

Through the Purple Door

Written by Mark Shaffer

Wednesday, 23 November 2011 12:30 - Last Updated Wednesday, 23 November 2011 12:31



Down the alley and up the stairs, ArtLofts takes Beaufort's art scene to a whole new level.



THE CONTACT POINT

My first ever assignment for *Lowcountry Weekly* was to interview the author of *100 Best Small*

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Art Towns in America

. The Beaufort Guild of Galleries flew John Villani in for a weekend art event in February 2008. As I recall – much to the Guild’s chagrin – gale force winds and rains blew in right along with him.

Through the course of the conversation we discussed all of the elements that went into making a great art town. At the top of his list of priorities was working studio space.

“Artists have to be able to invest in the places where they have decided to make their stand,” he explained. At the time he believed Beaufort’s primary strength as an art town was its strong concentration of galleries. On the flip side he considered a near complete absence of working studios as part of the downtown art scene to be a crucial weakness. According to Villani the economic formula for an art town is simple. The basic ingredient is art, and to produce art one must have artists. The rest will follow.

“There has to be a visible presence of the arts. You have to have some degree of contact point in the arts scene where

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artist Mary Grayson Ogare and asked me to write a story about her. I was not a writer at the time, but I was a fan of her work and I was intrigued by the idea of writing a story about her. I was not a writer at the time, but I was a fan of her work and I was intrigued by the idea of writing a story about her.



My first story was about a girl who was a fan of the artist Mary Grayson Ogare and asked me to write a story about her. I was not a writer at the time, but I was a fan of her work and I was intrigued by the idea of writing a story about her.

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After "The Purple Door" was published, I received many letters from people who had read the book and were interested in the story. I was particularly struck by the fact that many of the letters were from people who had never read the book before. This was a surprise to me, as I had always assumed that the book was only of interest to those who had read it. I was also struck by the fact that many of the letters were from people who had never read the book before. This was a surprise to me, as I had always assumed that the book was only of interest to those who had read it.



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