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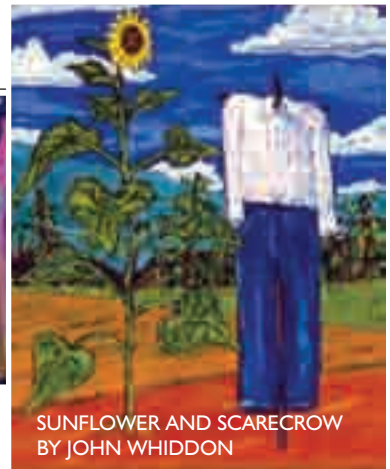
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WILD Things

"Creativity Gone Wild" at the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina

They call it "outsider art," but it's totally in. Once considered "outside" the mainstream of the art world, outsider art, also called folk art, has become the hottest form of contemporary art today. Created by artists with no formal training, the funky works of art stretch the boundaries of the imagination, paying little heed to traditional styles of art.

"This is not art that you stare at and scratch your chin studying it," said Joe Adams, owner of the America Oh, Yes! folk art galleries in Hilton Head and Washington, D.C. "It is in-your-face art. It's art created with passion."

An assortment of folk art from Adams' extensive collection will be showcased **December 3-24** in the Walter Greer Gallery at the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina. "Creativity Gone Wild: American Folk Art" will feature more than 150 works of art created by 50 "outsider" artists from the renowned Kristen Helberg, Kacey Carneal and Ted Gordon to emerging artists such as Darrell Scott, Matt Sesow and Tim Chess. The show also will include a special collection of "Itty Bitty" folk art—small paintings by nationally known artists—along with a holiday tree decorated with Elvis ornaments handmade by Elayne Goodman. All of the artwork is for sale.

"It's art that anyone can collect because it's so reasonably priced," said Arts Center gallery manager Martha Ahrens. "If you're looking for a unique Christmas gift, this is the place to shop."

The art form took off in the late 1980s when regional and national museums, such as the Smithsonian's National Museum of Art, began exhibiting folk art and adding it to their permanent collections. The American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore describes it as "art produced by self-taught individuals... whose works arise from an innate personal vision that revels foremost in the creative act itself."

The artists, uneducated in art techniques and styles, are inventing new styles as they go. They use whatever is at hand, including bottle caps, broken china and road signs, to create their artwork.

"It is truly mixed media," Adams said. "It will make you laugh. It will make you feel the art, one heart to another."

"Creativity Gone Wild" opens with a reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, December 2. Admission to the reception is \$5; free to Arts Center members. The exhibit is free and open to the public and gallery walks have been scheduled for 11 a.m. on Saturdays, December 4 and 11. The Greer Gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and one hour prior to performances in the Elizabeth Wallace Theatre. For more information, call the Arts Center at **686-3945**.

— Marie McAden