

**Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley**  
**21 W. Main St. - P. O. Box 309**  
**Pulaski, VA 24301-0309**

**Date: June 14, 2000**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Our Best of the Century*

Celebrating Blacksburg Regional Art Association's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley is currently hosting an exhibition entitled *Our Best of the Century* that celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the Blacksburg Regional Arts Association (BRAA.) The BRAA is the only arts organization in the New River Valley with a longer history than the Fine Arts Center -- preceding it by twenty-eight years.

This invitational show recognizes and rewards the many exhibiting artists who are members of the organization -- a list that exceeds eighty! These artists must meet certain criteria to be considered "exhibiting artists" by the BRAA. They must have a body of work ready to hang and must demonstrate a high level of professionalism.

The present show contains work by twenty-seven of the organization's artists. All works have been executed within the last year and most have never been exhibited. The vitality, zeal and drama of the works in this exhibition are befitting the show's title. David Hutchins' *Black Parrot Tulip*, for example, practically tangles out of the frame. What appears to be an abstract in perpetual motion is actually a realistic close-up of a tulip that originated about 1660 in Europe from a mutant gene.

Sally Mook's *Delicato Squash with Crows* shows her wonderful use of color and whimsy. Equally full of strong color is Jordi Calveri's *A Heavy Load - Ecuador*. Whimsy is replaced by labor and heat. Susan Lockwood's *Reflections IV* deceives the

eye on first glance. What would appear to be an intricately executed watercolor is actually an exquisite color photograph.

The show has many fine watercolor artists to be sure. Florals by Jean Nelson and Carole Davis all but emit fragrances. Alisa Colpitts offers a wonderful glimpse of the west in her *Canyon Blue*, while Nadine Allen's *Doorway in Iona* takes the viewer to the isles of Scotland.

These are but a few of the many fine artists represented in the show.

The Blacksburg Regional Art Association traces its roots back to the fall of 1949. It was then that a group of VPI artists began talking about forming a small art group for the critical discussion of their own work. In 1950 a community art club was formed for those "interested in increasing the opportunities for enjoyment of the arts in Blacksburg." Its first show after formal organization was a two-man exhibition of sculpture by Dean Carter and paintings by John Laurent. Carter, who's *Head* is in the current exhibition, served many years on the Fine Arts Center board and continues to be a strong supporter of the FAC. A one-man show of his work was held there in 1995.

Since those early days, the BRAA has continued to provide public art offerings to the greater Blacksburg area, always on a volunteer basis. The dedication of so many artists and those interested in the arts to serve the organization for fifty years is exemplary. The BRAA and the FAC have been the two leading organizations sponsoring *New River Art*, the region's prestigious biennial juried art exhibition. *New River Art* will be held at the Fine Arts Center in 2001.

The BRAA primarily serves the Blacksburg/Montgomery County area of the New River Valley, offering a series of rotating exhibits in public areas of various businesses throughout the area. They also paid for a specially designed hanging system in the new Blacksburg Library. In addition, the association offers a lecture series on various arts related topics through its partnership with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and sponsors Montgomery County high school students at the Museum's Three Days in March program.

*Our Best of the Century* will bring many artists to the Fine Arts Center who have participated in one person or group shows there in the past. This will be the first BRAA member's show the Center has hosted. A special reception honoring these artists and the

Blacksburg Regional Arts Association will be held on Sunday, June 25, from 2:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon. The public is invited to come and help celebrate fifty years of arts in the New River Valley.

The Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley is a nonprofit organization serving the region for the past twenty-two years. Located at 21 West Main Street, Pulaski, business hours are 10:00 - 5:00, Monday through Friday; and 11:00 - 3:00, Saturday. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Center at 540-980-7363 or [facnrv@swva.net](mailto:facnrv@swva.net).

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*The Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley is partially supported by funding from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Center is a member of the Virginia Association of Museums, the Southeastern Museums Conference, and a Partner of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.*