

12-2003

Under the Dome - December 2003

McKissick Museum--University of South Carolina

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UNDER *the* DOME

McKISSICK MUSEUM NEWSLETTER • DECEMBER 2003

ZELDA

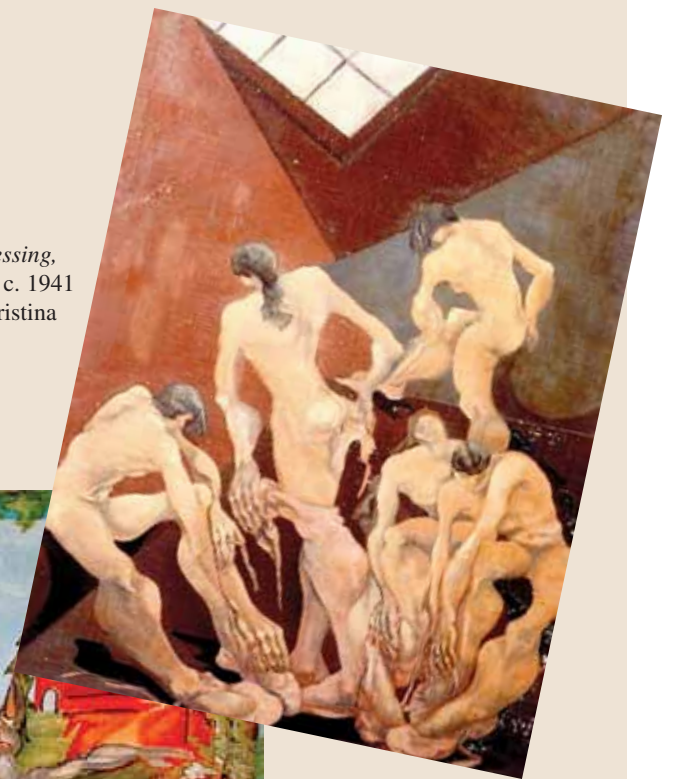


Times Square, Gouache on paper, c. 1944
Courtesy of Samuel J. Lanahan



A Mad Tea-Party, Gouache on paper, Undated, Courtesy of Eleanor Lanahan

Ballerinas Dressing,
Oil on canvas, c. 1941
Courtesy of Kristina
Kalman Fares



“You’ve got to come and tell me how I was. Now I see odd things, people’s arms too long or their faces as if they were stuffed and they look tiny and far away, or suddenly out of proportion,” Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald pleaded to her husband, F. Scott Fitzgerald, in the midst of one of her nervous breakdowns. Plagued by schizophrenia, Zelda applied herself to a regimen of art therapy to cope with the world around her.

The young and free-spirited Zelda married Scott in April of 1920. With the success of his literary career, the couple quickly became the embodiment of the Jazz Age, and she became perhaps the most famous American “flapper.” Living a life of wealthy extravagance, the couple continually moved between America and Europe. Interested in the arts, Zelda began seriously studying ballet in her late 20s. The stress of mastering this demanding dance form may have contributed to her nervous breakdown in 1930.

Under the advisement of her doctors, Zelda took up painting two hours per day as a form of therapy. She exhibited her paintings and

drawings in 1934 at the Cary Ross Gallery in New York. To encourage his wife’s artistic accomplishments, Scott had been the primary planner of the event. In 1940, Zelda was stable enough to move back to her hometown of Montgomery, Alabama. She continued her artistic pursuits, but was estranged from her husband until his death later that same year. In 1947, Zelda was placed back in a mental institution only to tragically die a few months later in a hospital fire.

A collection of 54 framed watercolors, as well as a portion of Zelda’s paper-doll constructions, will be on display at the McKissick Museum beginning February 15, 2004, as part of a traveling exhibit organized by International Arts and Artists, Washington, D.C. The images include nostalgic scenes from her life during the Jazz Age, fantasy pieces that revolve around well-known fairy tales, and biblical works that were created toward the end of her life when she was struck by a religious fervor. *Zelda By Herself: The Art of Zelda Fitzgerald* will run through April 11, 2004.

McKissick Around the Nation

In keeping with our tradition of making research and resulting exhibitions available to a broader audience, McKissick has a number of exhibits traveling around the nation, both this year and next. Several previous traveling exhibits will return to circulation during the next year.

Current Traveling Exhibit

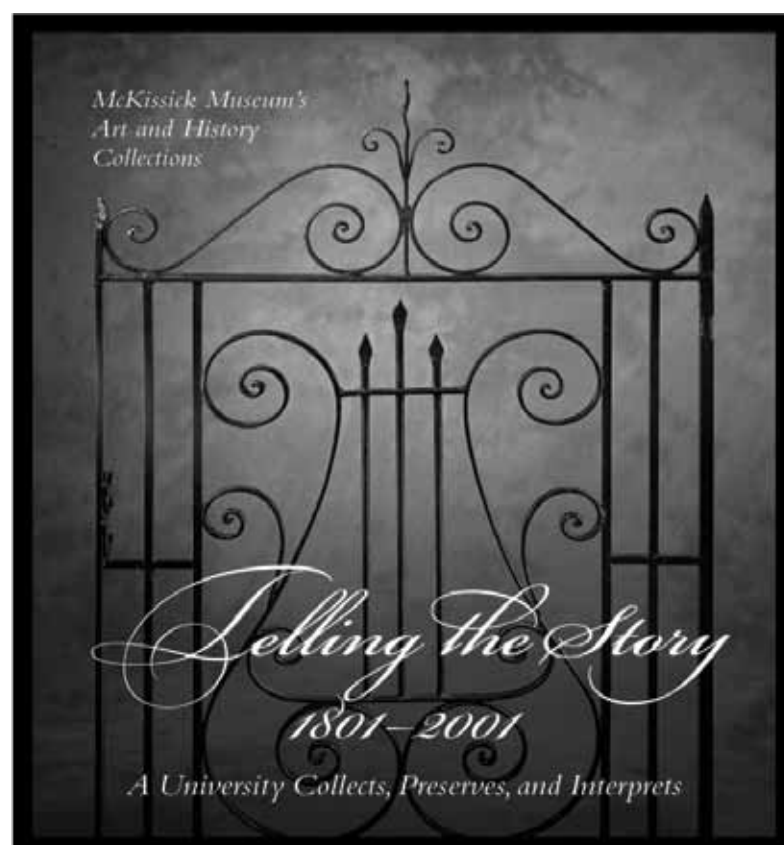
A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life
Levine Museum of the New South, Charlotte, N.C.
(September 14–November 29, 2003)

Upcoming Traveling Exhibits

The Middle Passage: White Ships, Black Cargo
DuSable Museum of African-American History, Chicago, Ill.
(April 3–July 19, 2004)
African-American Museum in Philadelphia, Pa.
(September 30–December 12, 2004)
Carolina Country: Early Radio in South Carolina
Horry County Museum, Conway, S.C. (April 1–May 28, 2004)
The Museum, Greenwood, S.C. (June 12–August 7, 2004)
A Soldier's Legacy: The Life and Music of Ralph Smith
Anderson County Museum, Anderson, S.C. (March 2–April 23, 2004)
Newport-Cocke County Museum, Newport, Tenn. (Summer 2004)
Posters of the Great War
USC Medford Library, Lancaster, S.C. (February 1–February 29, 2004)

For more information on the locations and dates of upcoming traveling exhibits, please see the Traveling Exhibitions Web page at www.cla.sc.edu/MCKS/html/exhib.htm#Traveling.

Telling the Story



1801–2001

A UNIVERSITY COLLECTS, PRESERVES,
AND INTERPRETS

Telling the Story, a soon to be released publication, provides a comprehensive look at the McKissick Museum's history and collections. Filled with beautiful color illustrations, the catalog highlights a small but significant portion of the museum's extensive holdings.

Although McKissick was not established until 1976, the University's collecting activities date to its founding in the early 19th century. It was the only repository for museum artifacts in South Carolina other than the Charleston Museum. Essays provided by former museum director, Dr. George Terry, as well as past and current curators, explore how these early collections guided the direction of the museum's mission and current collecting goals.

From the Director



Dear Museum Friends,

It has been a challenging year for the McKissick Museum. The local impact of the financial woes of our nation has tested the resolve of the staff in working toward our mission. It has been a year of tearful goodbyes. Artist and friend Tom Feelings died in September. Less tragic but also emotional was the departure of five museum staff members at the end of the summer.

On a brighter note the museum fund raiser, "Blues, Bluegrass and BBQ," was a strong success and allowed us to add a number of important objects to the collections. The related exhibition, "Considerable Grace," displaying 15 years of the state Folk Heritage Awards, drew strong attendance as did "Sharing the Chores," "Posters of the Great War" with Thomas Cooper Library, and "Palmetto Silver: Riches of the South."

Palmetto Silver was further documented in a beautiful catalog published by USC Press. The first catalog of the museum's permanent collections will also be available early in the new year.

As McKissick looks toward the continuing challenges of this still new century, the staff is exploring ways to better use technology and existing University resources to interpret and teach about our region. We embarked on a major project to develop a comprehensive Web site on folklife and material culture. We also launched another new initiative to encourage faculty to use museum collections for teaching and exhibition projects. We join with all other cultural institutions in our desire to build a stronger mission of service in these times of strained resources.

Lynn Robertson
Executive Director
McKissick Museum

Folklife Awarded Major Federal Grant

Through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the McKissick Museum has initiated a three-year project titled “Digital Traditions: Public Access Initiative for Folklife and Material Culture.” This project will allow the museum to merge the material culture collections with research documentation in McKissick’s Folklife Resource Center into a wholly digital resource. It will incorporate image, audio, and video technology in a comprehensive Web-based application.

The museum houses unmatched resources in a variety of media formats, some more stable than others. The demand for these resources increasingly comes in the form of requests for materials in electronic format. The Internet is one of the most effective and efficient tools for disseminating information—providing research resources and imagery in a format that complements traditional exhibitions and on-site programs. High-demand materials on CDs and DVDs will supplement Web-based sound, image, video, and text files.

Two main goals will be addressed through this project. First, the Folklife Resource Center will have audio, video, and image editing capability. Used as a training tool for University students, this equipment will digitize many formats held in the archive, creating a comprehensive digital collection. This process will address education, preservation, and accessibility issues. Second, the museum Web site will be an accessible research tool, allowing off-site visitors the ability to search databases, listen to audio and video clips, look at objects in the museum’s collections, and tour virtual exhibits. As part of the museum’s strategic plan, the initiative could become a model project in building public access to regional resources.



Southern Stews, exhibit and documentary film project, 2002.



The archive holds hundreds of tape reels, some dating to the 1950s.



George Herron

The Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Award

It’s that time of year again! The Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Award is a nomination-based program. The award is successful only because people throughout the state take the time to nominate folk artists for the award. Created by the South Carolina Legislature in 1987, the award recognizes lifetime achievement in folk art and folk arts advocacy. The award honors individuals or groups who have used their lives to create beauty and meaning for their communities in ways that have lasted, often for hundreds of years. What exactly is folk art? Rooted in family and community activities, folk art can involve song, speech, and dance, music, craft, and cookery—expressive forms of all kinds, communicated directly by observation, imitation, or verbally. Past winners include sweetgrass basketmakers, old-time fiddlers, quilters, and gospel choirs.

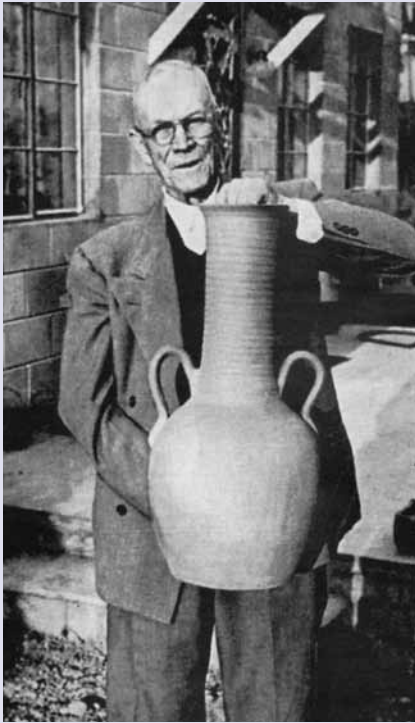
The McKissick Museum has been intimately involved with this process from the beginning. In addition to administering the awards with the South Carolina Arts Commission, the Folklife Resource Center houses all of the nominee support materials and research information. The collections department manages an extensive body of traditional art objects created by award winners. If you know of an outstanding traditional artist, musician, or traditional arts advocate, please contact Saddler Taylor at 803-777-7251 or Craig Stinson at 803-734-8697 for more information and nomination materials.

Exhibitions

"It's Just Mud": Kershaw County Pottery, through January 18, 2004

Considerable Grace: Fifteen Years of the South Carolina Folk Heritage Awards, through April 2004

Zelda By Herself: The Art of Zelda Fitzgerald, February 15 through April 11, 2004



Guy Daughtery

Activities

The series of Traditional Crafts Workshops will continue this spring. Earlier workshops in applique and pieced quilting, Gullah grass-doll making, woodcarving, and sweetgrass basketmaking were very successful. The two spring offerings are in the planning stages at present, and more information will be available early in the new year. Participants in the workshops will learn basic techniques from masters of their trades, while creating a functional piece of art to take home. Contact the museum's educational services department at 803-777-7251 to find out about the spring workshops and to register.

Start thinking about summer plans for your child now. McKissick enjoyed the most successful summer camp experience ever in 2003; all classes were filled to capacity and campers had great fun. Class size is limited to the first 17 students and registrations for the camps fill up fast, so make your plans early this spring—by May space may not be available! The museum offers a variety of educational and fun experiences that reflect our mission to focus on Southern culture, community, and the environment. Classes offered include art, archaeology, geology, and nature study. All camps consist of one-week sessions lasting from 8:30 a.m. until noon and include many outdoor activities around the USC campus. The teachers are all professionals in their respective fields and provide unique learning opportunities for young minds. Watch for the summer camp flyer after the start of the new year, and call the curator of educational services, Alice Bouknight, at 803-777-7251 for information or to register.



College of Liberal Arts
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

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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 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. The museum is open until 7 p.m. on Thursdays and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sundays. McKissick is closed on Mondays and Saturdays. 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.cla.sc.edu/mcks/index.html.

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