



Art is in the angle for Scarlett Givner



Patrons sit under the displayed artwork of Scarlett Givner. COURTESY DANELLE GIVNER

Steampunk Rainbow

Photographs by Scarlett Givner

Displayed through July at Local Coffee, 107 Watchung Ave.

Artist reception Thursday, July 12, 6-8 p.m.

Localcoffeemontclair.com

By **GWEN OREL**

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It is the artist's first exhibition. She sat calmly sipping an iced coffee through a straw.

Many artists first show their work on the walls of a coffee shop, and Scarlett Givner is no exception, although she has had a booth at the Walnut Street fair, and sold some prints there.

Her colorful photographs, which take familiar items and see them at unusual angles, with filters and colors layered onto them, are modern and striking.



Scarlett Givner ADAM ANIK/FOR
MONTCLAIR LOCAL

So striking that it's hard to believe the artist will attend Glenfield Middle School in the fall. Scarlett Givner is 13. Her mother Danelle Givner, who frequents Local Coffee, said that the idea for the exhibition began when she noticed that the art on the walls of the shop changed constantly, and asked the owner, Robert Genovese, how her daughter could exhibit.

She sent some images to him, and Genovese quickly agreed. That was back in October, Danelle Givner said.

Danelle Givner isn't an artist, but her grandmother Jessie, Scarlett Givner's great-grandmother, who died at age 100, was. Jessie's work too was full of color.

Local Coffee opened up in February 2017. Genovese said he always intended to showcase artists on his walls. He grew up in Greenwich Village in the 1970s and '80s, which was an area that always supported the arts and artists, he explained.

"When we opened Local Coffee, that was something I took with me. We don't take any commission, We want to encourage people who are not only already artists, but also artists hoping to find a voice," he said.

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Scarlett Givner holds up the tool of her trade. ADAM ANIK/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

Scarlett Givner has been taking photographs for two years. "I was just walking in New York with my mama, and my phone died, and I saw something I really liked, and I really wanted to take a photo.

So I started taking photos with her phone. Whenever I see something, it feels like it has to have a meaning, it all depends on the angle of how I take it. It feels like it has a different meaning or story when I take it with a different angle."

Most of the photos are objects.

"Buildings stand out to me the most," Scarlett said. The title of the exhibition, "Steampunk Rainbow," reflects the artist's interest in pipes and alleys, as well as her love of color. To her, steampunk suggests a factory, pipes and bars.

She and her mother were in an alleyway, and pictures, such as the cat holding a book stood out to her, she said. The picture, "Alley Eyes," hangs on the wall. She taught herself to take pictures, and the pictures on the wall at Local Coffee were all taken with her iPhone 6plus. Now she has an iPhone 8, and expects to take more pictures, she said.



"Alley Eyes" DANELLE GIVNER

Taking pictures in different angles helps show what the objects are, she said. "If I just took a picture of this coffee cup, it would just be a picture of a coffee cup." But at a low angle, she said, you could see the drops around it.

"Sky Ride" is taken through a bicycle wheel.

"Grey Lullaby," which shows a pensive looking statue, was taken in her mother's friend's backyard, Scarlett said.

"Follow the Blue Brick Road," taken in Hoboken, was taken at dusk, which is the artist's favorite time of day.

A chrome effect makes colors pop, Scarlett said.

All the color effects have been done with the editing button on the phone, not with Photoshop.

Right now, she hopes to pursue acting as a career, with photography coming second. She's never taken a photography class, but thinks she might in the future.

"Hungry Ruby" is one of Scarlett Givner's rare pictures with a living being: an extreme closeup of her dog, Ruby. It's the extremity of the close-up that makes the picture unusual, and, Scarlett said, it's one of her favorites.

The picture of the Pomeranian will soon hang on her room. Some of the proceeds from the show will be given to the Montclair Township Animal Shelter.

For Genovese, Scarlett Givner embodies the mission to promote new talent. She's the youngest artist ever to have her work displayed at Local Coffee. "She's finding her way," he said.



"Hungry Ruby" COURTESY DANELLE GIVNER



Matisse provides a respite at the Montclair Art Museum

*“Matisse and American Art”
through June 18*

*“Inspired by Matisse”
through July 29*

*“Janet Taylor Pickett:
The Matisse Series”
through July 2*

*Montclair Art Museum,
3 South Mountain Ave.
montclairartmuseum.org
973-746-5555*



“The Circus,” from the Portfolio “Jazz,” 1947, by Henri Matisse (1869-1954). All images courtesy Monclair Art Museum.

By GWEN OREL
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People love Matisse.

People love Matisse and don't even know it's Matisse that they love.

His iconic dancing figures appear on tote bags, mugs, posters. On a recent afternoon at Raymond's on Church Street, Matisse-inspired cutouts adorned the walls.

The Montclair Art Museum has three Matisse-flavored exhibits on display: “Matisse and American Art,” which runs through June 18; “Janet Taylor Pickett: The Matisse Series,” which runs through July 2, and “Inspired by Matisse: Selected Works from the Collection,” which runs through July 29.

So why is Henri Matisse (1869-1954) so popular?

MAM Curator Gail Stavitsky said that people respond to the harmony, beauty, purity and serenity of the artist’s work. “People want to feel good about themselves,” Stavitsky said. “They’re a respite, to restore people’s spirits.”

“Matisse and American Art” is a loan show, and includes 19 works by Matisse and 34 by American artists, from 1907 to the present day. None are from the museum’s collection.

Because all of the works had to be borrowed from other museums and private collections, the show took more than five years to put together, Stavitsky said. “It’s a long process of begging,” she said.

The other two shows are related: “I basically see this as one big show with a few consistent themes,” Stavitsky said. “How artists adapted Matisse’s subject matter: paintings of nudes, bathers, still lifes, landscapes, studio interiors ... Very early on artists had a sophisticated understanding of how he uses these subjects, his vibrant colors, fluid lines, simplifying forms. Very early on they were doing their own spins and interpretations. None of these American artists are actually copying Matisse. They were able to use him as a springboard to find their own means of expression.”

Some of the artists included in “Matisse and American Art” are Max Weber, Robert Motherwell, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Faith Ringgold, and Robert De Niro Sr.



“Bellagio Hotel Mural: Still Life with Reclining Nude (Study),” 1997, by Roy Lichtenstein.

The exhibit shows the progression of Matisse’s style, from his 1906 “Nude in a Wood,” an example of the “fauve” style, to his later abstracted works (the ones that adorn the tote bags). “Fauve,” Stavitsky explained, means “wild beast,” and was a term used by a critic about the bold style of Matisse and other artists’ work.



“Nude in a Wood (Nu dans la forêt; Nu assis dans le bois),” 1906, by Henri Matisse (1869-1954)

“Matisse and American Art” shows that Matisse had a reciprocal relationship with America: early collectors such as Leo and Gertrude Stein, as well as artists, appreciated him as early as 1905. Matisse also had major shows in America, and was featured on the cover of Time magazine in 1930. Catalogues of Matisse exhibits are on loan from the personal library of pop artist Roy Lichtenstein, who also owns some of Matisse’s work.

“Inspired by Matisse” includes 53 works from the museum’s collection.

“Janet Taylor Pickett: The Matisse Series” includes more than 76 collages and four handmade books by Taylor Pickett, who lived in Montclair until 2011 (she now lives in California). Included in the exhibition is the installation of “Sixty-Six Dresses: An Odyssey, 2014-2015.” The title refers to Taylor Pickett’s age when she created the works. For this show, she includes two additional collaged dresses to match her current age. Kathy Imlay, the show’s co-curator with Gail Stavitsky, had been following Taylor Pickett’s work for more than 10 years, the artist said by telephone. Stavitsky saw one of her pieces and “one thing led to another,” Taylor Pickett said.

Taylor Pickett’s work is in all three of the Matisse shows at MAM.

 Formerly an art teacher at Essex County College, Taylor Pickett said, “Over the years I have had this conversation with a white European male artist, who has been an influence on generations of artists. I was always drawn to his color, use of line and shape. He became part of my visual vocabulary.”

The dress shape has been a vessel for her work for many years, Taylor Pickett said. “It goes back to the first time I had to buy a black dress, when my father died. I began to think about the symbol, metaphor of what a dress was. Then it became a vessel of memory that I could fill.”

Her work, she said, shows her “voice as a woman and an African-American and an artist.”



“Vessel Dress Still Life After Matisse,” 2013, by Janet Taylor Pickett (b. 1948)

One of the most rewarding things that has come out of the exhibition, which Taylor Pickett described as “pretty spectacular,” is to receive messages on Facebook from strangers telling her how her work has affected them. Now, people even follow her new work on her Instagram account, [jpickett813](#).

“To be alive and to hear and know that your work has affected folks that have seen it in such a positive manner is really rewarding. Not every artist gets that. Most of the time people just walk away.”



Culture photo: Angular rainbows at Local Coffee



"Child's Fantasy" by Scarlett Givner.

"Steam Punk Rainbow," photographs by Scarlett Givner, 13, will hang at Local Coffee, 107 Watchung Ave., through July 15.

An artist reception will be held on Thursday, July 12, 6-8 p.m.

Local Coffee opened in 2017, and showcases artists monthly. Interviews with artists and info are at localcoffeemontclair.com.

"Sometimes when I see something that stands out to me, I take a photo because I feel that it has to have a story," the artist states on the exhibition postcard.



Culture in brief: The Maker Studio, shekere at The Creativity Caravan



Shekere. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The Creativity Caravan is partnering with Montclair artist Elizabeth Smith Jacobs to hold mixed media classes, workshops and camps. The inaugural class, African Shekere, takes place Sunday, Feb. 25. It is part of The Maker Studio, in which Jacobs will be teaching and hosting an eclectic variety of focused workshops at her home studio, a five-minute walk from The Creativity Caravan and three blocks south of the Montclair Art Museum.

A shekere is a percussion instrument of West African origin consisting of a hollow gourd covered with a loose netting on which beads, shells or seeds are strung, played by shaking. In this workshop, participants will learn how to create this webbing, while adorning it with an assortment of beads and embellishing the exposed gourd with a pyrography (burning) tool.

The class is suitable for ages 12 and up and is limited to six students. All materials are included. For more information, call 201-259-9801 or email hello@thecreativitycaravan.com.



Unspeakable, beautiful work by Kara Walker at MAM



Kara Walker's "Virginia Lynch Mob" installed on a custom-built wall at MAM. KATE ALBRIGHT/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

Kara Walker: Virginia's Lynch Mob and Other Works

Sept. 15-Jan. 6, 2019

32nd annual Julia Norton Babson Memorial Lecture with Guest Curator Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw and Rutgers University Associate Professor Brittney Cooper on the exhibition on Thursday. Oct. 18, 7 p.m.

Montclair Art Museum, 3 South Mountain Ave.

Concurrent with Constructing Identity in America (1766-2017), Sept. 15-Jan. 5, 2019

montclairartmuseum.org

By GWEN OREL

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Here's something you don't see every day: advisory warnings at an art museum.

It's not because flashing lights could be detrimental to health.

It's because of the art itself, though it does not show blood and guts, it does display horrific cruelty and violence.

"Kara Walker: Virginia's Lynch Mob and Other Works," currently on display at the Montclair Art Museum, is an exhibition centered on a 40-foot installation. The exhibit, hung on a curved wall built for Walker's work, shows 23 paper cut-outs that appear to depict a lynching about to happen. There is a child shooting himself, a boy carrying a noose, an antebellum child with a Klan mask and a child flying. Is the flying girl Virginia? Or is it the title that refers to the state of Virginia?



Advisory for "Virginia's Lynch Mob and Other Works." KATE ALBRIGHT/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

Walker's works on display range from 1997 through 2017. They explore race, gender, sexuality and violence.

The Walker exhibition runs concurrent with "Constructing Identity in America (1766-2017)," an exhibition drawing on 90 works mostly from MAM's permanent collection.

[READ: MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM](#)

[LAUNCHES RETROSPECTIVE OF KAY WALKINGSTICK](#)

[READ: HUMAN NATURE WEARS BRIGHT COLORS AT MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM; PHILOMENA WILLIAMSON](#)

MAM Director Lora Urbanelli said both exhibitions attempt to foster dialogue. To make sure dialogue happened, MAM reached out to the African American community in and around Montclair more than a year ago, she said.

MAM was aware that Walker, born in 1969, is controversial, despite having won the MacArthur "genius" grant in 1997, when she was still in her 20s.

"We know that there are people that find the work so difficult as to be offensive. She does use stereotypes to express herself. And there are members of the African-American community who find that rather difficult and want to leave those stereotypes aside. And here's this young artist throwing them in your face," Urbanelli said.

Dialogue will at least let people know what MAM was trying to do, she continued. The museum has programmed different events to help foster that dialogue, and created a space for reflection, where people can write their own thoughts about the exhibition.

And the advisory notices will warn not just families away from images of rape and lynch, but also adults who could be upset. There is also an educational guide that will help parents talk about race, issue, gender, slavery and identity issues, as well as of the legacy of violence that Walker's work depicts.



"Emancipation Approximation, Scene No. 18," 2000 COURTESY MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM/JENKINS & CO.

SUBVERTING STEREOTYPES

Even in Walker's early work she explores stereotypes, said MAM Curator Gail Stavitsky, who assisted on the show with Guest Curator Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, associate professor of American Art at the University of

Pennsylvania, and author of “Seeing the Unspeakable: The Art of Kara Walker.”

Stavitsky said that for Walker, silhouette is linked to a stereotype, because it reduces visual information. And silhouette itself is a historic form of art, a popular miniature portraiture in the 18th century. What Walker does with the format is to make it subversive.

A relatively early work, “Emancipation Approximation,” shows a black silhouette of a woman carrying a white silhouette on her head. The title “Emancipation Proclamation” is a deliberate play of words.

“Her titles have an old-fashioned, historical theme to them, that give you a guide to their meaning,” Stavitsky continued. “Emancipation Approximation” suggests that we have not yet arrived at total equality. The white cutout looks like a woman, and also like a boll of cotton.

But the work is meant to be open-ended, Stavitsky said, with viewers bringing their own experiences to the work. Walker has said she wanted a viewer that would giggle nervously, but be pulled in to something that can be disturbing, but also beautiful.

A monumental 2012 work titled “Sketch for an American Comic Opera with 20th century Race Riots,” which shows both a woman in an antebellum long dress and hoses turned on children, as they were in Alabama in the 1960s, is typical of what Walker is doing now, she said.

Several of the works show the fetishizing and exoticization of the black female body, Stavitsky said. “African/American,” a work from 1998, shows a woman that seems to be flying, and sets up a conversation with the central work, “Virginia’s Lynch Mob.”

And in that central work, there is mystery: has the lynching already happened, or is it about to occur? It’s open-ended.



Harper’s Pictorial History of the Civil War, displayed at MAM. KATE ALBRIGHT/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

FASCINATION WITH HISTORY

Walker’s fascination with history informs all of her work. Some of the work takes history on directly: a 2005 series titled “Harper’s Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated),” literally takes engravings from Harper’s magazines/books of the period, enlarges them, with Walker adding her own silhouettes to them. “Harper’s Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated),” also known as of “Harper’s Pictorial History of the Great Rebellion,” was a way that people got their news, Stavitsky said. After the war ended, there was a process of purging images of slaves from the volumes, to appease the Confederacy. History changed.

By putting her silhouettes into them, Walker restores the history.

So “Alabama Loyalists Greeting the Federal Gun-Boats” now shows a woman fleeing, seeming to hover mid-air.

For Walker, the Harper’s images are landscapes at the back of her mind. She saw the Civil War as a personal, internal conflict, Stavitsky said. The artist annotates the work with her own notes.

Perhaps the most disturbing work, with its own advisory sign, is Walker’s 2005 silent, eight-minute film “Testimony.” It uses paper cutouts and marionettes, and shows Walker’s own hands manipulating them. It tells the story of slaves who are freed, who go on to torture and rape their former masters. It shows abusive power dynamics, and how slavery itself was degrading. Captions in the film say slaves were “only following orders.”

Turning things inside out, Walker shows that nobody wins in this system. It makes “something beautiful out of something very difficult.”



A still from “Testimony,” 2005. COURTESY MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM



Culture in brief: Lia Galletti at the Julián Espinal Art Project



"Flow" by Lia Galletti

The Julián Espinal Art Project presents the exhibition “Interspaces,” by the artist Lia Galletti, from March 16 to April 10 at the gallery at 5 South Willow St., second floor.

They write, “The show is made up of the artist’s work for the past three years in which we can see a continuous evolution, both in the color palette and in the intensity of the technique (action painting and dripping) that is characteristic of its pictorial language.” Galletti was born in Havana, Cuba, and is based in Miami.

Gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. For information, Julián Espinal, Director, at 1-863-326-2252 or email: julianespinalartproject@gmail.com.

[READ: ARTIST FERN BASS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE](#)

[READ: MONTCLAIR’S RICHARD PIERSON IN ARTS UNBOUND](#)

From the catalogue: “Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1943, Lia Galletti is a painter and printmaker. She left the island with her family at the age of 17 and moved to New York, where she finished her education and started to paint and exhibit her work in New York’s Greenwich Village and other venues on the east coast. Her father, also an artist, influenced her path towards becoming an artist as she watched him paint as a child. Lia is an abstract artist and has been painting ever since, developing her individual style and technique. She studied printmaking within the disciplines of etching, drypoint, linocut, silkscreen and monoprint. Lia exhibited her work and received an award at The Boston Printmakers, Brockton Art Museum, Boston, MA (1988). Her work is in their collection, as well as in the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, where she participated at the Ibero American Printmaking Biennial of San Juan, Puerto Rico. She recently participated in the Tokyo International Mini Print Triennial at Tama Art University Museum, Tokyo, Japan.”

Galletti writes: *“My work explores the spaces between reality and subreality in which emotions become expressions which appear in my paintings. I develop that image bordering between abstraction and reality until reality dematerializes into abstraction. I call this series Interspaces. I use acrylics as my medium because it is best for my technique. Painting is a spiritual experience that I transfer to the canvas and allow it to manifest. It is my own perception of that moment, freely expressed. It represents for me an individualized concept of beauty revealed to the World as my painting.”*



Culture in brief: 'Good Works' opens at Studio Montclair



"Acute and Obtuse" by Allan Gorman. COURTESY STUDIO MONTCLAIR

Studio Montclair (SMI) presents "Good Works," an exhibition celebrating volunteer artist members who donated their time and talent to SMI.

"Good Works" will be on view from Jan. 11 through Feb. 23 at the Studio Montclair Gallery, 127 Bloomfield Ave. An opening reception will be held on Friday, Jan. 11, 7-9 p.m.

[LOOK: PHOTOS; A BANNER 'AFFAIR OF THE ARTS' RAISES FUNDS FOR STUDIO MONTCLAIR](#)

[READ: STUDIO MONTCLAIR INC.'S INCUBATOR GALLERIES SHOW ART MADE WITH STRING](#)

The show features 49 pieces of work by 28 artists in a variety of visual media including sculpture, photography, printmaking, painting, drawing and mixed media. All artwork will also be available for online purchase.

Participating Artists are Kate Albright, Susanna Baker, Amy Becker, Virginia Schaffer Block, Janet Boltax, RM

Cimini, Pam Cooper, Erica Engfer Pizza, Dan Epstein, Allan Gorman, Marlene Hendrian, Mary Howe, Mark Hunter, Miriam Jacobs, Catherine Kinkade, Yvette Lucas, Fernando Mariscal, John Masi, Gina Murray, Denis Orloff, Ron Powell, Jim Price, Jack Quinn, Matt Roberts, Michael Sherman, Amy Tingle, Katie Truk and Victor Utama. For information visit studiomontclair.org.

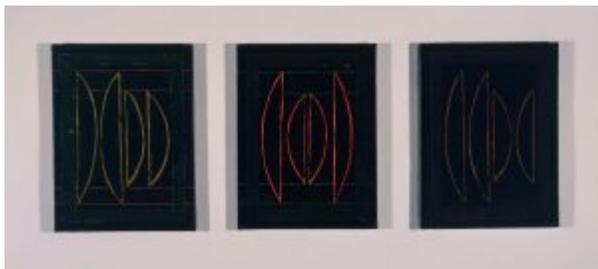
District 11 Congressional Art Competition for teens underway

Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen invites high school age students from NJ 11 to enter the 2017 District 11 Congressional Art Competition.

Each spring, the Congressional Institute sponsors a nationwide high school visual art competition to recognize and encourage artistic talent in the nation and in each congressional district, according to a release from Frelinghuysen's office. Since the Artistic Discovery competition began in 1982, more than 650,000 high school students have participated, said the release.

Entries should be submitted to Frelinghuysen's Morristown office, 30 Schuyler Place, Morristown, by Wednesday, April 19, at 5 p.m.

Specific information and guidelines are at www.house.gov/content/educate/art_competition/
For information, call Frelinghuysen's Morristown office at 973-984-0711.



Culture in brief: MAM to hold “Free First Thursday” on Feb. 8



A detail from Kay WalkingStick's "Chief Joseph" series. COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN.

Free First Thursday at MAM will take place on the **second** Thursday of the month, Feb. 8, 5-9 p.m., to spotlight the new special exhibition “[Kay WalkingStick: An American Artist.](#)”

Among the activities: live music in the galleries with **Bern & The Brights**, Montclair-based electro dream pop duo.

- For Black History Month, tours of African American artists now on view in the Museum’s permanent collection
- The Yard School of Art offers a **Draw Along Workshop** a free drawing session with a clothed model and guided art instruction for all ages.
- New! **Teen Space** welcomes teens with a free open studio, 7–9 p.m.
- New! Capture the fun with an official MAM photo to share on social media.
- New signature cocktails, wine selections, and NJ Beer Co. beer, the exclusive beer of Free First Thursday Night, at the bar in partnership with Krug Catering at Orange Lawn Tennis Club. Museum members receive a discount on drinks at the bar.
- Featured food vendors, including the Empanada Guy food truck.

In addition to the regular monthly program, featuring free general admission, live music, art activities and tours, the museum will also offer the premium MAM After Hours experience, Art Meets Jazz with Oliver Lake, from 7 to 9 p.m. (This part of the program is not free.)

New attractions include a Teen Space, with a free open studio, from 7 to 9 p.m., and an official MAM photo to share on social media. Free First Thursday Nights will be back to their regular schedule March 1. For more information, visit montclairartmuseum.org.



Sculpture for the soul at First Congregational Church



Rev. Anne Ralosky explains artist Rev. Dr. Charles McCulloch's interpretations of one the sayings of Jesus in a modern bas-relief clay tablet, on display at The First Congregational Church. ADAM ANIK/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

*The Rev. Charles McCullough
Conversation and presentation*

Sunday, March 10, 12 p.m.

*First Congregational Church
40 South Fullerton Ave.*

fccmontclair.org

By GWEN OREL
orel@montclairlocal.news

Art and religion can be two ways of looking at an issue.

That's how the Rev. Charles McCullough feels about his work as a sculptor and painter, and about his work as a minister.

The eight terra-cotta sculptures at First Congregational Church that make up his series "Beatitudes" are two-sided. The small square pieces that represent blessings Jesus gave, and sit on revolving plates on top of pedestals sitting in the church main Sanctuary. Since they are fragile, they are removed for Outpost in the Burbs or Montclair Literary Festival events. They are visible on Labyrinth Walks on Wednesday evenings (6-8 p.m. in the Sanctuary) and whenever the front doors of the church are open.

One side depicts the first part of a Beatitude, the other, the conclusion.

This Sunday, March 10, FCC will host McCullough in a conversation about his work, and FCC will unveil a new sculpture of Jesus that the artist is lending to FCC for the season of Lent, and discuss his latest book, "Picture This."

"Picture This" is a collection of McCullough's drawings, with text that explores his experience as an artist with dyslexia.

SPIRITUALITY AND POLITICS

FCC Senior Minister Ann Ralosky met McCullough and became familiar with his art when both were serving on a regional board of the United Church of Christ, of which FCC is a member.

"And it was during a time in this church's life when I was doing a lot of preaching on the politics of Jesus, and much of Jesus's parables have a strong political connection."

By political, she does not mean partisanship but "politics as the art of how we decide to live together," she said. "Jesus had a lot to say about how we live together."

"Normally, people divide things up," McCullough said from his home in Hopewell, N.J. "It's all together for me.

"We are all involved in political efforts even though we may not know that. It affects our personal and spiritual life. I emphasize the visual, while others emphasize the verbal and written forms of communication."

He says in a pamphlet about his work that he does not draw boundaries between what might be called religious or humanistic or political.

One side of "Blessed are the mourners, for they will be comforted" shows a sorrowing person. The other shows that mourner being comforted, the comforter represented by a cut-out of empty space in the shape of a head.

In his 2012 book, "The Non-Violent Radical," McCullough describes how this particular sculpture was inspired by the death of a good friend from leukemia. He reflected on the image of his friend's wife stroking his face during her last goodbye.

"In this two-sided relief sculpture, my friend is still present and real though his image is in negative space symbolizing the spiritual realm where he lives eternally. His spouse's hands embrace him. On the reverse side, the larger hands of God in turn comfort her."



The Rev. Charles McCullough. COURTESY CAROL MCCULLOUGH

"Mercy," which depicts "Blessed Are the Merciful, for They Shall Receive Mercy," shows an exhausted fireman on 9/11 rescuing a woman on one side, and being comforted by another fireman on the other.

"My job [on the national staff of UCC] was in adult education," he said. "I tried to convince people to increase spiritual connections to the holy and divine, but to apply that to political activity.

"Jesus grew up and was finally murdered by the Roman Empire." That empire often crushed humanity out of people, he said. "Jesus came to restore that humanity and resist the powers of Rome.

"We're called to do the same thing any time government crushes people, or keeps them from being fully

human beings. He was executed by Rome because he resisted.”

[READ: WALKING THE LABYRINTH: A PERSONAL, MEDITATIVE JOURNEY](#)

[READ: REENACTING THE SUBLIME ON PALM SUNDAY](#)

McCullough strives to emulate Jesus’s messages in his own preaching and teaching. “I help people to connect those things. I stress the value and importance of the visual image.”

The 10-foot high sculpture of Jesus crucified also has different ways of looking at it, Ralosky said. As a Protestant church, FCC would not usually have an image of Jesus on the cross (Protestant churches show empty crosses). But this sculpture shows Jesus’ arms outstretched to a span of about five feet.

Depending on how you look at it, she said, it’s either a familiar depiction of Jesus with his arms on the cross, or “like Jesus in a spirit of jubilation a person, with their arms reaching up. So we are hoping that the transformation from Good Friday which is the most solemn acknowledgement of our complicity in the forces that brought Jesus to the cross to Easter Sunday, when we will be draping him in white, and hopefully it will have that joyful look.”