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**inside: the heart of the arts  
featured artist series**

**thank you to our donors**

**where to buy local art**

# **ART beat**

**Transforming and  
strengthening the cultural  
life of our community through  
grants, marketing, fundraising,  
advocacy and education.**

**a publication of the  
United Arts Council of Catawba County**

*Vakala  
Penton 8.1*





*Congratulations!*

#### ON THE COVER:

Abstract artist, Joyce Vukela-Mayer utilizes transferable skills gained throughout her life experiences to create unconventional art. Those experiences include obtaining a Chemical Engineering degree, various management positions, and custom home building, in addition to art classes. Engineering which requires finding solutions to previously unsolved problems was instrumental in developing creativity, and homebuilding developed the ability to mesh both the aesthetic and practical. Joyce uses chemistry to react paint and acid with steel that has been formed into a canvas shape. Her unconventional paintings include vibrant colors and unique patterns that speak beauty and encouragement to the innermost psyche.

Vukela-Mayer is the 2022-23 Recipient of the North Carolina Arts Council Artist Support Grant. Her work has been collected both internationally and domestically and is in both private and public collections.

FB & IG: @Art\_By\_Vukela  
www.artbyvukela.com

Find the fun and fill

your calendar with the

many great cultural

events you will find in

these pages and on our website events calendar!

[artscatawba.org/events](http://artscatawba.org/events)

## IMPORTANT DATES

<b>19</b> MARCH	ARTIST WALL EXHIBIT RECEPTION-- FACULTY ART SHOW 5-7 PM WEST WING ON THE SALT BLOCK
<b>21</b> MARCH	GRANT DEADLINE THURSDAY, MARCH 21 AT 5 PM
	EDNA BOST BARRINGER YOUNG ARTIST AWARD PERFORMING ARTS 
	INNOVATIVE ARTIST PROJECT GRANTS 
	PROJECTS POOL GRANTS 

*Save  
the Date!*

Monday,  
December 9th, 2024



Please consider a  
donation to the  
2024 campaign



### 2024 UNITED ARTS FUND

**40**  
Number of years  
of United Arts Fundraising

**739,722**  
Total attendance at cultural  
events in Catawba County

**\$53,590,516**  
Dollar amount arts, science and  
history organizations in  
Catawba County generate annually in  
economic activity

# From Our President

Dear Arts Community,

Welcome to the latest edition of Art Beat, a testament to the spirit of local artists and the unwavering support of our dedicated donors.

In the pages that follow, you will discover experiences in science, art, history, theatre, and music that reflect the kaleidoscope of our community. From exhibitions and performances to workshops and collaborations, the United Arts Council of Catawba County remains committed to fostering an inclusive and dynamic cultural ecosystem that spurs economic development while empowering individuals to explore, create, and thrive.

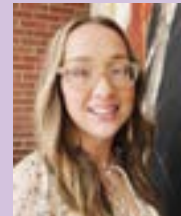
Whether through traditional mediums or innovative new forms, artists challenge our perceptions and foster a deeper understanding of the world around us. As stewards of creativity, it is our collective responsibility to nurture and celebrate the diverse voices that shape our community. Supporting the United Arts Fund is an important way we meet that responsibility. If you have already donated to the fund this year, thank you. If you have yet to make your gift, we hope you will consider doing so today.



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Thank you for the grant dollars that you entrust to us which are used to bring quality cultural events to all parts of our County.

Catawba County  
City of Conover  
City of Hickory

Town of Maiden  
City of Newton

# Funded Affiliates

Celebrating the arts and the joy  
they bring to life every day.

We proudly support these organizations that receive UAF dollars and make a valuable contribution to our economy and quality of life in Catawba County and the surrounding area. Through their efforts, children and adults are exposed to outstanding experiences in science, art, history, theatre and music. Their upcoming events and exhibitions are sure to entertain, educate and inspire. Visit these organizations to experience the joy of their high quality programming and performances.



## ANNOUNCING OUR 59TH SEASON!

### MASTERWORKS SERIES

P.E. Monroe Auditorium, Lenoir-Rhyne University

Wu Man, pipa | Works by Tchaikovsky, Zhao, Respighi  
Saturday, October 21, 2023

Dmitri Vorobiev, piano | Works by Shostakovich, Rachmaninoff  
Saturday, November 18, 2023

Carmina Burana | Works by Brahms, Orff  
Friday, February 9, 2024

Kelly Hall-Tompkins, violin | Works by Smythe, Bruch, Berlioz  
Thursday, March 7, 2024

Amber Ferenz, bassoon | Works by Perttu, Ferenz, Grofé  
Thursday, May 16, 2024

### CROSSROADS SERIES

Drendel Auditorium, Hickory  
*In conjunction with L.A.T.E. hours  
at Hickory Museum of Art*

Low and Lower, cello/bass duo  
Thursday, Nov. 2, 2023

Ariel Pocock & Chad Eby Jazz Duo  
Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024

KASA Quartet  
Thursday, March 21, 2024

Hank, Pattie, and The Current  
with WPS Maestro's Quartet  
Thursday, May 2, 2024

### FOOTHILLS POPS SERIES

J.E. Broyhill Civic Center, Lenoir

DISNEY IN CONCERT -  
A Dream is a Wish  
Saturday, Sep. 16, 2023

Holiday Spectacular  
Friday, Dec. 1, 2023

Totally Awesome 80s  
Saturday, April 20, 2024

### DISCOVERY FAMILY CONCERTS

P.E. Monroe Auditorium, Hickory  
*In Partnership with Catawba Science Center*

Magical Spooktacular | Sun., Oct. 29, 2023  
We are the Champions! | Sun., April 28, 2024



Tickets available at  
wpsymphony.org  
or call (828) 324-8603

Follow us at @wpsymphony



## Upcoming Concerts

### Fall Concert:

**"Love and Music Endure"**  
Sunday, October 22, 2023 | 3:00 pm

### Children's Christmas Concert:

**"Cookies and Carols"**  
December 2, 2023 | 11:00 am  
Drendel Auditorium, SALT Block

### Christmas Concert

December 8-9, 2023 | 7:30 pm  
December 9-10, 2023 | 3:00 pm  
Corinth Reformed Church, Hickory

### Spring Concert

March 17, 2024 | 3:00 pm  
First Baptist Church, Hickory

For seasonal membership, visit our  
website or call our office at (828) 322-2210  
Follow us for updates:



 Hickory Choral Society  
 @hickorychoralsociety  
 @hickorychoralsociety  
 hickorychoralsociety.org





AGATHA CHRISTIE'S  
**MURDER ON THE  
ORIENT EXPRESS**

March 15, 16, 17m,  
22, 23, 24m, 2024

**Butterfly  
in  
Overalls**  
by Molly Bass

April 5, 6, 7m, 12, 13, 14m,  
19, 20, 21m, 2024

**Sister  
ACT**  
THE MUSICAL

May 3, 4, 5m,  
10, 11, 12m,  
17, 18, 19m 2024



June 14, 15, 16m,  
21, 22, 23m, 2024

**Box Office**  
**(828) 464-6128**  
**thegreenroomtheatre.org**



**Hickory  
Landmarks  
Society**

Collecting Hickory's  
history since 1968.

Offering research on  
historic buildings in  
Hickory.

Heritage Days for  
area Fourth Grades  
April 11 & 12, 2024

Romance of the  
Home and Garden  
Tour  
May 18, 2024

Follow us on



PRESERVING THE  
PAST FOR THE  
FUTURE





828.322.8169  
[www.CatawbaScience.org](http://www.CatawbaScience.org)

On the SALT Block  
243 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave NE  
Hickory, NC 28601

## PLANETARIUM



## INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS

## HANDS-ON PROGRAMS



## AQUARIUM



# HICKORY

COMMUNITY THEATRE



February 23 - March 9



April 5-20

### Show Tickets

Adults \$16  
Students & Youth (18 & under) \$10  
[buy online at  
hickorytheatre.org](http://buyonlineathickorytheatre.org)  
or call 828•328•2283



May 3-18

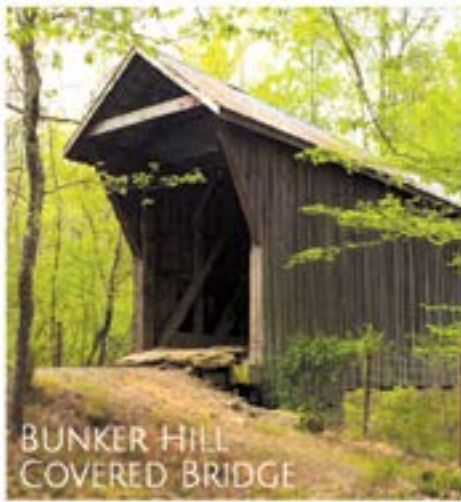


June 7-29

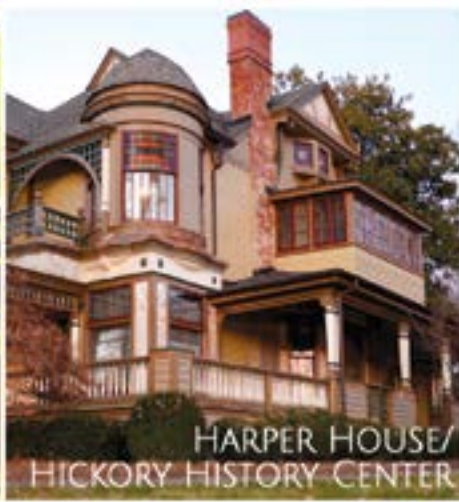


JUNE 10, 2024 \* TICKETS \$140

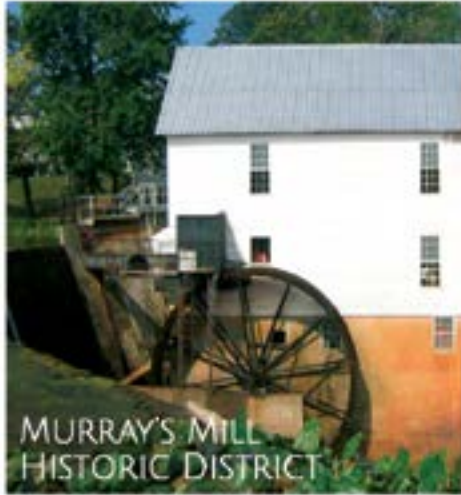




BUNKER HILL  
COVERED BRIDGE



HARPER HOUSE/  
HICKORY HISTORY CENTER



MURRAY'S MILL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT



HISTORY MUSEUM OF  
CATAWBA COUNTY



CATAWBAHISTORY.ORG  
828 | 465 | 0383

*Become  
An HACC  
Member!*



WHERE HISTORY  
COMES HOME

## did you know?

The cost of 1 **Family Membership** + 2 summer camps or workshops is less than 2 non-member summer camps or workshops!

**Junior M art camps** + **create M Summer workshops**

Okay, so let's do the math...

2 Camps/Workshops: \$120  
+ HMA Family Membership: \$75

Member Total = **\$195**

**vs.**

2 Camps/Workshops: \$200  
+ Non-Member Benefits: \$0

Non-Member Total = **\$200**

Visit [hickoryart.org/summer24](http://hickoryart.org/summer24) for complete details!

# hickory museum of art

### Museum & shop HMA Hours

Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM  
Thursday, 10 AM-8 PM  
Sunday, 1 PM-4 PM  
Closed Mondays, Tuesdays, & Holidays

### Located on the SALT Block

243 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NE Hickory, NC 28601 | 828.327.8576



# Associate Members

Visit our Associate Member's websites to learn about amazing programs and cultural events! If you are a non-profit with a mission statement rooted in Arts, Science or History, we invite you to become a member. Contact Executive Director, Ingrid Keller at [executivedirector@artscatawba.org](mailto:executivedirector@artscatawba.org).



<https://hmongsouth-eastpuavpheej.org>

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828-381-8342



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[Saltblockfoundation.org](http://Saltblockfoundation.org)  
828-324-4906 ext. 303



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[Hickoryplayground.org](http://Hickoryplayground.org)  
336-749-8703



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828-324-8603



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[footcandlefilmfestival2023.eventive.org](http://footcandlefilmfestival2023.eventive.org)  
828-962-4188



# The Heart of the Arts

## Featured Artist: Bunny Eaton

### Innovative Artist Grant Recipient

By Kat Evans



If there was only one word that could be used to best describe Kirstie-Ann “Bunny” Eaton, that word would be Innovative. So then it should be of no surprise that she was awarded an Innovative Artist Grant to create a customized art vending machine to be installed in one of Hickory’s newest and bustling downtown locations: City Walk Brewing & Distillery. Looking for art in a non-traditional setting? Here you go!

Bunny, as she likes to be known, was born in Manchester, England. She and her parents left the UK for North Carolina when she was 7 years old, settling in Mecklenburg County. As a senior in high school, she was on a job search in Charlotte when she came across artist Steven Ray working on a mural. Fascinated by the idea of someone making a living off of art, Bunny struck up a conversation with Ray who would become a close friend and mentor. Never before having any real desire to do anything artistic, Bunny decided to take art lessons. In studying the foundations, she realized the beauty of mathematics in art. Take the Golden Ratio. The technical aspect of art catered to her academic mind that, at the time, was gearing up to go to college to study something more along the lines of engineering or law, career paths more in line with what her parents envisioned for her. So, in teen rebellion style, she enrolled at Appalachian State University in Boone to study Art Education. After receiving her teaching certification, she worked for a time in the furniture industry before taking a position teaching at the Catawba Rosenwald Education Center, a public alternative school. She taught there for three years.

During her time in Boone, Bunny would meet Ben Loomis, a freelance grant writer and author of the book series, ‘Lower Heaven’. While hanging out at a local bar, the pair took note of a vending machine that marketed to a more adult clientele. This curious way of utilizing a machine that was originally created to provide short-term sustenance, was now seen as a way to promote various forms of art that could easily be purchased in packaging no larger than a bag of chips, making art accessible to a broader market. And so, the vision for The Curio Machine was born, just before the start of the Covid pandemic in 2020.



Like many other creative endeavors of that time, the Curio Machine became a ‘covid project’. Using what money they had, they started out by purchasing two older vending machines through the Facebook Marketplace. With access to maker spaces, like the hidden gem that is the Foothills Community Workshop located in Granite Falls, Bunny was able to obtain new skills that would further her creativity by learning to use tools like a CNC router, laser cutter, and 3D printer to make accent pieces that could be used to enhance the vending machine’s outward appearance or for products to be sold in the machines. She would partner with local artists and makers, purchasing their merchandise at wholesale prices rather than by consignment, ensuring that the artist is paid upfront. From stickers, to tiny games, mystery packs, even music, the possibilities of what could be sold in these machines are endless, giving artists an opportunity to challenge themselves to create work that could be interactive, functional, miniature, and quite simply, fun.

Currently, the Curio Machine has a total of 15 vending machines in places like Charlotte, Asheville, Boone and most recently, here in Hickory. The design for City Walk Brewing was a simple one. Using wood slabs purchased from West Penn Hardwoods in Conover, the live edge olive wood, full of character, sets beautifully against the earthy green machine allowing it to blend into the space like furniture, a tribute to the city’s rich history in furniture making. Bunny’s vision to see community building by the sale of local art through one of her machines is admirable and definitely worth checking out. To find out more about the Curio Machine and their locations, or if you are an artist wishing to sell your product, visit [www.thecuriomachine.com](http://www.thecuriomachine.com). You can also follow Bunny on Instagram: @thecuriomachine and @artbybunneyeaton.



# Thank You!

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Mr. and Mrs. Steve Ivester  
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*UAC Staff*  
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*Marian Story*  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wessels  
*Father Wilbur Thomas*  
Mr. and Mrs. Martin Light  
*Scott Washer*  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Washer

3 Little Birds  
19 N College Ave |  
Newton

ATAC Gallery  
1020 3rd Ave NW |  
Hickory

Barley Market  
109 Government Ave  
SW | Hickory

Bottega | Hickory  
256 Union Square |  
Hickory

Cafe Gouda  
2960 N Center St |  
Hickory

Creative - Claremont  
3246 W Main St |  
Claremont

Emporium 23  
111 N College Ave |  
Newton



## **WHERE TO BUY ART IN CATAWBA COUNTY**

Full Circle Arts  
42-B 3rd St NW | Hick-  
ory

Hickory Museum of Art  
Gift Shop  
243 3rd Ave NE | Hick-  
ory

Mud Mamas Studio &  
Shop  
932 3rd Ave NW |  
Hickory

Prism Coffee  
285 2nd Ave SE |  
Hickory

Taste Full Beans Coffee,  
Tea & Cafe  
29 2nd St NW | Hickory

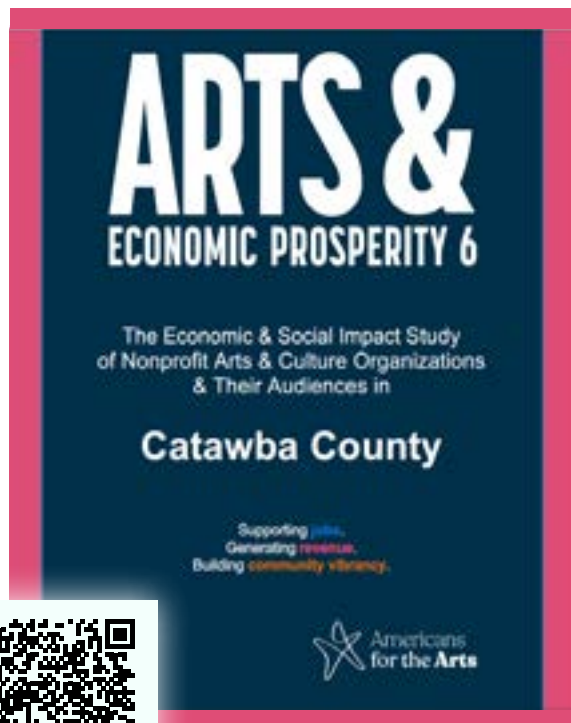
Trade Alley Arts Gallery  
25 2nd St NW | Hickory

Waterbean Coffee -  
Startown Road  
1995 Startown Rd |  
Hickory

Would you like to be added to our online  
artist directory? Please note: This is for  
individual artists, studios, collectives,  
creative businesses etc...



**SCAN TO COMPLETE REGISTRATION**



SCAN TO VIEW THE  
STUDY SUMMARY

## Artist Survey

ATTENTION Catawba County  
Artists and Creatives!

Help us help you! The United Arts Council of Catawba County is creating an inventory of artists, makers, craftspersons, and the entire creative workforce active in our county to better understand the valuable creative resource you are and to understand the kinds of support and services that will attract and keep your talent here. If you are creating art in any capacity, we want you to take part in this survey\*!

Please see the list of artistic disciplines on the back of this flyer.

Scan this QR Code  
to take this 10 minute survey



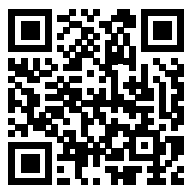
For those of you who complete the survey and respond by March 12th, you will be included in a drawing to receive gift cards valued from \$50 to \$100. Please complete the survey as best you can. If there are questions you can't answer, please don't skip them, just select N/A (for not applicable or don't know) and go on to the next question. Survey findings will be discussed at work sessions the first week in May. The final results will be shared in August 2024.

# Let's Make a Difference TOGETHER!!!

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The United Arts Council of Catawba County is creating a county-wide cultural plan and organizational strategic plan this year. Community engagement is a key element of this work. Please take the time to help us as we conduct this important research of our community's cultural resources by taking the survey below.

Thank you in advance for your support!



SCAN TO COMPLETE  
SURVEY IN ENGLISH



SCAN TO COMPLETE  
SURVEY IN SPANISH

PLEASE FILL OUT OUR

## Quality of Life SURVEY

The United Arts Council of Catawba County and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments want to know what you think could be done in Catawba County to make living better.





# Random Act of Artsiness-

## “A Random Act Can Make an Important Impact”

by Ingrid Keller

Public art and economic impact are the focus of Random Act of Artsiness for this issue of Art Beat. I'd like to thank my nieces, for being my inspiration behind these thoughts.

First, let me just say how fortunate we are to have two public art commissions in Catawba County at the City of Hickory and the City of Newton. Both groups oversee many projects for our community and both are working on murals this spring that are supported by Projects Pool grants from the United Arts Council of Catawba County.

I am personally lucky to be an aunt to three remarkable nieces. When they turn thirteen years old, I take them on a U.S. trip of their choice. My oldest niece Zoey, also known as Z<sup>1</sup>, chose the hustle and bustle of New York City. The middle child's name is Zelda or Z<sup>2</sup>. Her interest in geology means she will be visiting the Grand Canyon this summer. Ziva, or Z<sup>3</sup> of course, is not yet 12 and still has quite a bit of time to choose her location but recently sent me a text out of the blue asking if she could choose Chicago for her birthday trip. I told her that would be a great choice and she has plenty of time to finalize her decision. She asked, “But can we? I wanna see the Chicago Bean.” She was referring to Cloud Gate, a permanent sculpture by the internationally acclaimed artist, Anish Kapoor. Also known as “The Bean”, it is now one of Chicago's most popular sights. It has a reflective surface that shows the city's skyline and the surrounding area of the downtown Millennium Park. It was unveiled in 2004 and is now a Chicago landmark.



It is amazing the impact that public art can have. It can provoke an array of thoughts, emotions and inspiration. It is one of the most accessible forms of culture because it is free for public consumption and usually only limited in most cases by geography. The fact that Ziva's inspiration behind choosing her destination is based on a public art sculpture makes me so proud to be her aunt. Not only that, her choice is a case study demonstrating how public art can drive tourism and economic development. Our recent Arts & Economic impact study shows that the economic impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Catawba County is millions of dollars - \$53,590,516 to be exact. We have some wonderful public art but imagine if we had our own “Bean” that people would travel from across the world to see? Imagine the amount of revenue that work of art would generate for our restaurants, hotels, transportation, retail and local government!

While currently closed for maintenance, Cloud Gate is expected to be back on view later this year, in plenty of time for Ziva to turn 13 years old and take her trip to Chicago to fulfill her wish to see “The Bean” - a Random Act of Artsiness with major economic impact.

### Government

Catawba County Library  
Downtown Newton Development Association  
Friends of Catawba County Library  
Friends of Claremont Library  
Friends of Hickory Public Library  
Friends of Sherrills Ford Library  
Hickory Downtown Development Association  
Hickory Public Art Commission  
Hickory Public Library  
Hickory Recreation Department  
Keep Catawba County Beautiful  
Newton Public Art Commission  
North Carolina Cooperative Extension  
Town of Catawba Historical Association

### Education

Catawba County Schools  
Catawba Valley Community College  
Hickory Day School  
Hickory Public Schools  
Hickory Schools Orchestra Boosters  
Lenoir-Rhyne Art Department  
Lenoir-Rhyne University  
Lenoir-Rhyne University Visiting Writers Series  
Lenoir-Rhyne University Youth Chorus  
Montessori Children's House  
Newton-Conover City Schools

### Service

Art of Compassion  
Camp Dogwood  
Catawba Valley Orchid Society  
Cento Latino  
Delta Sigma Theta  
GFWC Hickory Woman's Club

Greater Hickory International Council  
Hickory Junior Woman's Club  
North Carolina Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Association  
Service League of Hickory  
Women's Resource Center

## Community Partners

A Community Partner of the United Arts Council must be an education, government or service organization that supports arts, science and history in Catawba County. To learn more contact Executive Director, Ingrid Keller at [executivedirector@artscatawba.org](mailto:executivedirector@artscatawba.org).

243 3rd Avenue, NE Box 5  
Hickory, NC 28601

# Thank you Artists!

Each month we will be inviting local artists to submit artwork for our bi-annual Art Beat publication. Joyce Vukela- Mayer was chosen for this edition. Meet the artists below who also submitted their work!



listed l to r.  
Camantha Corsi-FB: WildSkeins  
Francis Simeni- francissimeni.com  
Karin Koval-karinkoval.art  
Nic Milam-IG: @nicmilam photography  
Brandon Pope-Bpopeproductions.com



Caryn Drexl-caryndrexl.com  
Dana Pape-danapapefineart.com  
Renee Barnette-IG @reeneebarnette  
Mark Angelo Bato-IG: @baterz\_art  
Traci Blasko-IG: @boldly\_joyful



Helen Tueffel-FB: HelenaJolanta  
Krystallin Loudermilk-IG: @loyalblush  
Meredith Janssen-foothillspaintersnc.com  
Sigrid Hice-bookartist1450@yahoo.com



Maria Register-mariaregisterart.myportfolio.com  
PxL Photography, LLC (Pablo Becerril)-IG: @pxl\_photography\_\_  
Carol Turner-FB: Carol Turner-painter