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“Aaron Hernandez may have been a well-known New England Patriots football player; however, in the end, the jury found that he was just a man who committed a brutal murder.”
— District Attorney Thomas Quinn outside the courthouse where Hernandez was convicted

“It was an emotional moment, the head teacher spoke words of compassion. You could see the seriousness on the faces of the children. So indeed it’s not your regular opening of school year as normally experienced.”
— Roeland Monash, the head of UNICEF in Sierra Leone, on the children of Sierra Leone returning to school after a nine month break due to Ebola

“We as law students cannot and will not sit idly by while the rights of Americans are infringed upon and lives are senselessly lost.”
— Sonia Canzater, a law student at USC and the president of USC’s NBLSA chapter, at USC’s protest in honor of the shooting of Walter Scott

“I have heard some suggest that I should step aside and wait my turn, but I cannot.”
— Senator Marco Rubio in his announcement that he will be running for president in 2016
Cynthia Boiter is a writer, editor, publisher and arts advocate. In 2014, she won an Elizabeth O’Neill Verner Award from the South Carolina Arts Commission for her work cultivating an “interdisciplinary and collaborative aesthetic” and promoting cultural growth in the Midlands and greater South Carolina. She and her husband, Bob Jolley, founded Muddy Ford Press, a press that publishes South Carolina writers and poets. Muddy Ford’s main publication is Jasper Magazine: The Word On Columbia Arts, a bimonthly magazine that focuses on local artists and interdisciplinary arts appreciation.

**The Daily Gamecock:** What about Columbia inspired you to create Jasper Magazine?

**Cynthia Boiter:** Columbia is replete with artists from almost all disciplines, but in many ways prior to Jasper we were lacking a sense of community — a sense of knowing who the people in town were who had an artist’s back. I hope that, with Jasper, our artists feel more connected to one another and to the arts patrons who honor them since Jasper came along four years ago. I also hope that artists feel a bit more valued and validated — because that’s what Jasper is here for.

**DG:** Why do you think many people don’t know about Columbia’s art scene?

**CB:** Not everyone is raised with the arts being a part of their lives. Or they think that art should get about the same amount of attention the typical South Carolina public school system gives it — an hour or less a week each of music and visual art, with no attention whatsoever to art history or theory, and drama and dance being something extracurricular. When this happens, people aren’t necessarily comfortable with the arts, and sometimes the arts may be so foreign to a person that they are intimidated by them and don’t know how to incorporate art into their daily lives. If art isn’t part of your life ... it’s easy to overlook the artists, artisans and craftspersons who are part of your community. Non-arts folks also seem to think of art solely as painting — which is just a small portion of the visual arts — without remembering all the facets of music composition and performance, dance, theatre, film, photography, design and so on.

**DG:** Do you think Jasper and Columbia’s art scene has a symbiotic relationship?

**CB:** I like to think so. It certainly feels like Jasper and the Columbia arts scene have grown alongside one another. And that’s why so many of us are involved in Jasper. We want to live in a community that needs and supports a magazine like Jasper. We are creating the culture we want to live in.

**DG:** Describe your ideal night out in Columbia.

**CB:** OK, I’d start off sitting outside with a drink and some friends at one of the city’s great places to people watch, enjoy the weather, and chat with friends — maybe Hunter-Gatherer or Bourbon. Then I’d go to a gallery exhibit opening, somewhere like Vista Studios Gallery 80808, Anastasia & Friends or Tapp’s Arts Center where I’d get to celebrate some new art and all that bubbling energy that comes off of a new collection of work and how it stimulates and inspires everyone around it. Then I’d just make it into my seat at Trustus Theatre where I’d see a New York City-quality play and visit with friends at intermission and afterwards. And I’d end the night, of course, at The Whig where I would eat late with my family and extended family of friends, sipping one of Will Green’s delicious cocktail concoctions until Joy or Steve or Darien or Matt turns all the lights on and makes me go home.
Pieces of the past help interpret the now

Emma Jardine  
@EMMAVJARDINE

Charleston native Julie Henson warns viewers of her art show at Indie Grits to steer themselves for “some confusing images.” Her display, Parallel Horizons, explores interpretations of the future by using a spread of magazines from the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s. Each of Henson’s pieces aims to show how past generations of Americans envisioned the future, giving today’s viewers an interesting mix of déjà vu and clairvoyance — she uses things from the past to depict her view of future.

This is the College of Charleston grad’s first year showing at Indie Grits, and she said her work takes on a lot of forms and often changes depending on the exhibition venue’s focus. In this case, Indie Grits showcases videos, sculptures, outdoor art installations, drawings and images.

“It takes intelligence, awareness, innovation, but most importantly dedication and some serious hard work,” she said.

Henson said she’s really impressed with this year’s group of artists and stressed that people should attend the events because “you may get the chance to think about something new or see your own personal ideas in a new light.”

Henson aspires to evoke a sense of wonder and uneasiness with her work and aims to make her work both recognizable and foreign — some of her biggest inspirations include Mike Kelley, Pierre Huyghe and Robert Heinecken. She said she spends a lot of time looking at advertising images, trying to stay in tune with pop culture and researching a variety of popular religions to create her designs.

“The greatest impact art has had on my life is in the way I look at the world around me,” she said.

Studying art has shown Henson how to be observant and engage in her community’s strengths and weaknesses, while inspiring her to help make her community a better place.

Being an artist takes work, she said, but it’s not any more difficult than being an entrepreneur.

Henson finds joy in getting the chance to communicate her views and perspectives and having other people engage with them. She takes pride in her work and finds it upsetting when people do not take artists seriously or believing they have chosen an easy career path.

“You just have to work hard on your ideas,” she said, “and be a little creative about making the money appear.”
Weekend Calendar:
April 17 to 19

Friday

HAPPY HOUR HISTORY TOUR: FIVE POINTS
The fountain in Five Points, Harden Street
Fri, 5:30 p.m., $25
Learn how a trolley hub grew to be one of the most popular nightlife scenes in Columbia. This walking tour presented by Historic Columbia will feature information about the local history and architecture. Admission includes two cocktails and appetizers throughout the tour.

10TH ANNUAL BALLET STARS OF NEW YORK GALA PERFORMANCE
Koger Center for the Arts, 1051 Greene St.
Fri, 7 p.m., $15-$35
USC Dance Company instructor Stacey Calvert, a former soloist at the NYC Ballet, will stage a performance with both dancers from USC’s dance program and the NYC Ballet. The gala performance will feature seven principal dancers from the NYC Ballet, as well as four ballet pieces from the NYC’s repertoire.

Saturday

HIP HOP FAMILY DAY
1700 Block of Main St.
Sat, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Free
Part of Indie Grits and created by Love, Peace and Hip Hop,Hip Hop Family Day aims to shed light on southeastern hip hop culture. The day will be filled with music and activities suitable for people of all ages. The three headlining artists are Nice & Smooth, Monie Love and Big Gipp of the Goodie Mob.

COLUMBIA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
State Fairgrounds, 1200 Rosewood Drive
Sat, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sun, noon to 6 p.m., $7
The 20th Annual Columbia International Festival will host more than 60 exhibitors. Walk from booth to booth to sample authentic, ethnic food from all over the world, shop for clothing and trinkets and enjoy all the different cultures.

Sunday

SLOW FOOD AT INDIE GRITS
711 Whaley St.
Sun, 3 p.m., $25
Presented by Indie Grits and Slow Food Columbia, the festival invites attendees to sample “food that is good for them, good for the people who grow it and good for the planet” — which is the ultimate goal of Slow Food Columbia. Each dish will include at least one local, sustainable ingredient. Chefs at Slow Food Columbia take pride in their resourceful, but creative cooking. Anyone who brings their own potluck dish will be admitted for a reduced price.

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Artist brings surreal elements to domestic setting

Emily Olyarchuk @TDG_ARTS

For the ninth year in a row, Indie Grits has brought the Columbia community many new experiences, films, events, digital apps and this time, visual artists.

The festival is constantly looking for new opportunities to expand and offer even more to the community. This year, Indie Grits has launched its first visual artists program, which offered a few select participants resident artist positions during the festival.

One of these specially selected artists is Megan Stein, a sculptor, animator and performance artist from Durham, North Carolina.

Stein arrived in Columbia for the first time on Saturday, April 11, to begin her week-long program at the Nickelodeon. Other than installing her personal works, Stein created new sculptures that will be given to the winners of the festival’s nine filmmaker awards. The sculptures are what Stein calls “lollypop creatures,” little abstract creatures that represent Stein’s artistic style and inspiration. Captivated by deep sea creatures and the fantastic qualities of real animals on the planet, Stein combines these natural inspirations with science fiction influences and brings them into the domestic setting. What does this mean? Stein actually uses pieces of furniture and other objects from common domestic spaces in her art installations along with the fantastical creatures. While many of Stein’s works incorporate the “unknown,” they often bring the viewer to a place of familiarity by establishing themselves in common settings like someone’s living room.

“They can be unnerving but also bring people to a place of exploration in their thoughts,” Stein said. “When combined with domestic materials, they provoke us to think about the psychological beliefs that come up in domestic spaces.”

Unlike most sculptures, Stein’s pieces do not just stand on a pedestal. She carries her sculptures into new spaces and creates interactive environments that further require audiences to assess their preconceptions and psychological experiences. She will be incorporating performances with her art installation and during other events of the festival. If you’re lucky, you might catch Stein pushing one of her sculptures around in a baby stroller, or if you visited the art opening at Tapp’s Art Center Thursday night, you may have seen her turn her handmade sculptures into aquarium creatures and lead a guided tour of the aquarium.

“I was an aquarium guide teaching people how to touch them,” she said. “I model it after the idea that there is a right and a wrong way to touch a creature like they really do in aquariums.”

Stein is a graduate from the University of North Carolina where she received a bachelor’s degree in philosophy and a master of fine arts in studio art. She first learned about the Indie Grits festival through friends.

“It sounded like an energetic and exciting festival, and I just wanted to be a part of it,” she said. “So, I applied to have my sculptures, performances and animation screen during the festival.”

Stein’s thought-provoking sculptures are on display at Tapp’s throughout the five days of the festival, and you can still catch one of her spontaneous performances. Her film, an animation of a living room coming to life with odd creatures, is a part of the Four Minute Film Frenzy playing at 4 p.m. on Saturday in the Nickelodeon’s new theater.

Stein’s unique artistic style and multimedia involvement with the festival is a strong representation of what Indie Grits is about. Even as the festival continues to grow, its image as an innovative D.I.Y. festival dedicated to representing talented southeastern artists will never be lost.

“I genuinely enjoy going to work every day. And I always go home feeling good about it.”

Choose Special Education.
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It's “more than just a movie theater.”
That's how the Nickelodeon — or simply, the Nick — describes itself. The Nick has come a long way since it was founded in 1979 by Carl Davis and Linda O’Connor, both USC students at the time. It started out as a place where cinephiles could come view and talk about films, staffed entirely by volunteers. Today, the Nick shows independent films and specialized screenings, boasts its own film festival and supports local media-literacy programs.

The Nickelodeon is South Carolina's only non-profit art house theater. Its relocation in 2012 from 937 Main St. to 1607 Main St. completely revived Columbia’s Main Street, where it now attracts over 35,000 visitors to the area annually. The Nick is a cultural oasis in Columbia, but its single 100-seat theater put a constraint on an otherwise limitless creative powerhouse.

That constraint was lifted this week.

The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Theater, along with more employee offices, was finally completed Tuesday. Located on the second floor of The Nickelodeon, this second theater has been in the works for years, according to Executive Director Andy Smith.

“In some ways, we’ve been working for a decade at the Nickelodeon to get to this point. It's exciting to know that with this theater opening, we’ll be able to fully realize our goal of being more than just a movie theater,” Smith said. “With even more media literacy education opportunities and more room to screen first-run films, we’ll also be able to delve deeper into more programming that you just won’t find elsewhere.”

The Nick already does a lot for Columbia’s arts community, giving people a place to gather, learn and discuss. The second theater will allow for more discussion-based screenings and let the Nick run successful films longer — before, films generally ran for two weeks or less. The Nick has seen remarkable growth in the past ten years — over 42,000 patrons visited the Nick in 2014 — and that trend should continue with the addition of the second theater.

“Peer theaters to the Nick see an average attendance increase of over 100 percent when they add an additional screen, which will increase our revenue and budget, and effectively make a dramatic impact on the kinds of additional programming we can offer,” Smith said. “The use of this second screen means that attendance at the Nick next year should double to 80,000. And because every person that comes to the Nick spends an average of $30 downtown before or after seeing a film, the increased attendance means that the Nick should cause an economic impact of nearly $2.5 million in direct spending for the Nick’s neighbors on Main Street.”

The renovations will help not only the Nick’s community, but South Carolina as a whole — the second-floor offices create more space for the Helen Hill Media Education Center, the Nick’s educational outreach program. The Helen Hill Center gives budding film and media artists the skills they need to create their art. The program includes field trips, after-school classes and summer camps that teach kids how to use film equipment and become versed in the filmmaking vocabulary.

“We’re working to foster the skills necessary to be an active citizen in our increasingly media-heavy society,” Smith said. “Having more space inside the Nickelodeon will give the Helen Hill Center
Expansion inspired by the second theater is already at work in this year's Indie Grits, the film, music, media and tech festival created by the Nick in 2007. For the first time, Indie Grits has a theme — Future Perfect — and has included visual arts as a part of the festival. The festival, which began Wednesday and ends Sunday, has multiple screens showing films at all times to provide as much exposure to southeastern filmmakers as possible. This is the first year the Nick will screen all the films in-house, in addition to the Mini-Cine, a storage unit they repurposed into a miniature movie theater for the festival.

“For years we've had to screen Indie Grits films at other locations in addition to the Nick,” Smith said. “We've really enjoyed and appreciated being able to use nearby facilities like Tapp's Arts Center for screening films, but we're excited to see how screening all films at the Nick changes the feel of the festival. We have the equipment and sound and screening technology to really show films in the best possible manner, and it's nice to have all of the films under one roof.”

It was important to the Nick to maintain the decor of the Fox Theatre — the original theater of 1607 Main St. — in their upstairs renovations. Built in the 1960s, the Fox Theatre building is Columbia's only remaining arthouse theater, many of which used to populate Main Street. Preserving its red velvet curtains and art deco elements was essential in keeping with the original reason the Nickelodeon was created: a love of the past and a love of the movies.
We can’t talk about local arts without mentioning the legendary Chicken Man. If you’ve ever driven through Five Points or been to local restaurants, you’ve seen his work. With over 15,000 paintings circulating around Columbia, The Chicken Man has become one of the city’s most recognized artists.

The Chicken Man, also known as Ernest Lee, parks his studio on wheels on the corner of Gervais and Harden streets almost every day. Lee says customers are constantly stopping him to talk to him and buy his artwork.

Lee paints unique images of chickens in human situations. Among his most requested pieces are the chicken man, chicken weddings and his iconic logo of the chicken head.

Although a lot of people think his chicken artwork was inspired by the USC mascot, that’s not the case. Lee admits he is a USC fan, but says he owned chickens in his hometown of Edgefield, South Carolina and was inspired to paint them.

“I gave away about 70 paintings when I first started, but then people started requested them so I started to sell them," Lee said.

He admits that when he first started painting chickens, he was skeptical that people would want to buy them.

“They sell around here because people like the Gamecocks,” Lee said.

His painting of the chicken man has become his most beloved piece of artwork. However, he does not limit his work to just chickens. He first began painting country scenes. He also paints palmetto trees and famous people, such as Stevie Wonder and James Brown. He has been known to take requests and paint them at his mobile studio.

“I paint right here on the spot,” Lee said. “I try to make what they want. I paint wedding chickens, flamingos, pretty much whatever they want.”

Lee started drawing when he was just five years old and began painting at 11. Over the years, he’s taken art classes in Virginia and spent 10 years painting in Washington, D.C., where his art was exhibited in the Martin Luther King Jr. Library, as well as the Gertrude Herbert Institute of Art in Alexandria, Virginia and the Rose Hill Art Center in Aiken, South Carolina.

Lee set up shop in Five Points around 1999, and he’s been there ever since. He is a self-taught artist and has passed his skill down to his son, Scotty Lee.

The younger Lee has been painting for 11 years, ever since he was seven years old. He sells his own style of painting right alongside his father’s.

“When I first started, my chickens looked a lot like [my father’s]. I didn’t want to copy him,” Scotty Lee said. “But I paint cars, chickens and palmetto trees, too.”

Both of Ernest and his father consider themselves to be folk artists, use their art to make a living and feel blessed to do what makes them happy.

“It’s hard,” Lee said. “But at least I’m doing it honest.”

Although Lee is most known for his acrylic painting of chickens in people’s clothing, his personality is where his fame resides. Lee’s stories and conversations are as popular as his art. He says he stays friendly with people because it makes him happy.

“You are supposed to stay blessed and humble,” Lee said. “I came from a long way and had a heart. I know what it’s like to be mad and all that, so I try to be happy. I try to keep it on a spiritual level.”

Lee considers himself lucky to be able to express himself through his paintings and make an honest living. He is well aware of his local popularity and says he gained his reputation from just being himself.

“Be what you are, don’t be what you ain’t,” he said, “because if you be what you ain’t then you ain’t what you are.”
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Antoine William’s mixed media art is visually appealing, but that’s not all it is.

Williams strives to bring culture to Indie Grits, displaying his thought provoking sculptures centered around hierarchy, power and struggles in America that stem from his personal experiences to create a larger conversation and spark social commentary.

“My work is somewhat autobiographical,” he said. “And being from a small town has shaped my perspective.”

This year is Williams’ first time at Indie Grits, but this isn’t his first art show. He has pieces in The Mint Museum of Art, UNC Charlotte’s permanent collection, and in art collector’s homes.

He began creating art when he was young and fairly shy. Unable to verbally communicate confidently, he used art as an outlet to share his opinions with the world. But as he grew older, he knew he wanted this to be a career.

“I’ve always wanted to make really large installations in public spaces. So, when Indie Grits contacted me I was definitely interested,” Williams said. “Also, the theme this year is Future Perfect, which is great for me since I’m thinking of the future and how we as humans will continue to interact and treat one another. Plus, this residency is a great place to meet and hang out with other creative people.”

The subjects of his art range from personal experiences, to current events, to ideologies that may inspire his work. Whatever inspires him turns into art.

“Sometimes, there may be a memory or something that happens in the news, like the policeman in North Charleston shooting the man in his back [eight] times as he ran away, which I have a strong emotional reaction to,” he said. “I attempt to represent those emotions visually by combining images and materials that normally don’t fit together.”

Williams is interested in how science fiction relates to the black experience in America and attempts to communicate this through his sculptures. He has also created a world of gods that help translate the struggles between hierarchy and power.

“My practice is an investigation of my cultural identity through the exploration of power as it relates to social stratification,” William’s artist statement reads. “My desire is to create a variety of pieces which create a mythology on which I question how low income communities of color and their relation with other social classes affect perception and behavior.”

The gods Williams created are versions of animals in current black culture inspired by his experiences in a rural town, his childhood in Red
Springs, North Carolina and watching his friends morph into drug dealers. His artwork embodies how one is simply placed in the social hierarchy and what stems from that.

Williams uses issues in society to create anti-art, which was part of 20th century Dadaism, where lower classes made art that rejected conformity and rejected traditional ideals of exclusion. He said he strives for his art to interest not only the academics in universities, but also the janitors.

“Coming from a small rural town and having parents who were factory workers then going into academia, class became very apparent to me. I use to wonder why I knew more people in jail than college,” he said. “Then I learned of the structural power hierarchy which organizes our places in society. Being able to see how this power structure affect those at the bottom by clipping them at the knees making opportunity and autonomy in life harder to obtain.”

He works with all different mediums according to how well they fit the subject he is creating or the message he is trying to communicate. He uses anything from acrylic and oil paint to ink to collage.

“I also use what are called found objects. I walk around looking for items with interesting shapes, colors and textures,” Williams said. “For instance in the installation at Tapp’s Art Center, I use shards of broken wood used in rail road tracks in one of the pieces.”

Art aficionados can expect to see his solo art exhibition “The Wound and the Knife” in Sumter County Gallery of Art coming April 23. As for Indie Grits, William’s art installations will be displayed in Tapp’s Art Center at the Richland Library.

“But with some of these pieces there is some emotion I’m trying to translate. However, I don’t want to dictate what people take away from my pieces,” Williams said. “Whether they love it or hate it, I just want them to have a meaningful experience with them. Hopefully, my work can be a part of a larger conversation that paints an interesting picture of the times we are living.”
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33 Examine, as produce
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55 Resting place
56 “I didn’t mean to do that” key

DOWN
1 Compound once used as aerosol propellant: Abbr.
2 NPR’s “Science Friday” host
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4 Land in el agua
5 Dry French wine
6 Target in the end zone
7 System ending?
8 Eliciting awe
9 Plead in court, say
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11 Bowler’s target
12 Strengthens
13 Sound from the bull pen
2012’s “The Nazarene” author Sholem
22 Belgian prime minister Di Rupo
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24 Jackman of “Les Misérables” (2012)
28 Sloshed
29 Sáo ___
31 Off ___:
32 NBAer who tweeted “I’m about to retire” in 2011
33 Wrinkly toy
34 Silver-tongued
36 Sloshed
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38 No later than
40 Improvisational piece
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and 43-Across)
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52 Slapstick sidekick
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