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WOODS, JIM McPHAIL

river arts studio stroll

INTERVIEWED BY DENNIS RAY

INTERVIEW WITH *Jeff Pittman*

Residing in the beautiful mountains of Asheville North Carolina, Jeff Pittman is never short on inspiration for his colorful oil paintings.

He is primarily known for his dramatic skies, panoramic mountain vistas, and small town street scenes of Western NC.

Born in Greenville, NC, Jeff grew up observing his father paint rural scenes of eastern and coastal North Carolina. He has taken the artistic impressions he learned early on and applied them to his colorful landscapes, seascapes, and cityscapes.

"I strive to capture the scene in bold, expressive colors that represent the different views of North Carolina as I see it and particularly enjoy the play of light against the downtown buildings, and the ever changing color in the skies and mountain ridges that surround us here."

Rapid River Magazine: Tell us a little about your color pallet and why you chose to work with such vivid colors?

Jeff Pittman: Honestly it was somewhat by accident. My first paintings were dull & lacked any life to them at all as I tended to over-mix colors before placing them on my canvas, so I

decided to mix less on the pallet and more on the canvas & that enabled me to use more paint "straight from the tube" and mix them only as needed.

It wasn't long before I knew I was on to something. I noticed

quickly that people were drawn to the colors as much as they were to the familiar subject matter, so combining the two seemed to strike a chord with many folks.

RRM: When did you decide to become an artist?

JP: It wasn't long after moving to Asheville in the late 90's that I began to explore oil painting. I grew up with art as a major influence but never really gave it a shot until coming to the mountains.... I think the downtown architecture as well as the scenic area as a whole inspired my artistic side.

RRM: Do you paint from photos, on site, memory or a little of each?



Jeff Pittman

JP: For my cityscapes I tend to paint better in my studio while working from several photographs . . . I try to never leave home without a camera in my pocket! For smaller landscape studies I do enjoy painting on location if time permits, but sometimes now I'll go mostly from memory & try different color combinations to capture a sky that I saw that morning, or certain familiar mountain ridges I've seen many times now.

RRM: Tell us a little about working in the River Arts District. How it has changed you as an artist, being surrounded by so many talented people?

JP: I'm still fairly new to the River Arts District, but have enjoyed poking around others' studios and enjoying the vibe of creativity that abounds in the area. Mostly though, I've enjoyed meeting and talking to all the people who come down browsing from studio to studio either on a quest to find the perfect piece, or just stumbling across the RAD while looking for downtown or whatever.

Everyone I meet seems to be quite taken with the area as a whole and finds it fascinating that there are so many artists right there in the River Arts District creating all the time.

RRM: When do you paint and how many hours a day do you create?

JP: Before moving to the RAD studio, I'd work on a piece in my home studio for a few hours here and there. It would seem to take forever to finish, partly because [I'm] juggling an art career and family life but now the kids are a bit older and I'm able to get down to the studio and really focus. While I have no set hours, I do try to spend most of Friday and some Saturday and Sunday afternoons painting at the studio.

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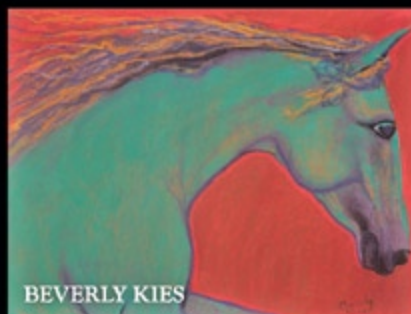
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river arts district studio stroll

Give the Gift of Art

Find Locally Handmade and One-of-a-Kind Works in Asheville's River Arts District

The River Arts District Studio Stroll is the first, largest, and most walkable tour of working artists' studios in the region. Located in 19 historic buildings along the French Broad River, the District also features lots of food and beverage venues.



Catch the free trolley at Riverview Station.

BY JENNY MOORE

\$100 spent in locally-owned independent shops, \$68 returns to the community in taxes, payroll, and other expenditures. If you spend that amount in a national chain, only \$43 returns here, and if you spend it on-line, nothing comes home.

Buying local doesn't just make sense economically, it helps the environment too. We all want to reduce our carbon footprints and buying local is one way to do that. What better way than to do all your holiday shopping in Asheville's River Arts District where all of the work is handmade locally, and many of the materials are sourced locally too.

Buying local has a social aspect too. A gift will mean more when you can talk about seeing it made and meeting the artist. During the Studio Stroll shoppers can see artists at work — turning a clay pot, blowing glass tumblers, caning chairs, painting and sculpting. Some artists have their studios set up to let visitors try their techniques.

On Studio Stroll weekend you can catch the free trolley at any of the eight stops or take a leisurely walk from studio to studio. Demos and activities take place all day. In some studios you can try your hand at different techniques.

Easily accessible from Downtown, West Asheville, and Biltmore Village, the River Arts District offers plenty of free parking. An information booth is located at the 5-points intersection where Depot St. meets Clingman Ave., across from the Clingman Café. Brochures and maps are available at the info booth and in all of the buildings.

Buy Local

According to the 3/50 Project, for every

Constance Williams Gallery & Working Studios

Constance Williams Gallery & Working Studios immerses you in a creative, sensory world of local art. Constance's encaustic paintings — heat-fused pure beeswax, damar tree resin and color — are created right before your eyes in her in-the-round studio on the main floor. Her abstracts, landscapes and tree scenes simply glow on the walls, luminous and welcoming. www.constancewilliamsgallery.com



Constance Williams

Constance is also a hand-built clay sculptor, and her ceramic studio is upstairs alongside on-site artists Jenny Mastin and Greg Vineyard. Jenny's clay sculptures bridge a sacred dialogue between physical and spiritual worlds, referencing cultural myth, folklore and legend (www.jenluma.com). Greg's meditation bowls, communication animals and tiles are about connecting with self, each other and spirit (www.creativewayfinding.byregion.net).

Open to the public seven days, the space is also home to additional on-site and guest artists, and hosts events and monthly shows.

Constance Williams Gallery & Working Studios is located at 9 Riverside Drive, the middle building in CURVE, across from 12 Bones. (828) 225-1762

The Studio Stroll is a great time to come because all of the artists have their studios open. But plan on a return visit — many of the artists are also open seven days a week. Check www.riverartsdistrict.com to find out which businesses in the district are open every day.

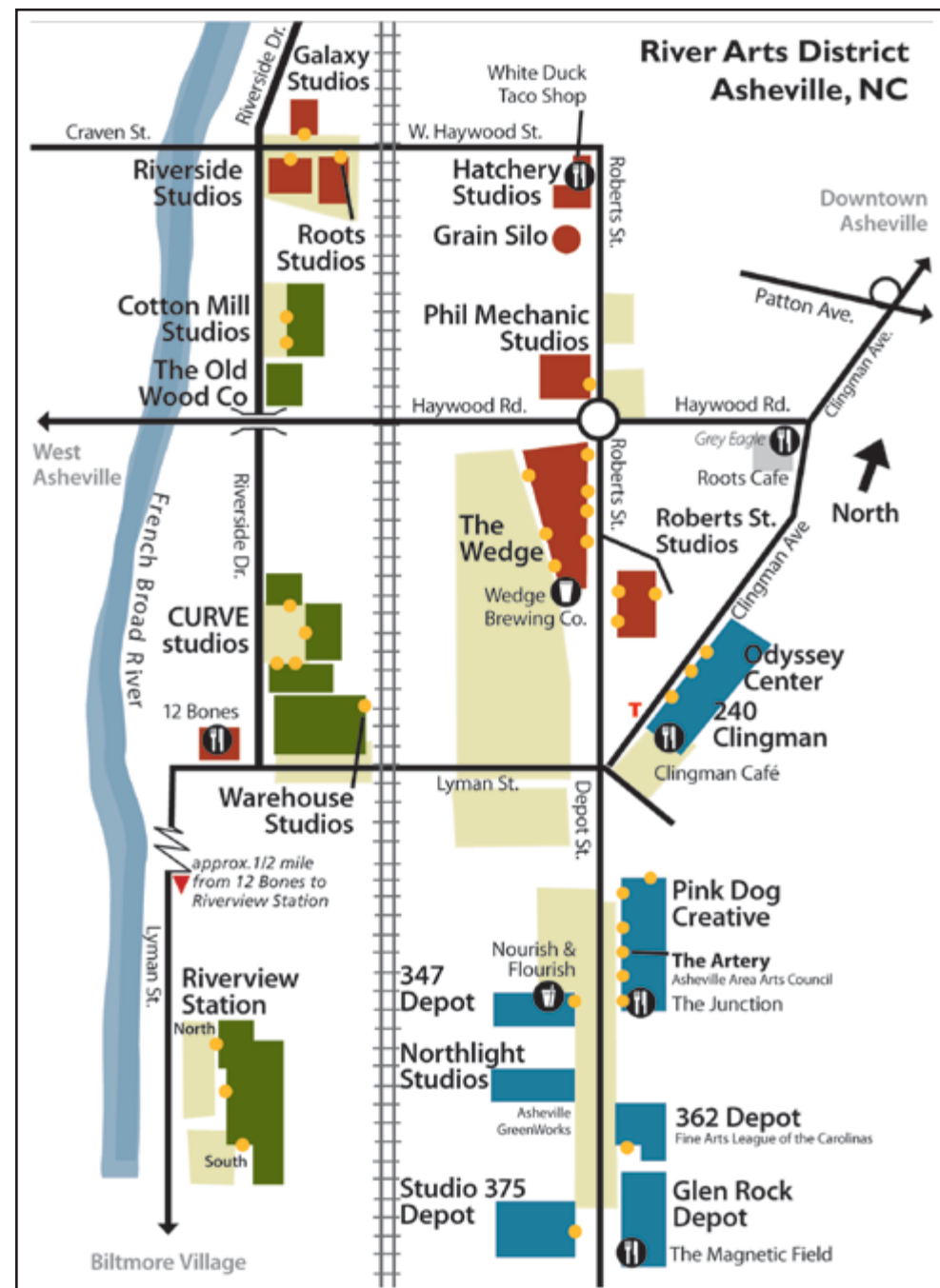


Visit the studios of 163 artists on Saturday, November 12 and Sunday, November 13, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. both days

Go to www.riverartsdistrict.com for special events, directions, and more information.

RIVER ARTS STUDIO BUILDINGS

- * 240 Clingman
- * 347 Depot
- * 97 Roberts Street
- * Cotton Mill Studios
- * CURVE studios
- * Galaxy Studios
- * Hatchery Studios
- * Northlight Studios
- * Odyssey Center
- * The Old Wood Co
- * Phil Mechanic
- * Pink Dog Creative
- * Riverside Studios
- * Riverview Station
- * Roberts St. Studios
- * Roots Studios
- * Studio 375 Depot
- * The Wedge
- * Warehouse Studios



river arts district studio stroll

Flowing Into Fall

BY CHRIS STACK

Fall is a time when artists gather their creative energies and produce some of their deepest, most introspective work. Jonas Gerard is no exception. He has a continuous and impulsive need to search for new ways to dig within, discovering new paths to expression.

The winds of Fall combined with the upcoming River Arts District Studio Stroll have spurred Jonas to search even further outside the realm of traditional artistic technique and his new series Fluid Poetry shows the stunning result. In it he gives up the brush and allows the paint to join the canvas using water as a vehicle. This is not watercolor, but flowing fluid acrylic pigments applied with squeeze bottles and cups directly onto either stretched canvas or open un-stretched canvas, where the col-

ors flow with the undulating curves of their new home.

Inspired by the pioneering work of Paul Jenkins, the mission is one of introspection and of discovering the amazing potential and layers that exist within the psyche. Jonas views abstraction as the only free method to uncover those subtle layers, revealing

the boundless cosmic potential through absolutely astonishing colorful vistas.

"I remember how in the film *Avatar*, the characters could fly in and out of realms of consciousness. When I saw that I said to myself, 'I want to paint that transformation.' I want to travel in and out of worlds of color, creating the illusion of



Jonas Gerard

3D, 4D and even more unlimited dimensions," said Jonas Gerard. "I paint to focus the viewer's attention into those realms and allow them to visit those inner planes."

With canvases laid flat, Jonas uses gravity, forced air, curved blades and even his own hands to channel the fluid paint into motion... always listening to the

colors (that seem to have a mind of their own). The work is done in a totally intuitive, deep listening, and nonintellectual frame of being. The equilibrium between transparency and opacity, between soft edge and hard edge, between light and dark, positive and negative occurs with minimal guidance as the painting paints itself.



Flow 10 by Jonas Gerard

Fluid Poetry splashed onto the Asheville art scene with a color-filled opening reception at Jonas Gerard Fine Art on October 20. The series is on display through November 20, 2011, making them a "must see" during the Studio Stroll on November 12 and 13.

Also during the Studio Stroll, Jonas returns to the vertical canvas and brush for a very special pair of Live Painting Performances. There is one each day of the stroll at 2 p.m., featuring live music by The Billy Sea. The Billy Sea is comprised of Billy Cardine, River Guerguerian and Jake Wolf.

Energized by Billy's recent performance at India's Bangalore International Music Fest, these painting performances promise to be unforgettable explosions of creativity.



Jonas Gerard's gallery and studio is located at 240 Clingman Avenue. Phone (828) 350-7711. For more information visit www.jonasgerard.com.

Asheville, NC

GIVE A Gift of ART

River Arts District

- Open Every Day – Check our calendar online!
- Studio Stroll – November 12 & 13
10am – 6pm 163 artists' studios OPEN

828.280.7709

RiverArtsDistrict.com

*river arts studio stroll*INTERVIEW WITH
PORTRAIT ARTIST*Stephen Janton*

River Arts District artist, Stephen Janton, is best known for his uncanny ability to capture the character of his subjects in his portrait paintings and he is currently exhibiting his recent works during the River Arts Studio Stroll this November. In this interview Janton talks about his artistic practice and his lifelong love of painting.

Rapid River Magazine: How long have you been making art?

Stephen Janton: I have been making art since childhood but developed my art and greater interest in art in high school. My first art teacher trained in Florence and we did all types of artwork from cloisonné to drawing live models. I have developed my painting over the last 25 years.



Reflections
by Stephen Janton

“Little Masters” and the best of the French academic painters of the nineteenth century. They carried oil painting to its highest pinnacle of technical perfection. They explored the use of light and shadow as a means of creating mood and achieving character in their subjects. An important factor in my process is to include the client as much as possible in determining the composition of the painting.

RRM: Is oil paint your preferred medium?

SJ: Right now oil is my preferred medium, however, I have enjoyed painting in egg tempera which has a very luminous quality to it that is great for skin tones. Egg tempera tends to dry very quickly whereas oil will stay wet long enough to make blending a lot easier. Oil allows the painter to make more changes and adjustments throughout the process.

RRM: How would you describe your work?

SJ: I am a realist painter. I really enjoy the challenge of getting a very good likeness of the person I am painting, some would

INTERVIEWED BY DENNIS RAY



Stephen Janton

say my work is somewhat photorealistic. Capturing one's personality is the key to any portrait and a strong likeness helps achieve that.

RRM: All artists experience challenges in their practice. Can you tell us about any you have had?

SJ: Most recently I had a client who lost a son less than a year before she commissioned a portrait of him. She had asked if she could periodically come by to see the progress of the painting. It was a very emotional process and she told me that watching the painting progress helped her in the grieving process. I never want to disappoint a client and I put extra pressure on myself to really make it work for her.

RRM: You are well known for your portrait paintings. Why are portrait paintings still relevant in this age of photography?

SJ: The best question of the day. I think it comes down to the unique qualities of both. The intent of any portrait is to display the likeness, personality, and even the mood of the person. Photographs and painted portraits both achieve these things. However, one very big and obvious difference between them is the “seeing” involved.

The camera has a single eye whereas painters are using two eyes. Portrait artists incorporate the biology of seeing when they paint, thus the outcome and quality is just different because of it. One measure of how good a painting is would be the amount of time the observer observes. Do people spend more time observing a painting than a photograph? Perhaps.

RRM: What are you currently working on?

SJ: I just completed a human figure series and now need to concentrate on a series of commissions for portraits. A majority of the commissions are from individuals who

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PORTRAITS AND PAINTINGS BY
STEPHEN JANTON



RIVERVIEW STATION #211, 191 LYMAN ST. ASHEVILLE, NC
305-588-4564

river arts studio stroll

'Jeff Pittman' continued from page 18

RRM: What are your inspirations?

JP: Interesting skies and never ending mountain views.

RRM: What are your favorite snacks when you are creating?

JP: If it's early, coffee is about all I'll consume while painting, and even then I'm careful not to dip my brushes into the wrong mug! And though I'm located across the street from the Wedge Brewery, I try to refrain from any other consumption until after my work is complete.

RRM: What has been your most exciting moment as an artist?

JP: That's a tough one. I suppose it would have to be either the day when I delivered five large original paintings that had been commissioned for a lobby installation at Ballantyne Corporate Park in Charlotte, or when I received my copy of *Our State Magazine* which had me featured in the Carolina Artists section.



Orange Peel by Jeff Pittman

JEFF PITTMAN

Jeff Pittman resides with his family in the beautiful mountains near Asheville, NC and enjoys using vibrant colors to capture views of his favorite places across the Carolinas. Bold brush strokes give his paintings a feeling of texture and movement while luminous colors create a natural glow. He loves to paint wide mountain vistas with spacious skies, as well as capture the quiet landscapes of rural North Carolina.

Pittman's work has been widely exhibited in juried competitions, art galleries, and can be seen in private and corporate collections throughout North Carolina and beyond.



Trees in Crimson by Jeff Pittman

Jeff Pittman

140-D Roberts Street Studios, Asheville
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River Arts District | Asheville, NC

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'Stephen Janton' continued from page 21

would like a portrait of one or more family members.

RRM: What has been your biggest highlight in your art career?

SJ: Always the biggest highlight is when the completed portrait satisfies the client. I have won awards in juried competitions but to hear from a father who commissioned a painting of his two sons for their mother that the painting brought tears to his wife, nothing beats that.



Nepal Man by Stephen Janton

Janton Art Studio

Riverview Station, 191 Lyman St.,
Studio #211, Asheville, NC 28801
(305) 588-4564, www.jantonart.com

See us at Studio Stroll! Sat, Nov 12 and Sun, Nov 13, from 10 am - 6 pm
+ Group show: "Port-A-Gift-A-Bility!" Nov 12 - Dec 8

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