

Where Art is Joy

Written by Margaret Evans
Wednesday, 01 August 2012 08:54

Red Piano Too hosts Annual Summer Show, featuring the work of Shirley “SA” Hunter.



No mistake about it - it's summer time on Saint Helena Island with heat 'n more heat at the Red Piano Too Art Gallery's Annual Summer Show. Be sure to mark your calendar for Saturday, August 4, 2012 from 1-5 pm at the gallery "Where Art is Joy." This year's featured artist, Shirley "SA" Hunter has been a gallery "regular" for many years. Hunter, a Florida native,

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relocated to the Georgia Sea Islands at age nine. Her family and The Gullah People would be instrumental as a frame of reference for the type of art she would eventually paint. She classifies her work as, “family life that warms the heart” and “folk art with a twist.”

Shirley’s husband, who died almost five years ago, was her major fan and inspiration. During her husband’s illness and his subsequent death, she lost her interest and inspiration for art. She did not paint for five or six years. Motivation and encouragement from her large support system eventually moved her to return to her passion. She re-emerged to create paintings that are bursting with life and color. These new paintings are happy and delightful celebrations.

Mrs. Hunter is a self taught artist, who began painting in 1995 at age 50. She says she “at first wanted to paint landscapes.” Her work quickly evolved to painting her family memories and the Gullah lifestyle. “I just kept drawing people”, she says. The renowned artist Bill Hendrix, once told her, “Paint what you know and you will grow,” and grow she did. Working in oil paint she has created a wonderful, colorful, and animated collection. Her style draws the viewer into the lives of ordinary people as they go about the activities of daily life. The viewer is drawn in to the point of forming a personal relationship with the subject – getting caught up in the memory and story that Mrs. Hunter so artfully depicts. Gallery owner Mary Inabinett Mack says, “It was a delightful day at The Red Piano Too Art Gallery when we learned that Shirley “S.A.” Hunter was sufficiently motivated to return to creating her “Art that is Joy.”

A large number of “gallery regulars” will join Mrs. Hunter at the Annual Summer Show. Many of the artists are well known to the lowcountry art collector. They include Allen Fireall, James Denmark, Charles Desaussure, Diane Britton-Dunham, Cassandra Gillens, Irene Tison, Helen Stewart, Della Wells, Johnnie Griner, Jeffery Day, James Connor, W.J Wilkie, Victoria Smalls, Reggie Frazier, Mary Hanby, Johnnie Simmons, and Julia Neil. Demetric Denmark, Sonnell Thompson, Cassandra White, Dan Ciecelski, Toni Chireco, Tanya Craig, Bobbi Watson, Jo Watson, and quilter/musician/painter/storyteller Mrs. Dorothy Montgomery to name some.

Authors, always an integral part of the show, will be available to discuss and sign their books. Some of the invited authors are Pierre McGowan, H.H. “Bubba” Von Harten, Earl S. Cooler, Doctor Emory Campbell, Pat Branning, Bonnie Stanard, and Ninti and Kijani Bynum and others.

Former gallery partner, Elayne Scott, has returned to work at the gallery. She says, “The Summer Show provides an opportunity for the many artists exhibiting in the gallery to come together, meet, and exchange ideas.” “Many of the participating artists first exhibited their work

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in The Red Piano Too art Gallery and went on to be nationally and internationally recognized,” gallery owner Mary Inabinett Mack added. At age 75, Mack keeps the gallery open because art has been her passion for over fifty years and because the gallery provides an opportunity for new artists to exhibit their work. The gallery is a showcase for established as well as new artists. The Red Piano Too Art Gallery began twenty years ago and has become a Lowcountry institution, building deeply rooted relationships with the artists, the local community and with visitors from around the world. The “Summer Show”, serves as a public exhibit and as an appreciation day for the artists.”

The Red Piano Too Art Gallery is pleased to announce this year’s Summer Show which is open to the public. We hope to see you there. For more information call The Red Piano Too Art Gallery at (843) 838-2241 or e-mail redpianotoo@islc.net. The Gallery is located at 870 Sea island Parkway, St Helena Island, S.C.

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