

An Exhibit of Lowcountry Textures



The Beaufort Art Association is presenting a unique exhibition, "Sensual Surroundings: An Exhibit of Lowcountry Textures," in its gallery at 1001 Bay Street, now through April 4th. Headed by Donna Ireton's contemporary driftwood and pine needle sculptures, the artists featured in this exhibition incorporate a strong textural element in each piece in the exhibit. Also contributing to this show are these local gifted artists: Betty Betz, Tricia Gardner, Chris Kirk, Ellen Long, Carol Molten, Hetty Nijman, Penny Russell, Gay Torrey, and Cynthia Zeiss. The art works range from Donna's unique sculptural works to collage and mixed media, acrylics and photography. The show's unifying theme is the many glorious and sensual textures to be found in Lowcountry nature.

Ms. Ireton's sculptures, wall pieces and baskets are created using long leaf pine needle basketry on driftwood she has collected from Hunting Island and other local beaches, forests, and meadows, and from California mountains and beaches. After dyeing the pine needles, she creates colorful, decorative, and functional pieces which are unique to her vision and love of all things natural. Her goal is to create a sensual delight, both natural and contemporary at the same time. "I like it when people ask if they can touch my work," she explains. "I want them to reach out and stroke the woods, rest their hands on the basketry, and explore the nuances of the free-form works of art."

A work of art appeals to us for many reasons. It might be the scene that's depicted, something we are familiar with or something new and intriguing. It might be the emotion conveyed or a sense of nostalgia for an earlier time and experience. An abstract rendition arouses our curiosity about what the artist wanted to depict or maybe our imagination leads us to create our own interpretation. We may be attracted by strong vertical or horizontal composition or line, or by pastoral or urban settings. The addition of strong textural elements can arouse our senses to an even larger extent than other features. When an artist uses texture, our sense of reality and our appreciation of its beauty are heightened.