

Art Matters



The Art of Collaboration

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” Edward Everett Hale

This quote by E. E. Hale is one of my absolute favorites as it illustrates the three essential steps in building a quality relationship. One could even break it down further by focusing on the one recurring theme- 'together'. Hale is best known for authoring *A Man Without a Country*, the lessons within just as pertinent today as they were when written at the height of the American Civil War. In his writings he reinforces the importance of the basic concept of social structure. I'm sure he would be thrilled to know that as a whole, humanity hasn't learned a bloody thing in the last 160 plus years. (Insert eyeroll here) But, if we step back from the big picture and focus on what we CAN more easily influence, such as personal relationships, our community, etc., than the above quote can be not only inspiring but almost a battle cry. The Art Center is the embodiment of this quote. From the classroom to the boardroom you can see the results of our membership coming together, keeping together and working together. This has led to not only our longevity, but our continued growth and roll in the Oak Ridge community and greater East Tennessee region. Quite honestly, I feel this is a trait shared by all the cultural organizations in Oak Ridge. It is nothing short of amazing to have such a wide variety of cultural assets not only survive, but thrive in a town of this size. Much of this is due to the cross-membership we have shared over the years. Passionate individuals have given much of their time and energy to support these cultural institutions. Now it is up to the organizations to not only continue building relations with each other, but I believe also with our governing body and civic organizations in general. In the hours before I sat down to write this, I received multiple calls about projects seeking our input and participation that I believe will be very exciting for our community as a whole. Without giving too much away, Bissell Park is looking to become a destination for year-round interactive experiences. I see a children's art program with a sister organization in the near future. The fusion of science and art will become a common theme from children's activities all the way up to our city's public spaces. Our own gallery walls will play host to literature, music and culinary events. (Because as my doctor told me, "Rex, you need more culinary events in your life." Yes, you can insert another eye-roll there.) A young family visited last week while researching the area because of a job opportunity. The mom actually choked up when I pointed out all the cultural organizations we have for their family to join. She said it made her feel like **they were home**. We're coming together, we're keeping together, we're working together; success is immanent. Peace!

March/April 2026

Inside this issue:

Collaborations	1
In the Gallery	2
Studio News	3
New Instructors	4
Souper Bowl	5



In the Gallery

We began 2026 with selections from Salvador Dali's illustrations for The Devine Comedy. This collection was generously donated to the Art Center by a private collector for the showing. A departure from the familiar, Dali created these images using the Paranoiac-critical method, a technique involving "the cultivation of a self-induced, delirious state to create hand-painted dream photographs" using watercolor techniques (gouache), which was later transferred to woodblocks for printing. In total there were 100 images created, even though the commission was pulled due to pressure from the Italian public. Also on display were recent acquisitions from the Pat Postma collection that she gifted to ORAC. This represents work from her very eclectic collection, the result of a lifetime of traveling the world. Mixed in were pieces that have been in our collection but not necessarily seen much, including the Art Center's Dalis.

Next up:

"The Power of Water"

OAK RIDGE ART CENTER EXHIBIT
MARCH 7 -APRIL 11

THIS JOINT EXHIBIT BRINGS TOGETHER 44 ARTISTS FROM EAST TENNESSEE AND 104 PAINTINGS.

THESE CREATIVE PAINTINGS PRESENT INNOVATIVE APPLICATIONS OF WATERMEDIA DEMONSTRATING THE EXCITEMENT AND VARIETY OF WATERMEDIA PAINTINGS.

WATERMEDIA INCLUDES WATERCOLOR AND ACRYLIC PAINTS AND INKS, GRAPHITE AND WATERCOLOR PENCIL, GOUACHE AND MARKERS.

THE EXHIBIT INCLUDES THESE MEDIA PAINTED ON VARIOUS MATERIALS: PAPER, YUPO, AQUABORD, CLAYBORD, GESSO BOARD, PAPER-BASED BOARD, CANVAS, AND COMBINATIONS OF THESE PLUS COLLAGE.

THIS EXHIBIT ALSO INCLUDES ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATION METHOD: GALLERY WRAPPED PAINTINGS, CRADLED PANELS, VARNISHED PAINTINGS AND INNOVATIVE FRAMING AS WELL AS TRADITIONAL PRESENTATION METHODS.

THE POWER OF WATER

CREATIVE PAINTINGS WITH WATERMEDIA



**Tennessee Watercolor Society
Eastern Regions**

And

Knoxville Watercolor Society



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It is no secret that classes at the Art Center are at times difficult to get into! One of our solutions for 2026 is to ramp up even more the number of weekend workshops we offer to the public. These workshops will often mirror our weekly classes in that they are taught by our regular instructors, but will usually center on specific techniques or projects that can be covered in one or two days. Other times we will bring in instructors that will cover options that we generally don't offer on a weekly basis. For instance we recently hosted Judy Brater who taught wonderful sculptural techniques in our clay studio, and Julie Bell who introduced enameling to a large group of our new metalsmithing students and public alike. Watch our Facebook feed for classes as they tend to come in short notice and fill quickly!



Member / Student Show Opportunity!

The great outdoors and open spaces are a hot topic for Oak Ridge these days, and rightfully so! The Art Center has the great fortune of being located next to a premier park setting while being surrounded by a vibrant wooded area. Recently we have added a discovery trail with seating, signage and more for those who wish to “get away” for a little reading, painting, or just taking in the scenery. This was possible through a generous grant from the **East Tennessee Foundation**, the incredible skill and contributions from Sean at **Southern Gravity**, and the generous donations and manhours from our volunteers. (We receive compliments daily on our gardens and outdoor spaces, but please, direct your appreciation to Connie and Matt when you see them out there working.) Even better, maybe offer to help them out when you have a free moment!

This show will celebrate the great outdoors; specifically, the Art Center's! Be inspired by our setting, the abundant wildlife that calls our woods “home”. Paint what you see. Use the natural materials to create your work. (Ink drawing with sticks, printing with leaves, texturing clay, etc.) Simply create work inspired by our natural beauty. Have your work ready by May 18th– This show is for Art Center students and our membership!

NEW INSTRUCTORS!

We welcome **FIVE** new instructors to the program to start the new year!

Jean Brantly, who was mentored by our very own Dawn Sherill, brings her infectious personality and fun teaching style to our Metalsmith studio. She has a knack for making even the raw beginner comfortable with the tools and processes of metalsmithing.

Joining the Pottery studio is the acclaimed **Lynn Fisher**, is a juried Southern Highlands, Foothills Craft Guild and Terra Madre clay artist. She is proficient both in hand building and the wheel, recognized by her intricate constructed floral designs and use of texture.

Chriss Hardy joins our Painting studio, winner of the *Hartford Courant Gold Key Award* and graduate of the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale. She is a studio painter out of Knoxville working primarily in oils, but also mixed media incorporating interesting textures.

Also joining the pottery program is **Teresa Oler**, a multi-talented artist that brings a strong sculptural background to the program. she is also being mentored by Dawn in fine metalsmithing to compliment her skill-set, which includes metals casting and varied sculptural mediums. Expect to see some unique workshops in the near future.

Julie Bell will be leading classes and workshops in the art of enameling. She has that unique combination of science background and artistic creativity that can make seemingly complicated processes both simple and beautiful.



Another Souper Bowl Success!

Commensality, the Latin term for the social act of eating together, is defined as "sharing a table" to build, strengthen, and foster community bonds. It is the belief that a shared meal is an opportunity for connection, empathy, and social cohesion. Nothing more accurately describes the Souper Bowl event held annually at the Art Center. In fact, I would go so far as to expand that definition to include the entire process of putting on the event, and not just the meal itself. It begins months in advance with the making of bowls and serving trays by our volunteers, made up of students, instructors and friends of the Art Center. The hours involved are almost incalculable. Yet using class time, working from home and meeting up for designated "soup bowl" work dates they produce an incredible variety of bowls for Souper Bowl participants to add to their collections. Our pottery department head Janet Brudecki needs to be called out for successfully coordinating these efforts and being the consummate cheerleader/taskmaster. This task was further complicated by several work days being lost due to winter weather closures. Thanks' to each and every one of the artists involved. And not that I have favorites, but I do have a soft spot for all of you who provided the wonderful breads and desserts for the dinner. (Seriously, there's a big soft spot between my chest and loosened belt from all the delicious baked goods I was obligated to test.) I discovered corn bread that this Great Plains palette could love, fresh breads, brownies, cookies and a chocolate cake from **VG's** that was sublime. I can't express enough how much we appreciate you taking the time and effort to provide this bounty for our event. And of course, what would Souper Bowl be without soup! Our donor restaurants and member cooks once again provided an exceptional variety of soups and chilis that made for some very hard decisions when it came to picking what to eat. For me the decision was quite simple– all eight or nine decisions... Below you will find a list of all the restaurants that contributed to this year's event. I highly encourage you to patronize these community orientated businesses who so generously donate their time and food for your enjoyment. Tell them you appreciate their support for the arts, then enjoy a meal in a business that has so generously given back to their community. And on the subject of giving back, I want to give a heartfelt thank you to every volunteer that participated. From set-up to showtime through clean-up, none of this happens without you! Our biggest fear every year is how do we pull off this tremendous amount of work, and how do we make the seatings fun and comfortable for those who attend. This year I was smothered in compliments from patrons as they left, saying how efficient everything was run and how pleasant the help was. Just as important, our core volunteers that are responsible for the overall operation of the event were gleeful over having so many hands available. Trust me, we've done it with fewer and it is anything but joyful. Seriously, having a 12 hour day instead of a 15 hour day was bliss!

Commensality– building, strengthening and fostering community bonds through the simple act of sharing a table and a meal. I can't think of a better solution to start bringing us back together. Cheers!

- **Secret City Butcher Shop**– Chicken Chili with Turmeric
- **Aubrey's**– Tomato Bisque
- **Buffalo Mountain Grill**– Black Bean Chili
- **Caramella's Bistro**– Potato Bisque
- **The Soup Kitchen**– Hearty Vegetable
- **Fire and Salt**– Beef and Potato Soup
- **Calhoun's**– White Chicken Chili
- **Burchfield's**– Loaded Potato Soup
- **Outback Steak House**– Creamy Onion
- **Hamock's**– Tomato Basil & Vegetable
- Special thanks to **Hope Cook**– Brunswick Stew; **Ryan Braby**– Bacon Cheeseburger Soup; **Suzanne Ferrara**– Italian Wedding Soup



Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Luncheon of the Boating Party*