

Spring 2008

## Under the Dome - Spring 2008

McKissick Museum--University of South Carolina

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# UNDER *the* DOME

*Telling the Story of Southern Life*

McKISSICK MUSEUM NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2008

## Celebrating Tradition

### 20 Years of the Folk Heritage Awards

In 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts established the National Heritage Awards Program as a way of honoring American folk artists for their contributions to our national cultural fabric. Modeled after the Japanese "Living National Treasures" program, these awards set the precedent that several states would later follow.

While many states created similar programs, South Carolina was one of the first to formally recognize folk artists, through an award sponsored by the South Carolina General Assembly. Established in 1988 through the efforts of the Joint Committee on Cultural Affairs under Senator Harriette Keyserling and the South Carolina State Folk Arts program at McKissick Museum, the Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Award celebrates excellence in South Carolina traditional arts. The award is presented annually to honor lifetime achievements in folk arts and arts advocacy. The recipients demonstrate a commitment to keeping their traditions vibrant and have, in turn, used their art to benefit those around them. Several of the Jean Laney Harris Award recipients have also received the National Heritage Award.

Reflecting on America in his 1855 book *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman wrote, "Here is not merely a nation but a teeming nation of nations." The establishment of this award is a testament to the significant role folk artists and traditional arts advocates have in maintaining the diverse cultural heritage of both South Carolina and the country.

Today, the Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Award is managed jointly by the museum and the South Carolina Arts Commission's Folklife and Traditional Arts Program. For more information call 803-734-8693 or 803-777-3714. To download nomination forms and instructions, go to [www.southcarolinaarts.com](http://www.southcarolinaarts.com) or [www.digitaltraditions.net](http://www.digitaltraditions.net).



Snuffy Jenkins and Pappy Sherrill, *Old Time Country Music*



(Left to Right)

Carolyn "Jabulile" White,  
Storyteller

Neil Cost, *Turkey Call Maker*

Nola Campbell, *Catawba Potter*





George Archibald, owner of Archibald's BBQ, Northpoint, Ala.

## BBQ Joints and the Good Folks Who Own Them

Just in time for summer, the museum is excited to bring you *Barbecue Joints and the Good Folks Who Own Them*. Based on the work of Atlanta-based author and photographer David Gelin, this exhibit will provide an intimate, community-based perspective of dynamic barbecue traditions throughout the South. Gelin traveled thousands of miles on county roads in an effort to document and celebrate the folks who keep these storied traditions vibrant and relevant.

More than simply sustenance, these barbecue traditions are steeped in family and occupational lore; community-based activities like church homecomings, tailgating, and family reunions; and other significant social occasions. The exhibit will feature an extensive selection of original large-format photographs documenting barbecue masters from North Carolina to Texas. McKissick will host Gelin for a book signing to celebrate the companion publication and a public lecture during the tenure of the exhibit. The exhibition will run from May 10, 2008, through July 19, 2008, in McKissick's second floor South Gallery.

## The Dresses of Florestine Kinchen

A Tribute to Helen Hill, May 3–Aug. 23, 2008



Dress No. 4, Handmade Dress  
Cotton and buttons  
Florestine Kinchen, date unknown  
Collection of Helen Hill and Paul  
Gailunas

Although she was only 36 years old when she lost her life in January 2007, Columbia native Helen Hill spent a lifetime making films. Sadly, she died during production of her newest film, based on a discovery of hand-sewn dresses made by Florestine Kinchen, a recently deceased seamstress in New Orleans.

On the way to a Mardi Gras parade in 2001, Hill and her husband discovered the neglected legacy of this seamstress. In a trash heap in front of Kinchen's home were more than 100 hand-sewn dresses disposed of following Kinchen's death. Helen salvaged what she could. She expressed that they "were quirky and lovely, just my style."

A few months later, Helen began developing the storyline for a film depicting the discovery and the story of the dressmaker. Funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, Helen created the storyboard and several of the scene assemblages by the time she died. More than a year after her death, her husband, Paul Gailunas, is completing the film with the same character that Helen envisioned.

McKissick Museum is pleased to offer a premiere viewing of the finished film in conjunction with the exhibition. On display will be a number of the dresses that inspired Helen's final film, along with clips from her earlier films. For more information regarding this exhibition, please contact Jason Shaiman, chief curator of exhibitions, at 777-2515 or [shaimanj@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:shaimanj@gwm.sc.edu).



Storyboard Scene 15, still image, Silhouette of  
Florestine Kinchen sewing her dresses at home  
From *The Florestine Collection*, 2001  
Helen Hill  
Collection of Helen Hill and Paul Gailunas



Storyboard Scene 23 still image, Hands: Florestine  
Kinchen sewing—Helen Hill hand processing film  
From *The Florestine Collection*, 2001  
Helen Hill  
Collection of Helen Hill and Paul Gailunas

## Blossom Into Spring with McKissick Museum



The McKissick Museum Advisory Council is pleased to announce our 14th annual spring gala, "Spring for Art!" The gala will be held on Friday, March 28, 2008, at the McKissick Museum on the University's historic Horseshoe. The gala is an excellent opportunity to support the museum's program efforts.

McKissick holds two fund raisers each year to support acquisitions and public programs. Past themes include "Fool for Art," "Art on the Half Shell," "The Elegant Egg," "The Splendor of the Box," and "The Beautiful and the Damned." The gala features 50 artists with strong S.C. ties. Works are available for sale with a portion of proceeds directly benefiting McKissick Museum. "Spring for Art!" provides a unique opportunity to interact with the artists and form a connection between the artist and his or her works.

Tickets for the gala are \$55 for individuals, or \$100 per couple. For tickets or sponsorships, please call 803-777-7251 or e-mail Ja-Nae Epps at [jmepps0@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:jmepps0@gwm.sc.edu).





Selection of gastropod shells from the McKissick Collection

## She Sees Seashells

Shell collecting has existed for as long as there have been beaches and people. Archaeologists have discovered shell necklaces in the remains of most cultures, from ancient China to the Incas. During the Renaissance, collectors filled their cabinets with prized and exotic specimens from the ocean depths. What summer vacation at the shore is complete without that collection of prized, though often surf-worn and bleached-out, shells?

Shells have been used for more than just decoration and display, however. They are an important food source and are used as currency or musical instruments in some cultures. Shells are also widely used as sources of personal adornment. Carved cameos, pearl jewelry, and shell buttons are all by-products of seashells.

Beginning on May 10, selections from McKissick Museum's extensive shell collections will be on display. Assembled by a number of collectors, including former volunteer John Downing, the McKissick holdings contain examples of both local and international specimens. Behold the physical beauty and diversity of the shell family (mollusks) in which there are estimated to be more than 100,000 species worldwide, many still uncataloged by scientists.

## Celebrating the Life and Work of Evelyn George

Evelyn George, a practitioner of Catawba cultural traditions and master potter, passed away at the age of 93 on Dec. 9, 2007. Born in 1914 to Edith Bertha Harris Brown and Early Morgan Brown, she became a potter like her mother. George was designated a master potter by the Catawba Indian Nation. She also taught dance to the Catawba children, including Catawba Chief Donald Rodgers. While she learned the art of the potter as a young child, it was in the 1970s that she worked more frequently as a potter. George continued to work until about five months ago.

In 2004, Mrs. George received the Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Award for her work preserving Catawba pottery. While McKissick Museum has the work of her daughter, Susan George, in the collection, we lack any signed work by Evelyn George. This is a gap in our collections that we would like to fill. Anyone interested in funding the purchase of an Evelyn George piece is encouraged to contact McKissick's folklife department.



Evelyn George, 1914–2007

## Grandeur Saved: Photographs of the Aiken-Rhett House by Micheal Eastman



Sitting Room, Charleston, 2005,  
By Michael Eastman (American, b. 1947)  
Courtesy of the artist

Michael Eastman has captured much of the history and patina of the Aiken-Rhett House in his series of 16 large-format photographs. This Charleston landmark was owned by Governor and Mrs. William Aiken Jr. and his family for more than 150 years. It has a long and colorful history as a private residence and has been operated as a historic house museum first by The Charleston Museum and by the Historic Charleston Foundation since 1996. McKissick Museum

will display Aiken family silver, china, and other decorative art objects, including a miniature of William Aiken Jr., completed a few years after his graduation from South Carolina College in 1825. These objects are graciously on loan from the Historic Charleston Foundation.

Eastman, an internationally recognized photographer, was drawn to the house for many reasons—the richness of the interior surfaces, its “unrestored” state, the building's architecture, and the natural light. Eastman used long exposures to capture the nuances of the natural light. He photographed the house in spring 2005 and 2006.

The Aiken-Rhett House stands as one of the most significant, intact antebellum, urban residences in the South, with its elaborate stables, kitchen house, and slave quarters that have not been significantly altered for residential use. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is being conserved as part of a “Save America's Treasures” grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Services. The exhibit was organized by the Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, S.C.

*Grandeur Saved* will run through April 26, 2008. For more information on Michael Eastman, please visit [www.eastmanimages.com](http://www.eastmanimages.com).



Stairway, Charleston, 2005  
By Michael Eastman (American, b. 1947)  
Courtesy of the artist



## McKissick Welcomes New Staff

McKissick welcomes a new staff member, Ja-Nae M. Epps. Ja-Nae joins the museum team to guide our Web site applications and to develop other audience services and communications. Informing people about the museum's collections, exhibitions, and services is one of our major goals for 2008.



Ja-Nae M. Epps

Ja-Nae comes to McKissick from the University's Institute for Families in Society. She has been an active member of the University community and is committed to community service. A native of Whitmire, S.C., her interests and active volunteer efforts made her a perfect match with McKissick's focus on Southern communities. Ja-Nae attended Carolina as an undergraduate student and received a Master of Arts degree in strategic communication and leadership from Seton Hall University in New Jersey.

## Events

Join us for refreshments and special tours of the exhibition *Grandeur Saved* on Friday, Feb. 22, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

**"Spring for Art!" 2008 McKissick Museum fund raiser,** March 28, 2008: 7:30–10 p.m.

Tickets: \$55 per individual; \$100 per couple. Reservations are required. Call 803-777-7251.

## Exhibitions

***A Call for All: The Great War Summons the Palmetto State*** through March 14, 2008

***Natural Curiosity: USC and the Evolution of Scientific Inquiry into the Natural World***  
a semipermanent installation

***Grandeur Saved:***  
*Photographs of the Aiken-Rhett House by Michael Eastman*  
Jan. 26–April 26, 2008

***The Dresses of Florestine Kinchen:***  
*A tribute to filmmaker Helen Hill*  
May 3–Aug. 23, 2008

***Barbecue Joints and The Good Folks Who Own Them***  
May 10–July 19, 2008

***Generations:***  
*African American Camp Meetings in the Carolinas*  
Aug. 16, 2008–Jan. 31, 2009

***Carrying the State:***  
*South Carolina's Role in Presidential Elections*  
Sept. 13, 2008–Jan. 24, 2009



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## Telling the Story of Southern Life ... Community, Culture, and the Environment



The McKissick Museum is located at the head of the University of South Carolina's historic Horseshoe in the heart of campus. All exhibitions are free and open to the public.

Gallery hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The museum is open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays. McKissick is closed on Sundays. Metered parking is available on all adjacent streets and in the lower level of Pendleton Street Garage.

A number of volunteer opportunities are available at the McKissick Museum. Call 803-777-7251 for information on membership, tours, programs, and exhibits. Visit us on the Internet at [www.cas.sc.edu/mcks](http://www.cas.sc.edu/mcks).

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