

‘Prime, local real estate’ in the form of art for sale at ‘SAVANNOPOLY’

Josephine Johnson
For Savannah Morning News

What do you get when you combine some of the Hostess City’s most revered local artists creating portraits of some of the area’s most iconic streets, spaces and places? You get “SAVANNOPOLY.” And it’s back. Due to popular demand, this well-received 2021 debut returns for a second installment, Friday, Oct. 13, at Location Gallery, 251 Bull Street.

“SAVANNOPOLY” boasts 33 well-loved Savannah artists creating two portraits—all uniformly sized at 6” X 8”—that feature locations in and around the city. In total, nearly 70 works depict prime, local real estate that will adorn the walls of Location Gallery through mid-January 2024. A portion of all proceeds supports Coastal Empire Habitat for Humanity, which is celebrating its 40th year in Savannah.

Gallery Director Peter Roberts, innovation mogul curating the show, describes it as “the landscape-but-not-landscape-show” because each piece is oriented as a portrait, much like the orientation of real estate spaces on a Monopoly board—literally turning the concept on end.

“What makes this show particularly special is how each artist interprets a space or location through their own specific lens and style,” mused Roberts. “It’s the uniformity of installation contrasting with a multitude of styles that makes this show compelling. In 2021, we raised \$4,000 for Habitat, and I think what contributed to its success was patrons’ response to the work and its unusual way of documentation.”

In keeping with the Monopoly theme, deed cards with descriptions of art and artists are displayed beneath each work, and a Savannah-local Monopoly board serves as focal piece within the show. Artists Stacie Jean Albano, Claire Barrett, Bob Christian, Tate Ellington, Beth Logan, Jennifer Nolan, Lisa D. Watson and more represent some of the wide-ranging stylistic approaches to the show’s theme.

Heather Young, a returning artist, brings her soft-edged and muted-hued trees to the board. One of her works captures a line of moss-draped oaks along Drayton Street in her unmistakable, dreamy, pastel pallet. She recalls how the first SAVANNOPOLY show was packed on opening night and that many artists sold most of their work.

“I was there when this woman walked in and said ‘I’ll take all the Tate Ellingtons,’ which she did,” emphasized Young. “This show really is a great opportunity for local and visiting collectors to pick up a piece, or pieces, of real estate from their favorite artists. And what helps make this so brilliant is Peter has curated this fun show of local art in a real estate office in the middle of the Historic District. Just brilliant.”

Bernard Nolan, whose architectural paintings debuted earlier this year in his first solo show at the gallery, is a first-time contributor to “SAVANNOPOLY.” His work “Drayton Tower” captures the downtown icon after dark with a range of lights and colors illuminating the building. In front, Nolan has included a ’57 Chevy in homage of the building’s original mid-century construction date.

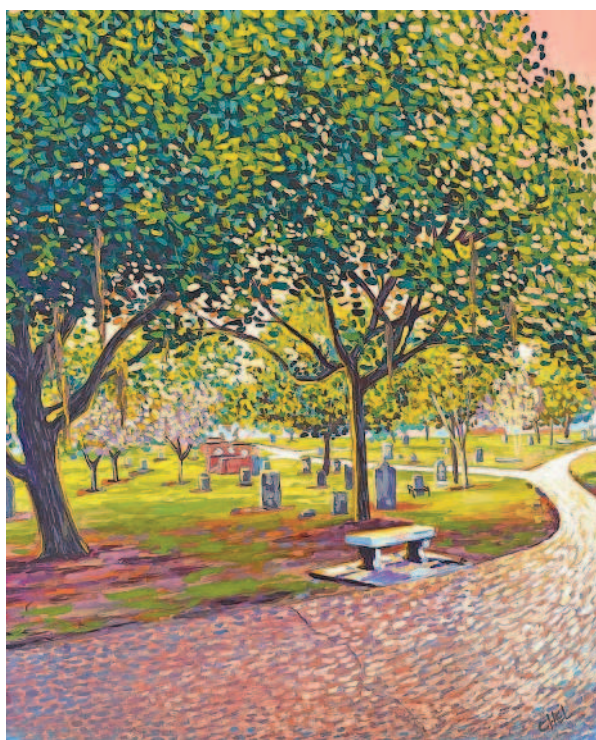
“First, it’s an honor to be part of anything Peter puts together,” beamed Nolan. “He is the art hub of Savannah in how he organizes and helps connect new artists with more established ones. Drayton Tower was definitely my first pick for this show. We’d been talking about me painting that one, and this turned out to be the show to do that. In some ways this painting is a con-



Bernard Nolan's 'Drayton Tower'



Bob Christian's 'Bluff Drive'



Michelle Perez's 'Colonial Cemetery'

PHOTOS COURTESY PETER ROBERTS OF LOCATION GALLERY

tinuation of my previous show “Savannah at Night” because I’m always interested in chasing interesting colored lighting, and Drayton Tower has all that and so many surfaces and intriguing angles.”

Michelle Perez returns to this year’s show with interpretations of The Cotton Exchange and Colonial Park Cemetery. For Perez, Colonial Park holds special reverence. It’s an easy walk from her home, and about two years ago she began venturing there for plein air

If You Go

What: SAVANNOPOLY is Back! Opening reception

Where: Location Gallery, 251 Bull St., Savannah

When: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., October 13

Cost: Free to attend

painting. While in the cemetery, she felt a sense of the unseen requesting her presence.

“I know it’s haunted, from the weird body feelings I experienced and how it felt that certain areas were calling me to paint them, it’s definitely haunted,” emphasized Perez. “And as I worked on this piece, I wanted to offer honor and reverence to that space. The pathways seemed important, and I focused on those. They offer a metaphor of how life continues even in death.”

In “Colonial Cemetery,” Perez works in sunset-inspired hues to capture the golden hour lingering softly over the park and its walkways. It conveys both ease and fulfillment, like a peaceful hug at the end of a warm summer’s day spent in love and laughter—the very picture of reverence and respect.

For Roberts, “SAVANNOPOLY” is one more way local art collectors and visitors to Savannah can come together and show a little love for local artists while also supporting an important non-profit. Roberts is swift to emphasize that a portion of proceeds goes directly to Habitat for Humanity of the Coastal Empire, with all funds remaining in the community.

“This show really is a win-win for artists and our local Habitat for Humanity chapter,” said Roberts. “Because last time, it was crazy, and all we did was sell art. We sold a lot of moderately-priced art from some of our most recognized artists. And that’s good for everyone, including Habitat. I’d say, if you’re planning on being here, you’d better be here early because stuff is going to go fast.”

Joanne Shaw Taylor to perform new music at District Live

Josephine Johnson
For Savannah Morning News

Blues artist Joanne Shaw Taylor was born to be a rock star. Raised in the Black Country of England—think John Bonham, Robert Plant, Beverley Knight—Taylor started playing guitar when she was just 8-years-old, immediately diving into B.B. King, Robert Johnson and Stevie Ray Vaughn. At age 16, while playing a breast cancer benefit in Birmingham, Dave Stewart (Eurythmics) was so taken with her playing that he asked her and her family to visit him in London to discuss being on his new recording label. Stewart also immediately asked her to join one of his touring projects. Taylor and her family said yes. And the rest is rock history.

Since 2009, Taylor has released eight internationally acclaimed studio albums, and for the first time she brings her sizzling blues guitar and soulful voice to Savannah. Taylor performs Wed., Oct. 18, at Plant Riverside’s District Live. Tickets start at \$35.

Guitar virtuoso Joe Bonamassa produced Taylor’s latest album

After joining Stewart and his supergroup S.U.P., Taylor stayed on the road with them for a year in the early 2000s. Taylor describes it as an “amazing time of learning and meeting new musicians, learning how to be on the road” with an array of high-level entertainers.

“We were opening for B.B. King, and my mom and I were backstage in the greenroom,” recalled Taylor. “And the door flew open, and we hear ‘Hi everybody, I’m B.B. King!’ It was the warmest, biggest entrance



Joanne Shaw Taylor to perform at District Live, Oct. 18. DISTRICT LIVE

I’ve ever seen anyone make and will always remember it fondly for how he lit up the room.”

In February 2009 in her mid-20s, Taylor released her debut album “White Sugar.” It garnered international acclaim and put her on the radar as an up-and-coming artist to watch. The release also opened new performance opportunities, including a blues festival in Norway where she met American guitar icon, Joe Bonamassa.

“I remember meeting Joe for the first time, we stayed up late and talked all night,” recalled Taylor. “He was the first person I’d met who’d also started out in music very young and was completely in the business at a young age. We formed a very important, artistic friendship that continues, and that’s a very special thing.”

Forged from a dedication to music and keen understanding of the business, the friendship between Taylor and Bonamassa solidified into a working creative partnership. Bonamassa produced Taylor’s most recent album “Nobody’s Fool,” released last October.

The title track opens with a bluesy riff that’s a little Joe-Walsh-meets-Jackson-Brown — it’s crisp, famil-

If You Go

What: Joanne Shaw Taylor

When: Wednesday, October 18, 8:00 p.m.

Where: District Live, Plant Riverside, 400 W. River Street, Savannah

Tickets: Start at \$35, plantriverside.com/district-live/

iar, catchy. But when Taylor’s vocals drop, that’s when the song takes off. Taylor possesses a timbre reminiscent of Susan Tedeschi but with a husk much thicker that firmly amplifies the smoky soulfulness of her voice.

Taylor also pays homage to Stewart on the album. She covers the Eurythmics classic, “Missionary Man,” and again, Taylor’s vocals stand out as the searing blues torch they are. Her voice simply scorches.

Last month, Taylor released “Sweet Lil Lies,” a single that will be part of an upcoming album. The tune is a dark, up-tempo pre-break up song. It doesn’t wallow or linger. It moves. Instead of writing the song on guitar, she sat down to write at the piano.

“You know, every day I play one instrument, the guitar, and I wanted to try something different. The piano forced me to write something different,” mused Taylor. “Then ‘sweet little lies’ stuck in my head, and I thought I had something. I went to dinner one night with Joe (Bonamassa), and he absolutely said I needed to write it. ‘Sweet Lil Lies’ is what came of it.”

From now until the end of November, Taylor is on a run of nearly 30 shows that take her through the South, Midwest and back to the Northeast before she returns to England for a brief break during the holidays. Taylor and her band play nearly 100 shows a year. The night before she plays Savannah, Taylor performs the Georgia Theatre in Athens.

Taylor is backed by a full band including bassist Steve Lehane, drummer Eric Savage, keyboardist Phil Whitfield, and Shane Saunders on guitar. And they all journey together on a tour bus.

“This summer I got a puppy, Hank, and he travels with us now,” said Taylor. “I’m looking forward to exploring Savannah for a few hours with Hank. I’m told it’s lovely this time of year, and I’m hoping to make and meet new Savannah fans.”