st-century life. Think about it. Love, jealousy, rage, and that's just the first act!"

Put it on the refrigerator door: Puccini's *Tosca*, Saturday night, March 2. Tickets are on sale at the Koger Center box office, online at Capitoltickets.com, and you can telephone your order at 803.251.2222. // *John Temple Ligon*

ART WITH A HEART



Ask any parent—the greatest fear we have is that something might happen to our children and we would not be available to give them the kind of comfort and support only a parent can give. Thank goodness there are people and services that work to make sure this happens as rarely as possible. Take the Ronald McDonald House for example. In 2013, the Ronald McDonald House Charities of

Columbia are celebrating their thirtieth anniversary of providing basic needs—food, shelter, a warm shower—to families of critically ill children in Columbia. Through their cornerstone programs—the Ronald McDonald House of Columbia and the Ronald McDonald Family Room—RMHC of Columbia provides families the support they need so they can focus on what is most important;

being near their child who is facing the uncertainties of a serious medical condition or injury. According to RMHC Special Events Coordinator Alayna Dunkerly, "It is only because of the generosity of the community's donations and support of our fundraising efforts, such as Art with a Heart, that we have been able to continue providing the highest level of quality programs and services for families in need."

The 5th Annual Art with a Heart art sale will feature the work of more than 20 artists from the area, as well as a few from neighboring states. Local musical artist Don Russo will also perform. "Artists donate 30% of their sales from the evening to RMHC of Columbia," says Jennifer Kresslein, Development Director for RMHC. Kresslein notes that Art with a Heart typically raises around \$5000 to go toward the funding of RMHC programs.

Among the artists participating in the project this year are Suzy Shealy, Alicia Leeke, June Tucarella, Robert Clark, Bryce Dixon, Gwyn Pevonka, Nancy Kauffman, and more. Dessert is compliments of The MeltingPot and drinks are provided by Sam's Fine Wine & Spirits. The event takes place at 701 Whaley on February 7th from 5:30 until 8:30 pm. Tickets are \$15 per person or \$25 per couple and are available in advance by calling 803-254-0118 or emailing Jennifer@rmhcofcolumbia.org. // *CB*

MURALS IN SCHOOLS

Many school districts see the arts in education as among the first to go when budgets need tightening or test scores become the primary metric for learning. A multiple-choice test cannot capture the intangibles of creativity. But as any artist and many educators will tell you, you don't need numbers to understand that the arts enhance the classroom by adding the what's possible to the what is. To that end, Kwamine Simpson, principal of Heyward Gibbes Middle School, a high-minority school in Richland School District I, applied for and received a Knight Foundation 21st Century Afterschool Grant. With the grant in its fourth and final year, Gibbes has just unveiled what will be its most visible result: a 37-x-8.5-foot wall mural and 233-x-4.7-foot walkway designed and created by several dozen Gibbes students under the guidance of artists Darion McCloud and Kyle Coleman, who at the start of the project ran the Columbia Museum of Art's outreach services. Demetria White, a Columbia College intern, helped as well. "Art can be and is a transformative agent," said McCloud. "These types of projects allow students to be active participants in that change not passive observers."

The project got fully under way in fall 2011. First the school figured out the logistics—storage space for the paints and other materials as well as a project workroom. "Everyone was made aware that we'd be doing the mural that year," said Coleman. "From September through December, we talked to the kids about using art to change their environment and the concept of abstract art. The purpose of mural is not only to make an artistic contribution but also to leave something behind for the generations of students to follow. The kids thought of it as their gift to the school." Any student who selected Art Club as an afterschool activity got to be involved in the mural proj-



Darion McCloud, Kyle C. Coleman and Demetria White

ect, regardless of talent or expertise.

Initially, students created a series of abstract designs for the hexagonal brick pathway that runs along retaining wall in the courtyard. "The plan was to fill in all those bricks with the designs the kids made," said Coleman. "From one end of the courtyard to the far wall where mural would be, you have the kids' designs all along the pathway." The students proposed project titles and put them to a vote: "Pleasing Patterns" won.

The project's next phase was the wall itself. By the spring, Coleman had developed a design concept for the mural: Every student in the program would have one square foot of space on which to paint. "It is like a story quilt," he said. "Each student would get to tell his or her story within the area allotted." In preparation, the students worked on square-foot sheets of paper. "They sketched out ideas and figured out what colors they wanted to use and what design elements they wanted to incorporate, so we could transfer that to the mural wall."

Once the students had their designs, they worked in shifts: some students would apply their story blocks to the wall, while the rest worked on the walkway. The finished mural has a field of three shades of green at the top, a gold

field with the students' painted squares below, the whole thing framed by a painted white border. All in all, the wall mural contains 22 squares measuring two feet on a side, and the walkway 400 squares measuring 14 inches on a side.

As Coleman explains it, the mural is more than an arts project that beautifies an otherwise-bland courtyard. "You had two black men from Columbia who are both artists going back to the community and showing the students that this is another option for a career," he said. "That was one of the selling points."

Another selling point was the effect that art can have on the people who practice it. "One of the most powerful changes observed in the children was the ability to articulate a vision," said Joan Huell, the Gibbes' afterschool coordinator. "Additionally, they learned to solve problems and make decisions as a team. The entire experience continues to build their self-confidence and self-discipline. This project enabled the students to image what might be and accept responsibilities to complete tasks from start to finish."

McCloud agrees. "We hope students feel a sense of legacy, of pride and ownership," he said. "That they will pass these on to younger students. And that they appreciate the beauty they can create." // SLW

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- Sat 1/19 VaVatican
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- Sat 1/26 Carey Murdock ~ Tyler Boone
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- Fri 2/8 Stuart Davis
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- Sat 2/9 Wasted Wine
(strange, homemade prog rock)
- Sun 2/17 Tatsuya Nakatani ~ bigSphinx
(textural improv percussionist)
- Fri 2/22 Mountains
(acoustic/electric transformations)
- Sat 2/23 Bombadil
(indie-folk-pop with a flair for the fantastic)

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JANUARY 2013

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ELENA MARTINEZ-VIDAL
ERIN BOLSHAKOV
ANNA SHAW LEGARE
CINDY RODDEY

JOIN THE
JASPER
GUILD

See page
42 for details



BEHIND THE LENS

Not to sound smug but, at *Jasper*, we're pretty proud of our photography team. We're always oohing and ahing over the art they provide to illustrate our writers' stories. And we appreciate the work they do so much that we just assumed they would be all-too-ready to come out from behind the lens and take a bow.

Not so much.

Getting these four artists to surrender their bios has been tantamount to asking them for a voluntary IRS audit. A "loathsome" chore, says Jonathan Sharpe. And when they had to pose for a photo *someone else* took? The grumbling reached a new height!

But we made them do it because, like we

said, we're pretty proud of these folks and the work they create, and we're honored to work alongside them. In the following pages you'll meet the artists who make up the *Jasper Magazine* photography team who, kicking and screaming, will also share some of the off-magazine pieces they've been working on lately. // CB



Forrest Clonts



Forrest Clonts is a Columbia based photographer who focuses on people, the work they create, and the events they celebrate. Clonts says he is always in a constant state of growth and learning as he expands from shooting in a snapshot style with natural light to focusing on crafted images

and studio lighting. He continues to build on the foundation he received from a BA in Media Arts from The University of South Carolina and through personal projects, observation, and collaboration with fellow creatives. Clonts is the photography editor for *Jasper Magazine*.

Photo by Thomas Hammond



Photo by Forrest Clonts | Model: Kyrian Poole | Make Up Artist: Amy Schaming

Sarah Kobos



Born and Raised in Columbia, **Sarah Kobos** recently earned her BFA from USC, where, among other awards, she received the Edmund Yaghjian Undergraduate Studio Art Award for Photography. Her love for editorial photography blossomed during her time as Photo Editor at

USC's *Garnet & Black Magazine* and she is thrilled to be the newest member of the Jasper photo team. She's currently an assistant at George Fulton Productions and looking into grad schools and grants where she hopes to continue her growth as a photographer. Kobos is the newest staff photographer for *Jasper Magazine*.

Photo by Jonathan Sharpe



Photo by Sarah Kobos

Thomas H. Hammond



Thomas Hammond would like to take your photograph. Raised in a household full of writers (reporters, poets, etc.), the only natural course of action was to pursue a futile career as a musician. Several rock bands and music degrees later, Hammond works passionately to

capture the full flavor and character of Columbia through every click of the shutter. Influences include Ansel Adams, Herman Leonard, Edward Hopper, Hunter S. Thompson, and the Hubble Space Telescope. Hammond is a staff photographer for *Jasper Magazine*.

Photo by Forrest Clonts



Photo by Thomas Hammond

A vertical rectangular image containing a handwritten signature in black ink on a white background. The signature is cursive and reads "Jonathan Sharpe".

Jonathan Sharpe was born in Columbia, SC. At age 12 he invested his lawn mowing income in a used 35 mm Canon AE-1 Program, bought from an ad in the *Carolina Trader*. Sharpe's self-taught avocations led him to become a contributing photographer and food writer at

Free Times, starting in 2007. Since then he has been published in various local and regional publications. He splits his time between freelance photography and a day job as a claims adjuster. Sharpe is a staff photographer for *Jasper Magazine*.

Photo by Sarah Kobos



Photo by Jonathan Sharpe



Aries, France, June 2012 | Photo by Alessandra Teclia Gerevini



Aries, France, June 2012 | Photo by Alessandra Teclia Gerevini



Palace of Culture | Photo by Andrea Bonisoli Alquati

Impressionism from Monet to Matisse



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Claude Monet, French, 1840-1926, *Port of Dieppe, Evening*, 1882, oil on canvas, Collection of the Dixon Gallery and Gardens; Gift of Montgomery H.W. Ritchie, 1996.2.7

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CONFLICT ZONE: THE ART OF WAR PHOTOGRAPHY

BY GIESELA LUBECKE

In the softly lit corridor, a United States Marine Corporal sleeps with his bomb-sniffing dog, a young boy is blinded by an explosion, and American and Iraqi soldiers arm wrestle on the hood of a humvee. The sound of muted gunfire from a battle in Afghanistan loops continuously.

"Conflict Zone: A Groundbreaking Look at War" will be exhibited at the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum until February 23, 2013. The exhibit opened November 9 and features photography and footage shot on the frontlines of Iraq and Afghanistan from some of the world's leading combat photographers and journalists.

"Conflict Zone" is a traveling project from the Independence Fund, Inc. Founded in 2007 by United States Marine Steve "Luker" Danyluk, the Independence Fund is a Beaufort-based non-profit organization dedicated to assisting veterans injured in the War on Terror. Danyluk and journalist Jackie Spinner collaborated on the project to honor Joao Silva, a photographer from the New York Times who was injured in Afghanistan in October 2010.

"Joao had donated some photos several years ago for a fundraiser we did for a wounded Marine and I knew him through that," said Danyluk. "Jackie was a journalist in Iraq for the Washington Post and knows

many war photographers professionally, so when we both learned about Joao losing his legs to a landmine, I think we both got on the phone at the same time and called each other with the thought that we needed to do something. Fortunately the New York Times has covered the recovery at Walter Reed, so the financial need has not been there, but the response from Joao's colleagues was so strong and the images submitted so powerful that we decided to continue developing the exhibit."

Danyluk said his favorite piece from the exhibit is a work by Ayman Oghanna. The photograph depicts a scared US soldier defending himself from an angry dog. "In Iraq, dogs are treated worse than dogs," said Danyluk. "For me, that photo is the perfect metaphor for my personal experience in Iraq."

Two "Conflict Zone" exhibits exist: "The Glass Edition," the version compiled by Jerry Kykisz at the SC Military Museum, and Spinner's version, "The St. Pete Edition," which was displayed at the Virginia Military Institute in November. "Jerry was curator at the National Veterans Art Museum at the time not long after I returned from Iraq, and I submitted a proposal of photos that I took while in Iraq throughout my tour of duty," said Danyluk. "I am not a professional photographer, so my photos pale in comparison to the pics in CZ, but the therapeutic value of piecing together an exhibit was not lost on me during the process and drew me into further examination of the work of the professionals covering the war."

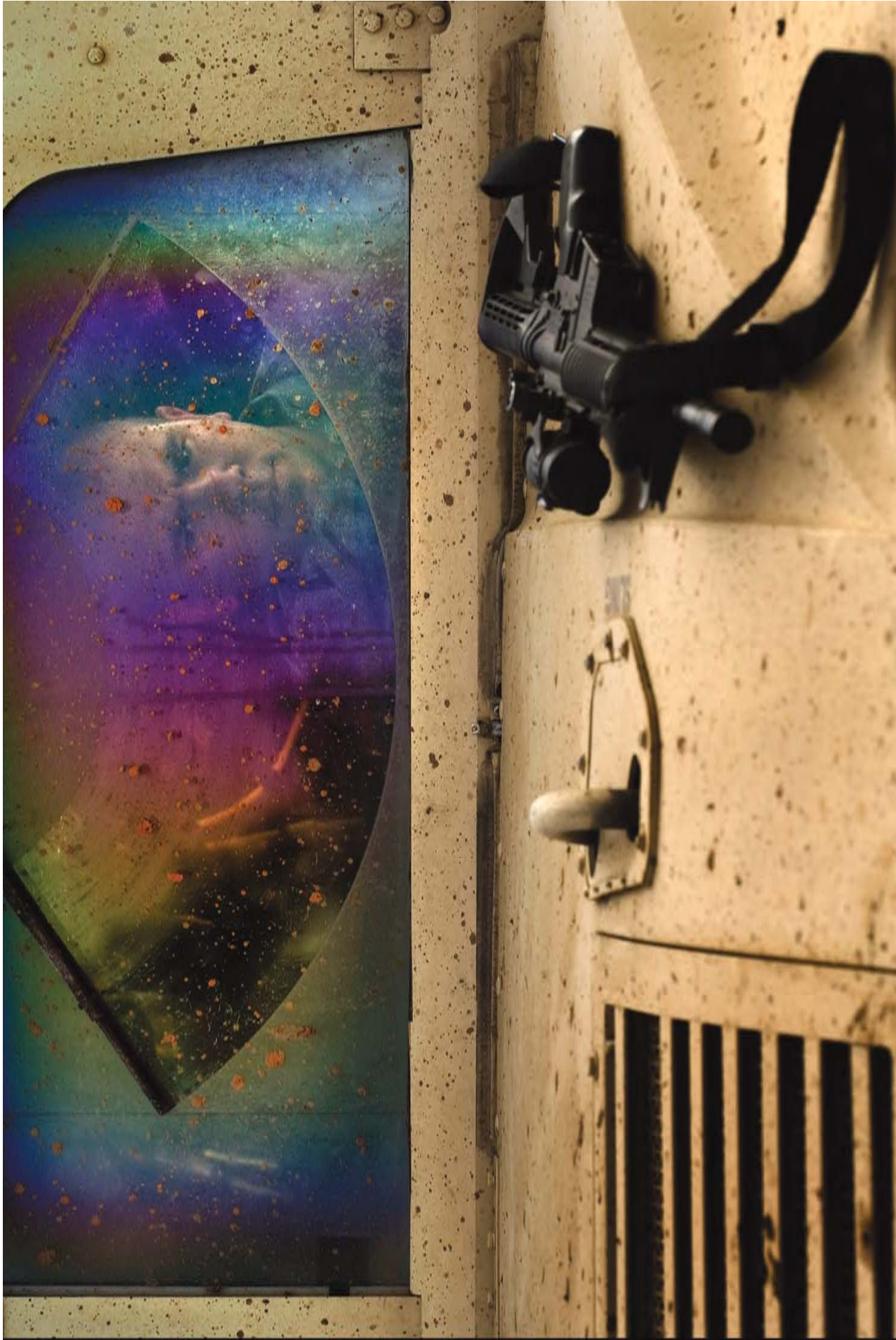
After its run in Columbia, "The Glass Edition" will be displayed at a larger venue in Aurora, Illinois for Me-

morial Day, adding work from more photographers to the exhibit. "There was enough good work for a much more extensive trip through the Zone," said Kykisz.

Kykisz said he was most moved by the work of Chris Hondros, a Getty Images photographer and 2004 Pulitzer Prize nominee. "He only submitted four shots and they effectively portrayed war at its worst," said Kykisz. "The impact of collateral damage, and resulting reflection of a wounded soul, summed up the storyline and exposed PTSD." Hondros was killed by a grenade blast in Libya in April 2011. "Conflict Zone" is dedicated to him.

Along with Silva, Oghanna, and Hondros, the exhibit features a video shot and produced by Jeff Newton of CBS and photography from Ben Brody, Alan S. Brown, Andrea Bruce, Joel Chaverri, Sig Christenson, Jed Conklin, Kathleen Flynn, Jason P. Howe, Diandra Jay, Alex Kingsbury, Greg Marinovich, Jeff Newton, Holly Pickett, Bill Putnam, Cesar Soriano, Jackie Spinner, Scott Wallace, Nathan Webster, and Michael Yon. ♪

The South Carolina Relic Room and Military Museum shares the same building as the South Carolina State Museum at 301 Gervais Street in Columbia. Adult tickets are \$5, and children under 12 are admitted free. The first Sunday of every month, tickets are \$1.



A soldier with the 81st Brigade, stationed in Ramadi, Iraq, sits in his humvee, 2008. Photo by Jed Conklyn
Photography courtesy of the SC Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum and The Independence Fund, Inc.*



A soldier passes rubble and twisted cars following a massive car bomb explosion Dec. 25, 2009, in Iraq, Baghdad. Photo by Ayman Oghanna





A young resident of Lakokhel stares at American troops in his Afghan village, likely the first foreigners he has ever seen, July 2010. Photo by Ben Brody



Mark Bieger holding Farah, 2005. Photo by Michael Yon



Pensacola 7 by F. Tobias Morriss

F. TOBIAS MORRISS: A PLACE IN OUR MEMORY

BY ERIC PLAAG

In an alternate universe somewhere, Columbia photographer and former USC adjunct professor Toby Morriss is hard at work this month, busily preparing for his twelfth SilverYana Institute field course in nature photography. He will spend January restocking his mobile darkroom, which occupies a brand new Freightliner Sprinter cargo van now, rather than the beat-up Iveco truck he started out in three summers ago. When the ten-day SilverYana class starts in March 2013, his twelve students will split time between two unheralded New Mexico sites—the Organ Mountains and Cibola National Forest. Morriss’s students will camp off the land and photograph what intrigues them there, then donate their images and negatives to the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service, who will in turn use those images to promote tourism and help preserve those sites. This particular course is special to Morriss; the fact that seven additional students are on a waiting list for the March offering proves that his dream of giving back through his art has come fully to fruition.

It was supposed to go that way in our universe, too, but in February 2010, a hit and run driver in Cayce changed

everything. Now, nearly three years after Morriss’s untimely death, his family and friends—and the Columbia photography community—still mourn him and await justice for the man accused of striking him. Many are angry and frustrated by the string of delays in the pending trial, but Morriss’s Zen-like acceptance of everything the world threw at him would not have allowed for such indulgences. There is too much beauty to be captured in the world, he would say. That energy would be better spent looking for it.

Born in Mississippi in 1973, Morriss grew up mostly in Oklahoma. His parents were avid amateur photographers who exposed him early to the joys of the darkroom and pinhole cameras. He was a tinkerer, too, with a brilliant mechanical and philosophical mind that rightly earned him the moniker of bricoleur. He earned a BA in philosophy at the University of Oklahoma, then moved to Louisiana in 1999, where he enrolled in Tulane’s photography program and enjoyed a remarkably prodigious burst of creative production. It was here that Morriss’s artistic vision coalesced through his focus on what he called the “liminal,” or the transition point from the “tangible or known” to the “point of

obfuscation.” By trying to capture this moment of transition, Morriss hoped to represent “the area where at one end is understanding and at the other the meaning is lost.” As he explained in his 2005 thesis show, “The area where the known becomes the unknown is allegorical to perception, memory, and acceptance. I love the unknown and find peace in leaving it unknown.”

From the beginning, Morriss’s photography was infused with a deep appreciation for texture, a raw and unapologetic love for the movement of water, and an often intimate fascination with the natural world’s complexities. He made regular pilgrimages to participate in the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium’s coastal photography course, which documented the rapid erosion of Louisiana’s bayous and barrier islands. For these excursions, Morriss built several complex pinhole cameras designed to capture very long exposures of the ocean and the cumulative effects of its rhythms.

For most of his career, he shunned both color and digital processes. As he explained in a 2008 artist’s statement, “Morriss chooses to delve into the archaic forms of his media ... He enjoys the infinite density variability offered



Self Portrait by F. Tobias Morriss

by the grain and finds it conveys his aesthetic in a way that the rows and columns of finite pixels cannot." Or as he explained in 2006, "Photography isn't about form or color; it is about recording light." Nevertheless, his work with pinholes culminated in the 2008 creation of *Inconspicuous Truce*, a paradoxical duality that melded digital video capture with analog pinhole photography.

After Morriss finished his master's degree, Hurricane Katrina chased him

from New Orleans to Columbia, where he found work for the next four years in USC's photography program and as a motorcycle mechanic at Lexington's Machinery and Design Company. Privately, though, he chafed at the challenges posed by university budgets and politics, and in the months just before his death found his teaching obligations interfering with his art. That's where SilverYana came in; it was a chance to make art that tangibly improved the world while also teach-

ing others how to appreciate—and capture—the endangered beauty of our natural landscapes. At the time of Morriss's death, the first SilverYana field course was scheduled for June 2010 at Folly Beach.

Because Morriss rarely digitized his negatives, almost no high-resolution digital copies of his later work survive. The images shown here are carefully selected from earlier work digitized by Morriss from original negatives. ♣





Photo by Eric Plaag



Self Portrait by Sean Rayford

SEAN RAYFORD

BY KYLE PETERSEN

ou've probably seen plenty of Sean Rayford's photos. A self-described "rock and roll photojournalist" (he will be the first to admit that sounds a little cheesy), Rayford has done work for *The State*, *Free Times*, *Columbia City Paper*, and others, shooting just about everything, since he started attending the University of South Carolina in the mid-1990s. But his passion is concert photography, and over the years he has shot and seen, literally, thousands of bands (he puts the number at somewhere over 5,000 in the last 10 years alone). Part of this comes from having served as a bartender at New Brookland Tavern, Columbia's oldest continuous running music venue, during

that time period, but the other half is that he just has an insatiable urge for live music. When he has a night off, chances are you will see him at another club, house show, or other musical event, camera in hand. Rayford's recent photo exhibit, *Soda City Rocks*, showed off the fruits of his long dedication to photographing a wide swath of the music happening in Columbia, with everything from backstage photos and experimental shots to in-your-face close-ups of punk rock crowd surfers.

We sat down with Rayford at a (too) early hour one afternoon at the NBT bar to ask him a few questions about his work.

JASPER: When did you really start doing concert photography?

RAYFORD: I was in high school, like a senior, and I worked for the school newspaper. I didn't really know much what I was doing at all, just helped out with photo stuff. There was a concert called the WHFS Festival Snow Job that put on a February 28th winter concert at the bottom of a ski slope in Pennsylvania where my brother worked. And I guess I had some idea about doing a story about either snowboarding or the concert, so I emailed the guitar player of Lupus the day before, and he emailed me back and got me in touch with their tour manager Brent. They ended up taking me on the tour bus, and I took some pictures and ask some questions, I don't remember what they were! And then I shot the show. I didn't really know what I was doing, but that experience really taught me to try and really inspired me. I would just try and email whoever was, people in bands. And if that didn't work, I also made a fake *Rolling Stone* press pass in the library of my high school and tried to sneak into shows that way! I was pretty determined that way, I guess.

JASPER: What separates amateur and professional concert photography in your mind?

RAYFORD: I think you have to just be a professional photographer. You have to understand the different variables that go on and everything. Professional photographers develop their niche, what they know really well, and just go and do it. I mean, how many bands have I shot this year? I've shot, literally, thousands of bands. So I think I've learned just by doing it a lot. I don't think there's anything different than any other niche, it's just going out and trying to do it professionally.

JASPER: How do you approach the unique challenges of concert photography?

RAYFORD: I would compare it most to sports, but no lights! There's also inside club, outside, inside midrange size club, or venues like Colonial Center, and each is very specific. And even places like this (he gestures around New Brookland Tavern), can change. Last year we put in LED lights, and the old can lights had, in comparison,



Rise Against, 2012 | Photo by Sean Rayford

large swaths of dim light, which made it harder to get an exposure anywhere. Now, there are these really greatly different intensities of shafts of light that sort of criss-cross across the stage. So one way I approach it is to just use existing light. [The first thing I do] is to check out where the light is falling, where the shots are gonna work. So basically I sit back and poach. I have spots, although they change depending on how the lights shift and where the bands are set up. Which means I miss a lot of stuff, because I can only take shots when they get in the right spot [that works with the existing light].

The other approach I take is to use strobe lights which I set up in the rafter there [on the side, at NBT], which gives me control. The only problem is, when you get them from the side it changes the intensity of the existing light, which means I still have to poach. But lately I've been trying to balance my own light with the stage light, so you get a little of both. But, of course, stage lights change.

Sometimes I have to look up and say, "I can't get a shot right now." Sometimes it's just too dark to get a decent exposure. It's just an extreme challenge [for photography]. You have to battle drunk people, people doing

crazy ass shit you probably won't see anywhere else all year!

JASPER: Is it ever difficult or creatively boring to shoot rock bands over and over again, or shooting at the same venue over and over again?

RAYFORD: I guess the way I look at it, you always have an ambition for perfection, like "the perfect concert photograph," but it doesn't exist. There are so many variables and so many moments. So I've just grown to find a certain way of finding different ways of approaching it. Growing up, I thought of concert photography in terms of those fucking wide, right up there shots of the band, but then I never really had a great wide angle lens, to tell you the truth. But I shot sports, so I always had decent longer lens. So I realized, particularly after I started putting lights up, that I could sit in the back and compress the whole plane of the stage, and then throw people in the foreground out of focus if they're lit. And it opens up a range of movement that I didn't have up close. Before, it might have felt a bit repetitive, but not now. You just adapt to your situation.

[Continued on the following page]



Photo by Sean Rayford



JASPER: Do you have a favorite local band concert experience that you've shot?

RAYFORD: Hmm. That becomes a difficult question actually. Just because I've shot it, doesn't mean I was "shooting it," you know? And my favorite times are often when I don't capture a whole lot of good stuff.

One of the first things that comes to mind, though, is the Baumer farewell show, mainly just because of the people who came out. But a lot of the cooler, bigger shows I'm often stuck behind the bar. Although I've figured out that I can shoot from [the far end of the bar] and get some good shots from the side.

JASPER: Do you think about there being a difference between being an "artist" and a "photojournalist"?

RAYFORD: I guess the way I think about it is, if you are a good photojournalist, you're an artist. I'm not trying to call out anyone when I say that, but it's not always as frequent as you think.

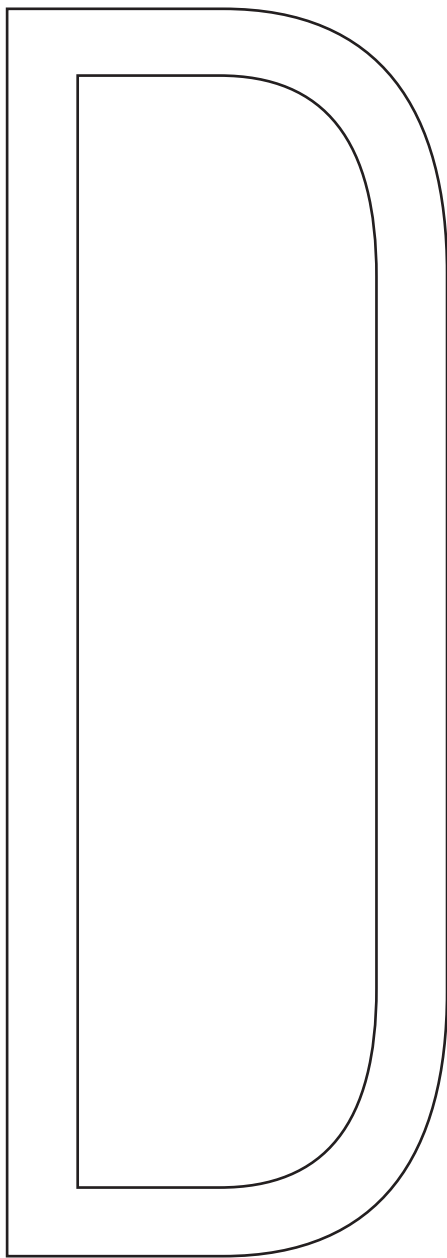
JASPER: Is it tough being so tied creatively and financially to New Brookland Tavern?

RAYFORD: In the last year, I've tried to bring myself back to reality and realize what I have. For instance, New Found Glory [who played the night before] loaded in at one, I didn't have to be here until 6, but I could come in and watch the sound check; be part of and witness how things work, how people interact, things like that. I try to do that more. Looking back on the last fifteen years—do I own a house, do I have a car? No. Do I get to do what I want to do? Yeah. Am I pissed off all the time? Yeah, but not really. Usually I'm a pretty happy guy. ♪

Photo by Sean Rayford

JAMES QUANTZ

BY KRISTINE HARTVIGSEN



iving the back roads of a rural South Carolina county in his black Dodge Durango, James Quantz is on the

hunt. Never without a trusty camera at arm's reach, he scans the horizon for the striking cloud pattern or come-hither tree line that one day may feature in one of his magnificent photographic compositions.

"I have a whole folder of skies that I can drop into pictures," he says. In fact, Quantz maintains an artist's palette of images at the ready, in addition to project-specific custom images, though instead of oils or acrylics, his gems are stored digitally, prepped for his electronic paintbrush. It has been an evolution of sorts, an exploration that has landed the West Columbia photographer some impressive accounts, including work for Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina, Amdro, the Atlanta Falcons, Grand Central Publishing, and, perhaps most notably for the past year or so, the University of South Carolina Athletics Department.

It was hardly an overnight union. "It took about three years to get a meeting with the right people over there," he explains. A lifelong Gamecock fan, Quantz attended football games throughout his Columbia childhood and, as an adult, coveted those pricey season tickets. "Now they give them to me, and that is nice. It's kind of fun to be an insider." Indeed, Quantz recently has created fun and compelling images – from team posters to digital billboards – for various Carolina tennis, swimming, baseball, and, of course, football programs.

One has to wonder how Quantz gets so many vivid details into a single photo, seeming to achieve the impossible with the mere wave of a stylus. In reality, many, many hours of brainstorming, scene-scouting, isolated image-shooting, storyboarding, composition, image placement, digi-

tal manipulation, and overall tweaking culminate in one of Quantz's mind-bending visual products. And, yes, of course he uses Photoshop. Without apology.

"Photoshop is an absolutely legitimate tool – so long as you aren't trying to pull something over on someone or pass it off as not having been manipulated," Quantz says. "The stuff I do is mostly for paying clients. If someone dismisses the work, it is fine with me."

The Photoshop debate certainly has received its due. New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art is currently exhibiting "Faking It: Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop," which examines the history of manipulated photography before the digital age. Techniques such as multiple exposure, photomontage, hand-coloring, and retouching negatives were innovative in their time; digital photography and Photoshop-like applications opened up a whole new universe of possibilities photographers at the turn of the century could only dream of.

Exhibit curator Mia Fineman asserts that photo-manipulation is as old as the advent of photography itself. "There is no such thing as an absolutely unmanipulated photograph," she states in her catalog essay, calling purist photography "more of a rhetorical ideal than a practical reality." Even iconic landscape photographer Ansel Adams enhanced his images in the darkroom.

Clearly, Adams was motivated by the desire to convey a certain aesthetic and emotion, to improve upon what arguably already were exceptional images to begin with. "I had been able to realize a desired image: not the way the subject appeared in reality but how it *felt* to me and how it must appear in



Coralee Harris by James Quantz

the finished print," Adams wrote in his autobiography.

"Even with film in the old days, you did dodging and burning in the darkroom. That is manipulating your image," Quantz says. Having done this manually for so many years, he found

the digital capability offered tremendous advantages, particularly in the area of commercial photography. Quantz sees himself not only as a storyteller but a problem-solver as well.

Quantz's clients may have a concept in mind but no idea how to trans-

late the concept to a polished print or online execution. Or they may lack a concept but generally can communicate their goals. "You have to solve the issues involved in getting there," he says. Either way, Quantz helps his clients connect the visual dots, seizing



Photo by James Quantz

digital photography's potential to tell a story.

"You are basically manipulating the viewer's eye to get them to look at what you want them to look at," he explains. "I enjoy adding all the little details so the viewer may come back and see something they didn't see the first time."

In developing a series of photos to support a marketing campaign for the University of Alabama Bookstore, Quantz painstakingly shot campus scenes, then individual students and the bookstore mascot each against a gray screen in the studio, images that later were combined to create the final, highly engaging visual collateral in a highly successful campaign. It isn't photojournalism, and the images aren't meant to fool anyone, just to tell a story in an entertaining context.

"The process of coming up with a concept and actually delivering it, of exceeding expectations for a project, that is always a thrill," Quantz says.

Back in high school, Quantz took pictures for the school newspaper and yearbook. He did not consider it a career path, however, and relegated photography to hobby status when he left Columbia to study history and business in college. "I was more focused on having a good time," he says. After working a variety of jobs, Quantz eventually was drawn back to the camera, this time as a serious calling. He studied at Atlanta's Portfolio Center, concentrating on studio lighting and styling, followed by a stint studying with two of Ansel Adams' former assistants, from whom Quantz learned the earliest methods of darkroom photo enhancement.

Quantz likens his process to a musician's ability to hear a song and then play it. To see something in your head and translate it to print or web takes hard work, dedication, and experience. "True artists are interpretive of whatever is around them and translate that reality to whatever medium they are working in," he says. "Like an artist, I take liberties with a lot of elements. You have to be passionate about it."

The world has taken notice, and Quantz has been the recipient of multiple international awards for his work and been featured in magazines such as *Italian Geo*, *Advanced Photoshop* (UK), and *Popular Photography*, which in October 2010 gushed over Quantz's "Airstreamin' Apes" series, a creative exercise in which he fused images of a vintage airstream trailer, individual apes he shot over a couple of days at



Photo by James Quantz for Henderson Brothers Burlesque, see page 53



Photo by James Quantz

the Atlanta Zoo, and an inspired selection of props. The curious and whimsical combined interpretations that resulted remain in circulation both in print and online.

Quantz is happy with the career he has chosen, even with its inherent challenges. "As a freelancer, you have to stay hungry. If you are not doing it, someone else is. It can drive you crazy," he says. "It's getting better and better. It doesn't feel like

a real job."

To aspiring photographers just getting into the game, Quantz can't emphasize enough the value of practice, practice, and more practice. It's how he developed his most successful techniques. "Everyone has a camera these days," he says. "Skill comes with practice. Make sure there is a reason that you are taking a picture of something. Try different perspectives and mix it up."

Take a tour of Quantz's work by visiting www.quantzphoto.com. "Faking It: Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop" runs through January 27, 2013, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The touring exhibit continues February 17-May 5, 2013, at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and from July through October 2013 at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts.

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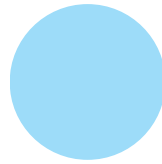
HARBISON THEATRE
at Midlands Technical College

CLARK & POLAND'S IMMINENT JOURNEY

ART & ESSAYS ON SOUTH CAROLINA

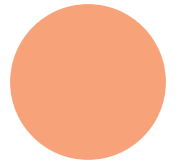
Robert Clark and Tom Poland began a long history of photo-essay collaborations in the mid-1980s. Together, they have co-authored four books on South Carolina and many feature articles. Their current work, *Reflections of South Carolina*, (USC Press 1999) is in its third printing and has sold more than 35,000 copies. Their new book, *Reflections of South Carolina, Volume Two* (USC Press spring 2014) will be their most ambitious undertaking and will present readers approximately 250 images and twenty-two mini-essays. The book represents the culmination of a lifetime's work for both men.

ROBERT
CLARK



Robert Clark photographs people, places, and panoramas. He captures nature, architecture, landscapes, and objects at their best. In short, he captures the beauty of life itself. A native of Charlotte, North Carolina, Clark's work has appeared in *National Geographic* books, *Newsweek*, *Smithsonian*, photographic awards annuals such as *Print* and *Communication Arts*, and magazines too numerous to list.

TOM
POLAND



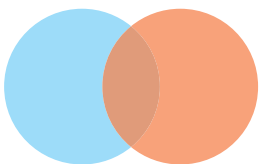
Tom Poland's writing appears in magazines, books, and journals throughout the United States. He writes often about a changing Southland. His essay "For The Birds" appears in *State of the Heart: South Carolina Writers on the Places They Love*, an anthology to be released in spring 2013 by the USC Press with a foreword by Pat Conroy. Swamp Gravy, Georgia's Folk Life Drama, produced *Solid Ground*, his play in October 2011 and March 2012.



Photo by Robert Clark

BOYKIN MILL BROOMS

"If a new broom sweeps clean" what does a vibrant broom do? It sweeps boredom from the eye. Boykin's Susan Simpson makes brooms as they were made centuries ago, by hand. Her broom shop in a restored settlers' home houses vintage tools and equipment. Her broom winder is at least 140 years old. She dyes the straw, cuts it, and makes brooms ranging from small hearth brooms to large house brooms. Decorative-but-sturdy, her brooms last for years and they are backed by experience. Simpson began making brooms more than 37 years ago. // TP



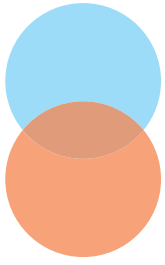


Photo by Robert Clark

UNION RE-ENACTOR

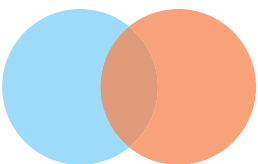
Ian, a Civil War re-enactor and tour guide, dons Union blue in Historic Brattonsville. Both Civil War and Revolutionary War reenactments take place here. Reenactors stage The Battle of Huck's defeat, a rallying point that eventually led to the King's Mountain victory. //TP

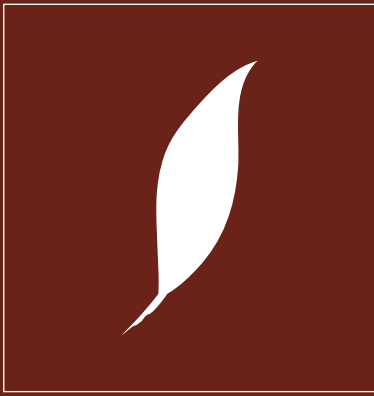


Photo by Robert Clark

A CRABBER'S DAY BEGINS

Pots stacked and ready, a commercial crabber begins his quest for *Callinectes sapidus*. The Atlantic blue crab's scientific name means "savory beautiful swimmer," while the common name, "blue crab," refers to its sapphire-hued claws. October to December is the preferred time to trap larger crabs, times when early morning mists rise creating a romantic image: the crabber who goes it alone. //TP





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CATCHING UP WITH BALLET DANCER MATHIAS DINGMAN

BY BONNIE BOITER-JOLLEY



started dancing with Mathias Dingman, who went by the name Matthew at the time, nearly 20 years ago. By the age of ten or so, Mathias was something of a tiny professional amongst our group of young and hopeful dancers, giving ballet the front burner in his young life at all times. Over the years I've watched his career soar and his life evolve. Now a soloist with the Birmingham Royal Ballet in England, Mathias recently performed the plum role of the Prince in the ballet *Cinderella*. I was able to catch up with my old friend to ask a few questions about his life in Birmingham, England.

JASPER: Tell *Jasper's* readers about your dance training.

DINGMAN: I danced at the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington, DC for 6 years, from the age of 12 until I was 18. Before that I had danced with Columbia City Ballet, studying under Serge Lavoie, and then at Columbia Classical Ballet from the age of 8 until I was 12. I spent about 2 years with each company).

JASPER: How old were you when you knew you wanted to be a dancer? Can you describe a specific time or feeling that confirmed your desire?

DINGMAN: I knew I wanted to be a professional dancer from about age 10. I don't really know why; I just knew it was the right thing for me.

JASPER: How long have you been living in Birmingham and dancing with the Birmingham Royal Ballet?

DINGMAN: I have been dancing with BRB for 6 years. I am currently in my 7th year with the company. I joined in 2006.

JASPER: Describe your life in England. Give us a run-down of "a day in the life of Mathias Dingman."

DINGMAN: 9:30 AM, I arrive at the studio and warm-up; 10:30-11:45 is company class; 12-1:30 is rehearsal; 1:30-2:30 is lunch; 2:30-4 I rehearse again with a break from 4-4:30, and then rehearse again from 4:30-6:30. On a good day I would have done an upper body workout in one of my breaks. I try to do that at least three times a week.

JASPER: Who do you consider your inspiration or role model for dance, and why?

DINGMAN: My role model is definitely Baryshnikov! He is the best. Has the whole package as a dancer; technically amazing, but most importantly, a performer. You can't take your eyes off of him when he dances.

JASPER: What is the most challenging part of being a professional dancer?

DINGMAN: The hardest thing for me about being a dancer is learning new things. Picking up new choreography and learning new ballets is very hard. At BRB we do new repertory all the time. We also don't have much time to learn all the steps. Rehearsals are quick and if you're not a fast learner you get left behind.

JASPER: And the most rewarding?

DINGMAN: The most rewarding part of being a dancer is performing. Being on stage is amazing. That's why I wanted to be a dancer.

JASPER: What is your favorite role that you've danced with BRB?

DINGMAN: My favorite roles have been Puck in *The Dream*, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, and the Prince in *Cinderella*.

JASPER: Dream role?

DINGMAN: My dream role is to do Romeo. It has everything a male dancer would want in a ballet. And to do Fancy Free.

Mathias has one goal for himself in the future: to keep improving and become the best performer he can be.





RECLAIMING VAGINAS

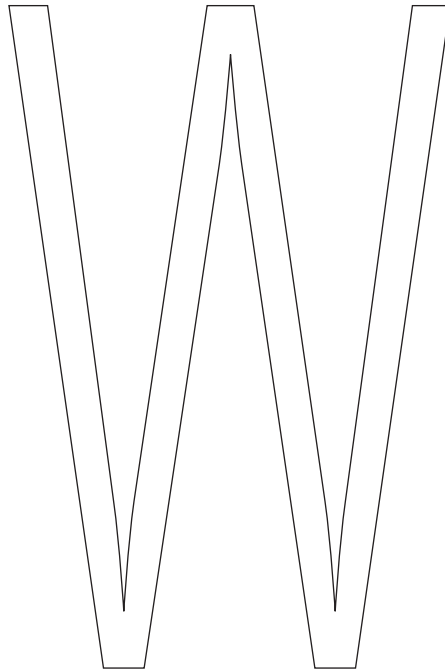
AN ESSAY BY ALEXIS STRATTON



Photo by Forrest Clonts

LET'S JUST START WITH THE WORD "VAGINA." IT SOUNDS LIKE AN INFECTION AT BEST, MAYBE A MEDICAL INSTRUMENT... "VAGINA, VAGINA." DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU SAY IT, IT NEVER SOUNDS LIKE A WORD YOU WANT TO SAY.

-"INTRODUCTION," *THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES*
BY EVE ENSLER



hen I first auditioned for *The Vagina Monologues* in 2011, I didn't care much for my vagina. And I certainly didn't want to talk about it.

It's not that I didn't want to get to know my vagina. It was just that the vagina seemed to be at the center of so many problems. Vaginas seemed to consistently be a target of attack—by predators who would assault them, by politicians who would regulate them, by religions that would make those who had them inferior to those who did not.

When I saw *The Vagina Monologues* for the first time in college, I had trouble understanding those monologues in which women talked about their vaginas as if they were beautiful or extraordinary. While the show conveys the stories of various women who have had funny, tragic, and/or enlightening experiences involving their vaginas, I related most to the monologue titled "My Angry Vagina"—in which a woman says her vagina is "pissed off" about OBGyn visits and the discomfort of tampons.

This is, of course, because my vagina was angry. It was angry about numbers—the one in six American women who has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape, according to the Rape, Abuse, and In-

cest National Network. It was angry about people, too—the growing number of friends, colleagues, and other loved ones who had told me that they are survivors of sexual assault, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and/or harassment. And newly armed with gender studies courses and a world-view I was finally able to label "feminist," I knew that I had to speak out.

So when the audition flier landed in my inbox, there was only one thing I could do. I needed to let that anger out, and I needed to be a part of this production that has raised money and awareness around the issue of violence against women since 1996.

What I didn't know was how transformative an experience being in the production would be. Not only did I engage with a cause I was passionate about, but I was forced to grapple with my own discomfort with my embodiment, my woman-ness, and my sexuality. I had to moan on cue (and had to be coached into moaning convincingly). I had to listen to women's stories of sexual awakening—even if that awakening didn't happen until age 72. I had to yell "cunt" at the top of my lungs when I was assigned the "Reclaiming Cunt" monologue the afternoon before opening night because an actress was sick.

And when I got past the discomfort of my own discomfort, something beautiful happened, and I noticed it among the other cast members as well. As we learned to yell the "bad words" the world has told us not to say, ("vagina" included), to convey the stories of rape victims in their own words, to celebrate a sense of womanhood, and to share our own stories and emotions as women, survivors, and friends, the walls between and inside us seemed to break down. We were no longer harnessed by shame. We didn't have to apologize for who we were or what our bodies made of us. We could laugh, cry, and shout, and I realized that the community and audience around us could do the same, too.

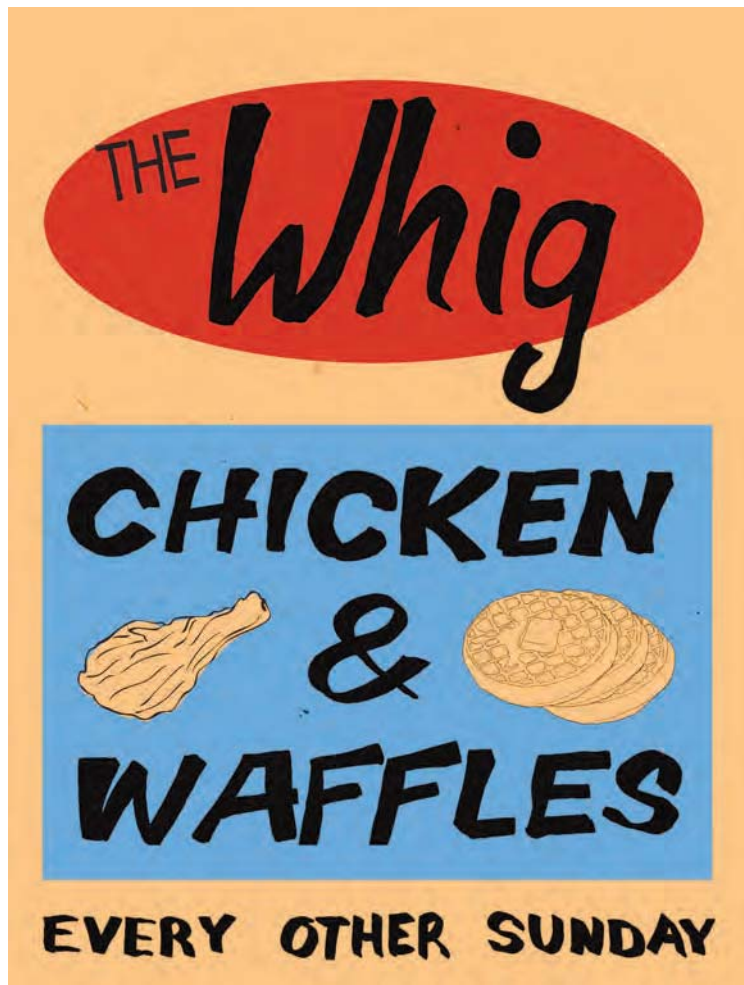
To tell one's story is a powerful thing, and in *The Vagina Monologues*, Eve Ensler captures the stories of hundreds of women she interviewed over the course of several years. Each performance of the show brings greater

awareness to the joy and pain that comes not only from being a woman (or identifying as one) but also from being human.

The Vagina Monologues was originally produced by David Stone, Nina Essman, Dan Markley, The Araca Group, and Willa Shalit at the West Side Theater in New York City. Once Ensler stopped performing one or more of the dozen or so monologues in the play, (the number of monologues varies each year and a new monologue dealing with a contemporary social issue is typically added yearly to the collection), various celebrities began appearing in the off Broadway production including Angelina Jolie, Anne Heche, Yoko Ono, and others. In addition to rape, incest, and sexual abuse, the monologues also address issues such as menstruation, orgasm, birth, masturbation, issues of performance and appearance, and any number of other topics relevant to womanhood.

This year, I'm bringing my relationship with vaginas to a whole new level as co-director of *The Vagina Monologues* (with Leia Cain, a graduate student at USC). With a cast made up of members of the USC and Columbia community, we'll continue our mission to raise awareness about violence against women while raising money for Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands (www.stsm.org), a local organization that provide services to survivors of sexual assault and abuse. I hope you'll join us on this journey. If you do, come prepared to laugh and cry—and maybe even be transformed.

The Vagina Monologues takes place on February 15 through 17 at 8:00 p.m. at the USC Law School Auditorium (701 Main St.). Tickets cost \$8 for students and \$10 for the public. Proceeds will be donated to Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands. ,



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CURTAIN UP

WITH AUGUST KRICKEL



Photo by Sarah Kobos

The weather outside may be frightful, but audiences are sure to enjoy the warm glow of comedies from namebrand playwrights like Neil Simon, Ken Ludwig, and George M. Cohan; meanwhile a number of local theatres stir the fires of passion with saucier and more provocative fare. **Curtain Up!**

Downtown, there are still two more weekends to catch Ken Ludwig's farce *The Fox on the Fairway*, running at **Town Theatre** through Sat. 1/26. Hijinks and romantic escapades abound at a posh golf club, as Allison McNeely directs an all-star cast of Town regulars: Frank Thompson, Abigail Ludwig, Bill DeWitt, Melinda Collins, Kathy Hartzog, and Charlie Goodrich. Thompson then pours himself a cup of ambition as he steps into the director's chair for the stage musical adaptation of *9 to 5*, opening Fri. 3/1. Info: 803-799-2510 or <http://www.towntheatre.com>.

A couple of blocks around the corner at **Workshop Theatre**, Neil Simon's wistful, semi-autobiographical coming-of-age-comedy in Brooklyn, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, also runs through Sat. 1/26. David Britt directs Jared Kemmerling in the role Matthew Broderick created on Broadway, with Lou Warth and Hunter Boyle as his parents. Info: 803-799-4876 or <http://www.workshoptheatre.com>.

Theatre Rowe continues their popular series of murder mystery/dinner theatre shows, running most weekends, Thurs. though Sunday, at Richland Mall. *Murder Rides Again* is featured through Sun. 2/10, followed by *Marriage Can be Murder*, running 2/21 through 3/10. Info: 803-728-1678 or <http://www.theatrerowe.com>.

Nearby **Columbia Children's Theatre** presents *A Year with Frog and Toad*, a musical adaptation by Robert and Willie Reale of Arnold Lobel's series of children's books,

following a year in the life of two little amphibious friends. Among the familiar faces you'll see here are Lee O. Smith, Kim Harne, Paul Lindley, Toni Moore, Elizabeth Stepp, Matthew Wright, Bobby Bloom, and CCT Artistic Director Jerry Stevenson as Toad. The show runs Fr. 2/8 - Sun. 2/17. Info: 803-691-4548 or <http://columbiachildrentstheatre.com>.

Over in Lexington, one of Simon's earliest and most beloved works, the romantic comedy *Barefoot in the Park*, runs Thurs. 1/24 - Sun. 2/3 at the **Village Square Theatre**. He's uptight, she's free-spirited, and of course they're newlyweds. Brandi Owensby directs Rachael Goerss and Michael Hazin as the mismatched lovebirds. Info: 803-359-1436 or <http://www.villagesquaretheatre.com>. *Nonsense Jamboree*, opening the last weekend in February, is presented by **On Stage Productions**, now performing at 680 Cherokee Lane in West Columbia. Rene' Littell, Debi Young, Suzy Panepinto Yankowitz, and Christy Shealy Mills play the singing, dancing, wacky Little Sisters of Hoboken, as they dive into the world of country music. M.J. Maurer directs, with musical direction by John Norris. Info: <http://www.onstagesc.com/>.

High Voltage Theatre, the folks behind those outdoor productions of *Sleepy Hollow*, will present a new adaptation of the classic *Night of the Living Dead* at **Tapp's Arts Center**, Fridays and Saturdays, 2/1-16. Advance material promises/warns "blood, guts, gore, body fluids, severed heads, entrails, and bone! Not for the weak-stomached!" Groovy. Info: (803) 754-5244 or <http://www.facebook.com/pages/High-Voltage-Theatre/148701098509882>.

Meanwhile, **S.C. Shakespeare Co.** takes a modern twist with Paul Rudnick's *I Hate Hamlet*, a screwball comedy that skewers relationships, theatre, and the supernatural, as a young actor is haunted by John Barrymore's ghost. CMFA hosts the production in its ArtSpace, at 914 Pulaski St. in February. Info: 803-787-BARD, or <http://www.shakespeareco.org>.

Stage 5 Theatre, located just down from Williams-Brice at 947 S. Stadium Rd., presents *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, a vintage "melodramatic farce" by George M. Cohen. Michael Bailey directs the tale of a novelist working on a deadline at a remote inn, who finds himself plunged into mystery and intrigue. Dates are Fr. 2/15 - Sun. 2/24. Info: 803-834-1775 or <http://www.mbfproductions.net>.

USC dips into contemporary classics for its spring roster; first up at the **Lab Theatre** (1400 Wheat Street) is Paula Vogel's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *How I Learned to Drive*, a challenging account of dysfunction, abuse and redemption. Directed by Eric Bultman, the show runs Th. 2/7 - Sun. 2/10. The lighter side of sex is then explored as only the French can, in **Boeing-Boeing**, Marc Camoletti's farce about a Parisian playboy juggling three stewardesses, running Fri. 2/22 - Sat. 3/2 at **Longstreet Theatre**. Then tempers flare, personalities clash, and consciences are searched as *Twelve Angry Jurors* struggle to reach a verdict. K. Dale White directs Reginald Rose's jury-room drama in the **Benson The-**

atre (226 Bull Street) Th. 2/28 - Sun. 3/3. Info: 803-777-2551
or <http://artsandsciences.sc.edu/thea/2013/Season12-13.html>.

The **Trustus Side Door Theatre** continues its "Sex-ploation" series of saucy titles and themes with *5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche*, running Fr. 1/18 - Sat. 2/2. Andrew Hobgood and Evan Linder's script plays with double entendre and the mores of 1950's suburbia, as we experience an annual breakfast event where no sausage is allowed. Director Robin Gottlieb's cast includes Elena Martinez-Vidal, Vicky Saye Henderson, Dewey Scott-Wiley, Katie Mixon, and Emily Meadows.

The **Thigpen Mainstage** then presents... let's abbreviate this as *The MoFo with the Hat*, and you can deduce its actual title. This Tony-nominated serio-comedy by Stephen Adly Guirgis is directed by Chad Henderson, and examines the darker side of love, addiction, jealousy and relationships. Alexis Casanovas, Shane Silman, Joe Morales, Michelle Jacobs, and Raia Hirsch are featured; dates are Fr. 2/8 - Sat. 2/23. Henderson then teams with his (spiritual) brother Terrance and musical director Jeremy Polley for the *Henderson Brothers Burlesque*, premiering as part of the annual *What's Love?* event at **701 Whaley** on Valentine's Day. Described as "a contemporary Neo-Burlesque show, with imaginative throw-backs to traditional Burlesque of the Minsky era," the original piece features a number of popular local performers in sideshow mode: Giulia Marie Dalbec, Lainey Johnson, Terrance Henderson, Mandy Applegate, Hunter Boyle, and a live rock band that includes a horn section, and vocalists Kendrick Marion and Kanika Moore. Info: 803-254-9732, or <http://trustus.org/>.



the vagina monologues

by Eve Ensler

Feb. 15-17 at 8:00 p.m.

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\$8 students / \$10 public
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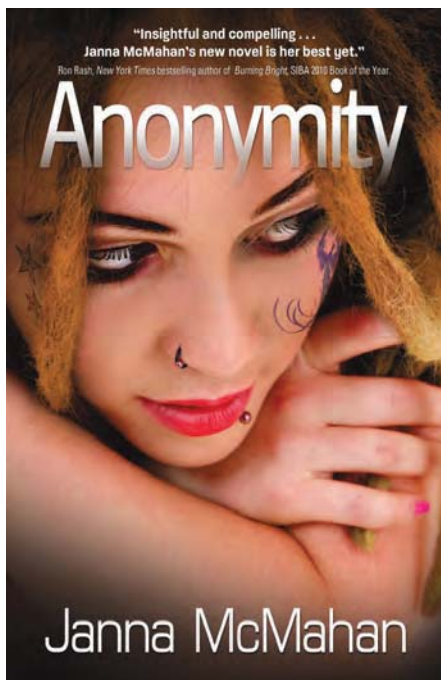
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VISTA Ballroom

REVIEW- ANONYMITY BY JANNA McMAHAN

BY WILL GARLAND



The New Year will bring with it Janna McMahan's latest novel, *Anonymity* (Koehler Books, 2013). The Columbia resident is a national-bestselling author and Flannery O'Connor Award finalist who has been praised by both readers and critics for her ability to create vivid and complex characters that stick with you long after you set her book down. *Anonymity* leaves you with this same lingering effect. While the action-driven plot places this novel comfortably in

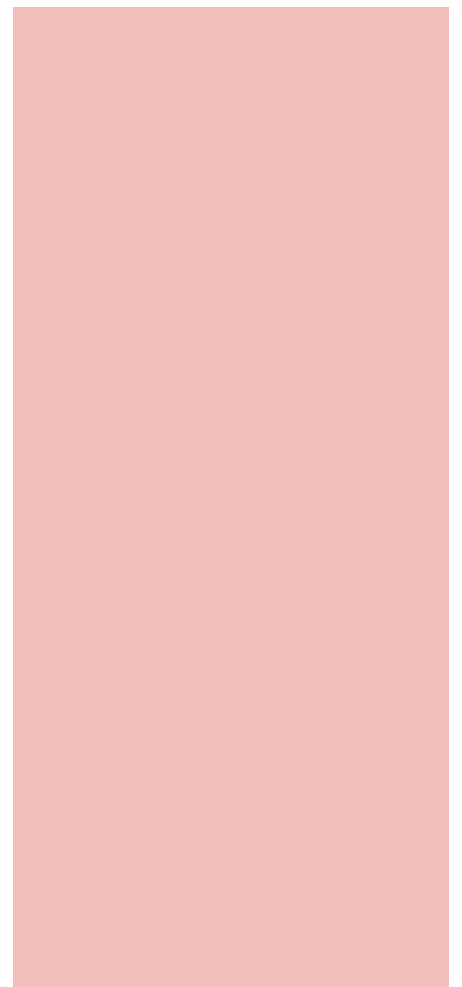
the fast-paced genre of psychological thrillers, the story finds its power in the slow, internalized character development.

Anonymity rotates between several points of view, and while the varied perspectives allow for more interiority in each of the major characters, the two most compelling are Emily and Lorelei. Emily is a bartender in downtown Austin, Texas who has spent her life struggling to find a balance between her own ambitions and the higher expectations of those close to her. Lorelei is a young runaway, living on the streets, who has been forced to create a hardened exterior that enables her to both survive and maintain a distance from a past that is always at risk of catching up with her. Emily lives wanting to seek out the "frayed edges of life," and Lorelei has forged a life that exists beyond the visibility of nearly everyone. Then when a series of events bring these two characters together, a friendship is created and readers get a firsthand look at the difficulties of life on the streets, and the dangers that exist when that hardened mask of anonymity is lowered.

As McMahan takes her readers further into the intersecting worlds of Emily and Lorelei, a third compelling character portrayal unfolds: the city of Austin itself. Music lovers and young people seeking out a unique culture and an alternative approach to life in Texas have frequently hailed Austin as one of the premier destinations in the country. However McMahan gives her readers a more nuanced look into this famous music locale. Like with the development of each of the actual characters, the city of Austin is presented as a multi-faceted and elusive being that you grow close to, but can never fully understand. *Anonymity* takes you for a tour of the drag, the nightlife, the suburbs, the urban wilderness areas, and into the inner workings of the homeless shelters, and medical clinics. Then McMahan makes the city come to life by allowing the patrons of each of these areas to converge on one another and exist within inevitable conflicts that arise. Her well-researched and in-depth look into the lesser-known sides of Austin is what precisely makes McMahan's portrayal of the storied city so gripping. For it

is through this lens that readers are able to understand why there is such a large divide between the well-meaning intentions of Emily and the frightening realities that Lorelei must face on a daily basis.

Good literature often has the power to press on its readers. It can make them reevaluate their previous understanding of the world around them and feel empathy for characters that they would normally disregard without a second thought. *Anonymity* succeeds in its ability to push readers towards this reevaluation. It is a gritty novel that challenges our assumptions and makes you ask yourself difficult questions. More than anything else, McMahan succeeds in placing her readers into the world that she has created and making it impossible for you not to come out of it without seeing our own surroundings through a different lens. The novel may take you on a riveting ride through Emily and Lorelei's worlds, but it is our inability to escape them after we finish reading that leaves you haunted. ♣





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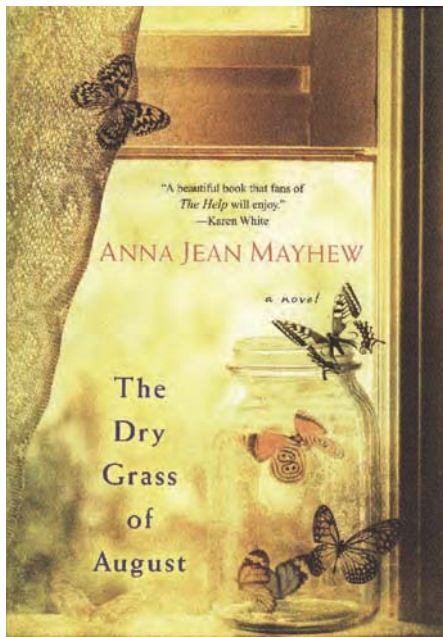
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This project is funded by the Cultural Council of Richland and Lexington Counties and the SC Arts Commission, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the John and Susan Bennett Coastal Community Foundation of SC.

ANNA JEAN MAYHEW, WRITING, AND THE DRY GRASS OF AUGUST

BY CYNTHIA BOITER



In 1998, in an effort to both grow community and promote literacy, Seattle Public librarian Nancy Pearl asked the question, “What would happen if everyone in Seattle read the same book at the same time?” From the answer to that question came the inaugural program for large group book readings that was first called “If All of Seattle Read the Same Book” and eventually morphed into variations on the title, “One Book, One Community.”

Word took off and the program spread to almost 500 cities in 15 years. In 2011, former Columbia City Councilperson Belinda Gergel piloted our

community’s first venture into the campaign, dubbing it “One Book, One Columbia” and selecting the 1993 New York Times Best Selling oral history, *Having Our Say: The Delaney Sisters’ First 100 Years* as our first novel. In 2012, Jasper joined the book selection committee and we chose the 2004 Ron Rash novel, *Saints at the River*. This year, we’re delighted to announce our choice of Anna Jean Mayhew’s first novel, at the age of 71, *The Dry Grass of August*; a story set in the South in the year 1954, dealing with the abundance of racial, gender, and social stratification issues so prevalent in that post World War II time period. While a number of lectures and assorted programs have been scheduled to deal with the issues so eloquently addressed in Mayhew’s novel, Jasper wanted to spend a little time shedding light on Mayhew herself and the process she used in writing this novel. We hope you enjoy the product of our interview below.

JASPER: I know that *The Dry Grass of August* was a while in the making. How long did it take you to write the book and how often did you put it aside and then revisit it later?

MAYHEW: In 1987, I began a short story that eventually grew much longer, and became the genesis for *The Dry Grass of August*. As I worked on it, I was learning how to write and finding my voice, which every writer must do. I often left the manuscript for months at a time, while working on other things. When I came back to it, my perspective was much clearer; I could see what needed work and what was polished. In all, the process took over 18 years until, in January of 2006, I felt it was ready to be sent out to agents.

JASPER: Were you writing other things while this book was in progress?

MAYHEW: From time to time I’d resurrect another novel that I might finish someday—it’s a mystery/romance, quite different from *Dry Grass*. I wrote

a number of short stories that I now see as exercises; only one of these was published. Maybe I’ll look at the other stories again someday.

JASPER: Did you have a day job or were you working as a “writer” during this time?

MAYHEW: Yes, and I’ll go back a bit in time to explain the influence of what a writer does for a “day job.” In the 1970s, I ran a court reporting agency. For days on end I recorded the testimony of witnesses from all walks of life. Later in my office I transcribed the record, then proofread it before handing it over to the court. So the words of the witnesses went through my head three times. Looking back on that work I can see that it gave me an ear for dialogue and dialect that serves me to this day. In 1980, I went to work for the Charlotte Opera, and in my five years with the company, I developed a passion for the dramatic elements of plot and character. In 1986, I went to work as a medical writer and editor and learned research skills that helped me get the facts right for my two novels, one set in 1954 and the other in 1961. In 2004, my husband suggested that I quit my day job (freelancing as a medical editor) and work on my novel. I bless him for recognizing that I needed total focus to finish the book.

JASPER: Did you train to be a writer or are you self-taught?

MAYHEW: Both, really. I began writing seriously in the 1970s when my children were in high school. I took night classes in creative writing at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte. My first publication was in 1985—a science fiction story in the anthology, *Writers of the Future*. Any sensible writer will advise, “Do not publish a short story and quit your day job.” But I did. I left the opera and my hometown of Charlotte, and, at the age of 45, moved into a winterized barn south of Chapel Hill, where I lived and wrote for almost a year. Once I got away from Charlotte, I became fascinated with it as a setting. In 1987, I joined the writers group I am still in today, 25 years later. My teacher, Lau-

rel Goldman leads three writing groups from which 25 books have been published as well as a number of short stories. Under her tutelage I found my voice, my style, and finally finished *Dry Grass*, which is dedicated to my husband and to Laurel. I'm now working on my next novel, and still going to my writing group every Thursday morning.

JASPER: Did you use an agent to place the book?

MAYHEW: Yes, as the result of several fortuitous events, I got an agent in just a few months after sending out queries. My agent, Robert Guinsler of Sterling Lord, was reading the manuscript when I got the lovely blurb from Lee Smith that is now on the back cover of *Dry Grass*. I sent her review to Robert, and that helped him decide to represent me.

JASPER: Was it easy/difficult to find a publisher?

MAYHEW: It took Robert over three years to sell *Dry Grass*, by which time I was considering self-publishing, ready to give up on the traditional route. But Robert was like a bulldog with a bone...he believed in my book and kept selling it, finally landing the two-book deal with Kensington. In the process I got some really great rejection letters; I say that without irony. Many editors told me why they weren't taking the novel, while praising it and the writing. One editor in particular, at a top publishing house, suggested a lot of changes; she said if I'd revise it, she'd look at the manuscript again. I incorporated all of her suggestions, and sent her the revision. She turned me down. While that was heart-breaking, the edits had resulted in a better book.

JASPER: Do you recommend using an agent?

MAYHEW: Yes, while acknowledging how difficult it can be to get one. I recommend the Writer's Digest book, *Guide to Literary Agents*, updated annually. I followed the advice in that book—wrote my query letter using their guidelines; made a list of agents interested in literary fiction, those who would take first-time authors, how the agent wanted the query (email or snail mail, the first chapter or 50 pages), and those who would take simultaneous submissions. The last point is a no-brainer—why send out one query letter at a time to agents who won't allow simultaneous submissions?

JASPER: Can you tell us about your writing practices?

MAYHEW: I write from inspiration, and don't write every day at a specific time. It's fortunate that I get inspired more often these days. The place I write (mostly my office) is extremely important, and having a view outside is vital. Every office I've ever worked in, I've positioned my desk so that I could look out a window

JASPER: Any little quirks about your writing style or writing needs?



New Work
THE NATURAL EVOLUTION OF SIX ARTISTS AND A MOUNTAIN RETREAT

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BRUCIE HOLLER
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 IN THE FALL
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RECEPTION
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 5:30-7:30
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 843-785-3535

MAYHEW: I do need quiet, and have gone to great lengths to get it. I often play classical music while I'm working, but if it's interrupted for a commercial or a station announcement, that's bothersome. I love opera, but I cannot listen to it while I'm writing.

JASPER: What are you working on now?

MAYHEW: My next novel, *Tomorrow's Bread*, set in Charlotte in 1961 at the beginning of the urban renewal project that destroyed an inner city black neighborhood. The story is told by several different characters, some black, some white, some male, some female.

JASPER: Who are your influences and why?

MAYHEW: Every time I read a book I enjoy, I'm influenced by it...I have to watch out for that, because I'll find myself trying to write the way that author did. In the past year I've read many remarkable books including *The Queen of Palmyra* by Minrose Gwin, *Mudbound* by Hillary Jordan, and *Leaving Tuscaloosa* by Walter Bennett. They're all Southern-set in the mid-twentieth century, which might explain why I was drawn to them, but the writing is what kept me reading—forceful and captivating, with characters I believed in. Lately I'm reading Ron Rash, marveling

at his style and the way he gets deeply inside his characters, even in a short story—e.g., “Three A.M. and the Stars Were Out,” which was included among six wonderful Christmas tales by North Carolina writers in the December issue of *Our State*; this is the first time that magazine has published fiction, and they selected great stories. I’m eager to read *The Cove*, the latest novel from Rash. (Editor’s note: *As noted above, last year’s One Book, One Columbia* selection was *Saints at the River*, by Ron Rash. Jasper enjoys this irony and congratulates Ms. Mayhew on such a happy coincidence.)

JASPER: Who is your favorite author?

MAYHEW: For years it was Harper Lee, and she’s still right up there at the top...I’ve read *To Kill a Mockingbird* at least a dozen times. I’m drawn to read and re-read Flannery O’Connor, [who is] brilliant at telling horrific stories with dark humor. And Ray Bradbury—he created characters so human that readers could identify with them, even in otherworldly settings (e.g. Mars). His short story “Kaleidoscope” still haunts me, makes me wonder what I’d be thinking if I were falling toward Earth from outer space. I’ve read *Anna Karenina* twice (different translations); Tolstoy was a master at telling the story through different points of view, getting us into the heads and minds of all the major characters. I haven’t read *War and Peace*, but it’s on my list. I’ve read and re-read all of Jane Austen; her insights into human nature and behavior inspire me as a writer.

JASPER: Is there anything I didn’t ask you that you’d like to share?

MAYHEW: One thing about *Dry Grass* gives me great satisfaction, and that is that it has crossed over somewhat to young adult fiction. Back when my agent was submitting it, a couple of editors suggested that I publish the book in that category, because it’s narrated by a 13-year-old girl. I was reluctant to do that, fearing the genre would limit the readership, but still hoping there’d be a way to reach older teenagers with the story. On my book tour I’ve visited both retirement communities and high schools.

JASPER: And finally, for kicks, what are the five books you’d want with you on a desert island?

MAYHEW: I have a high school education with a few college courses. If I’d had the chance to go for a degree, I’d have chosen to study writing and literature...I’d love to be guided through great books and to be taught their subtexts and underlying messages. Perhaps that’s why I’d choose to take with me some books I haven’t read: *Middlemarch* by George Eliot; Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* (mentioned above); *Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann; *Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin (influenced by President Obama’s choice of it as the one book he’d take to a desert island); and *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison (I’m embarrassed to admit that I haven’t read it). If one of those wasn’t available, I’d take *Remembrance of Things Past*

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by Marcel Proust. Oops...I forgot that I need something to make me laugh, so I’d take one of my collection of Walt Kelly’s *Pogo* books or a collection of Gary Larson’s cow cartoons. There are dozens more I’d love to have in the boat as I row toward shore, books I want to read over and over again, but oh, well, this is a good list, if I have to choose five (yes, actually six, but please let me take a funny one!).



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REVIEW—COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER

BY ZACH MUELLER

K eith Flynn's new poetry collection, *Colony Collapse Disorder* (Wings Press, 2013), has one foot in language and the other in place, albeit with incredibly long legs. His fifth collection, this book sprawls the globe, moving through different countries, cities, cultures, climates, civilizations, and perspectives. Flynn offers two poems for every letter of the alphabet, and each poem is presented alongside a corresponding location for the beginning letter of that place. (For example: **G**: Gaza, Palestine; **G**rand Canyon, Arizona. **S**: Linares, Spain; **S**an Francisco, California.) The scope is immense geographically, but also in its attempt to put disparate mythologies in dialogue. Each poem is informed by the influence of regional culture, however that might be defined—sometimes by history, sometimes by literature, sometimes by the stories that linger in the sound of footsteps walking through East Asia or the mountains of Georgia. (Truly, the table of contents is an overwhelming treasure map unto itself.)

The poems leave traces on one another, removing the vast distance between these places and times. "Speaking In Tongues" (Collodi, Italy) retells Pinocchio; "Lincoln's Life Mask" (Springfield, Illinois) reimagines Lincoln's lifework; there are intonations of Henry VIII, Charles Darwin, the Virgin Mary, Catherine of Sienna (disguised as Yogi Berra), among many, many others. But these visions are frequently borrowed to explore a completeness of humanity, some sense of larger narrative that all places share regardless of border. And signifiers are not limited to geography and history. There are religious ones as

well: Agnosticism in Ecuador; Zen in India; Easter in Gaza. The poems collect different names and resonances to create a complex yet elegant vision of cultural narrative—sometimes painful, but always human.

Flynn captures the fluidity of negotiation in "European Political Discourse":

*A vivid first feast of wind,
purity in the form of coercion,
lards the crisp air with recognition,
and those tarred thereafter harden
with resolve. Success has many fathers,
they say, but failure is an orphan.*

Here and throughout, Flynn is able to render language as sacred, the visage of wisdom and beauty, resistant to cynicism and irony. Formally, the poems are full bodies of words and rhythm on the page, almost like beds of different shapes, sizes, and luxuries. Language provides the pillows and blankets we lie on, creating a unifying rhythm, a current that navigates these landscapes, both literal and metaphorical, in such a way that you feel safe enough to contemplate and imagine worlds that you might not otherwise be willing to visit.

Flynn is also a musician, and it shows with his ability to craft poems that move like music. He situates soft rhymes in "Rembrandt's Mirror" with phrases like "mauzy gaudiness" and "Italian baubles and Grecian columns" that not only negotiate competing sonic textures, but cultures as well. In "Nearing Havana," the speaker finds himself in Cuba, presenting

a multi-dimensional political uneasiness: "The East Germans say that the Chinese/should understand Berlin." It's a moment early on in *Colony Collapse Disorder* that gestures towards an overwhelming task of balance. But just when the path seems constricted, he offers a breath (and a revision of Robert Frost): "something within that doesn't trust a fence,/sees a pathway in a pile of bricks." These pockets of air fill our lungs, in and out, allowing us to breathe an entire world all at once.

North Carolina poet Flynn is the author of *The Talking Drum*, *The Book of Monsters*, *The Lost Sea*, and *The Golden Ratio*, as well as the editor and founder of *The Asheville Poetry Review*. *Colony Collapse Disorder*, to be released in March 2013, is his fifth collection. Flynn will be in Columbia in March for readings at USC (March 5), Mind Gravy (March 6), then the Litchfield Poetry Series (March 7) and the SC Poetry Series (March 8-9 in Charleston).

Zach Mueller received his MFA in poetry from the University of South Carolina in 2012. He writes poetry, short fiction, and is working on his first novel. He lives and teaches composition in Columbia, SC.

The Exile

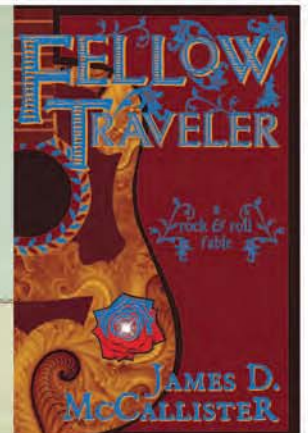
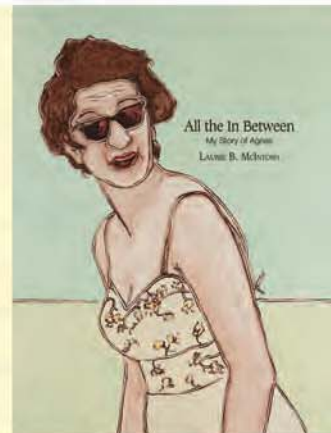
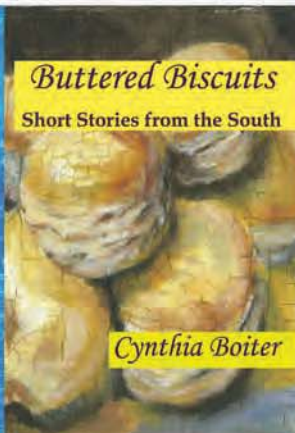
This is my last letter. The first one
disappointed in a love triangle has
lost the game. Some things upon
which I've aimed were undoubtedly
innocent; but that is for others to decide.
I've tried to rope the world in countless
ways and have done the best I can,
with tangled prayers and no reprieve.
The danger in the Beast is its seasons.

The morning star enlightened Buddha
and his first words formed a poem
out of the desperate ardors,
adders made of words, blind as a boxer,
striking out at every sound.
How do we discriminate?
The map is linear, but poetry is
circular and continuous,
untangling as it tells.

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701 CCA COLUMBIA OPEN STUDIOS: WIN, WIN, WIN, WIN

BY WIM ROEFS

As we move into the spring arts season, the board and volunteer staff at 701 Center for Contemporary Art are looking forward to presenting Columbia Open Studios, March 23 – 24, 2013. This weekend-long tour of artists' studios across Columbia and Richland and Lexington Counties provides our non-profit organization the opportunity for deeper engagement with the local arts community, and sponsorship money raised in conjunction with the event helps 701 CCA's programming throughout the year.

Since it opened in 2008, 701 CCA has been presenting high-quality, contemporary art programming through our free gallery exhibitions, our artist-in-residence program, and our youth summer art workshops. Recently, we have added exciting new initiatives like the 701 CCA Prize for younger South Carolina artists and the 701 CCA South Carolina Biennial Exhibition, which will return this fall.

701 CCA was asked to resurrect the Columbia Open Studios tour in 2011, and we have been very pleased with the community's response to the event. In 2011, there were 4,000 visits to artists' studios during Columbia Open Studios, and attendance increased to 10,000 visits in 2012. There are open studios tours in major cities across the United States, from Greenville, SC, to San Francisco, and 701 CCA is honored to be the presenting organization here.

While the tour is free to the public, artists pay a participation fee to offset marketing and organizational costs. At \$100 for 701 Center for Contemporary Art members and \$150 for non-members, artist participation costs less than at similar events elsewhere, including Greenville. For that investment, artists become part of a marketing and publicity avalanche. This includes ads, posters, mailings, rack cards, road signs, a website, a social media campaign and the Open Studios guide, all of which help artists reach audiences beyond their usual circles. Some 30,000 copies of the guide will be distributed through Columbia's *Free Times* on March 20, and another 20,000, statewide and in Georgia and North Carolina. (*Full disclosure: Columbia Open Studios is also advertising with Jasper Magazine.*)

701 CCA is thankful to our 2013 Columbia Open Studios sponsors for enabling us to multiply the return on each artist's investment. Artists can expect dozens, even hundreds of visitors during the weekend. Open Studios does not just generate publicity but in many cases leads to sales, including post-event sales and commissions, with artists keeping 100 percent of the proceeds. The sales are not surprising, since the event attracts serious art lovers.

These art lovers get to interact with artists in their studios and learn about the artistic process. They get the opportunity to see a lot of art in a short time and buy some of what they see. And they'll have one or two excellent days on the road, enjoying Columbia and the two counties.

As Greenville's long-running, successful event suggests, Columbia Open Studios will become a signature event for its host city and counties, helping the region become a cultural tourism destination. As Columbia Open Studios' own growth also suggests, the event will attract larger crowds each year, and those crowds will spend at local restaurants and gas stations. Open Studios increasingly will attract people from outside the Midlands, who will fill hotel rooms.

Join us on March 21, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., at 701 Center for Contemporary Art for a lively preview party in the Olympia Room and an exhibition of Columbia Open Studios artists' work in the first floor gallery at 701 Whaley, and visit www.columbiaopenstudios.org to start planning a leisurely weekend of studio hopping. Meanwhile, check out the Stephen Hayes exhibition at the 701 CCA gallery, January 17 – March 3, 2013. ♪

Wim Roefs is the board chair of the non-profit 701 Center for Contemporary Art, which organizes Columbia Open Studios.

Photo by Forrest Clonts

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