



Underwater Museum of Art

Press Kit 2022



umaf1.org  

About the Underwater Museum of Art



UNDERWATER
MUSEUM OF
ART

ABOUT THE UMA

The UMA is the first presentation of the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA)'s Art In Public Spaces Program and was produced in collaboration with the South Walton Artificial Reef Association (SWARA). The purpose of the UMA is to create art that becomes marine habitat, expanding fishery populations and providing enhanced creative, cultural, economic and educational opportunities for the benefit, education and enjoyment of residents, students and visitors in South Walton.

For more information, visit UMAFL.org.

Tag your photos with #UMAFL or @UMAFlorida on Facebook and Instagram.



ABOUT THE CULTURAL ARTS ALLIANCE OF WALTON COUNTY

As the creative core of Walton County, the Cultural Arts Alliance (CAA) of Walton County offers support, connection and access opportunities for all forms of art, every variety of maker, all levels of learners, and especially, art lovers. Through sponsorship, performance, and educational programs, the 501(c)(3) organization directly connects the people of Walton County with the broader view, the critical exploration, and the answers only the Arts have the power to provide. For more information, visit CulturalArtsAlliance.com.



ABOUT SWARA

SWARA is a grass-roots, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to raising funds to build permitted, beach accessible, artificial reefs in the gulf coastal waters of South Walton County Florida for the benefit and health of environment and community. To join SWARA in making a difference, visit SwaraReefs.org.



Top Awards & Articles

TIME Magazine's first annual World's Greatest Places list:

<https://time.com/collection/worlds-greatest-places-2018/>

CNN Travel:

<https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/underwater-museum-of-art-florida/index.html>

National Geographic:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/things-to-do-grayton-beach-underwater-museum>

The Smithsonian:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/coral-creatures-and-culture-floridas-underwater-museum-art-180969064/>

Conde Nast Traveler:

<https://www.cntraveler.com/gallery/us-scuba-diving-sites-worth-planning-a-trip-around>

Fodors:

<https://www.fodors.com/world/north-america/usa/florida/the-panhandle/experiences/news/this-is-definitely-one-of-the-stranger-places-to-have-a-museum>

Luxury Travel:

<https://www.luxurytravelmagazine.com/news-articles/south-walton-florida-an-unconventional-art-destination>

Thrillist:

<https://www.thrillist.com/travel/nation/this-slice-of-the-florida-panhandle-is-extra-chill-and-extra-gorgeous>

Architectural Digest:

<https://www.architecturaldigest.in/content/florida-underwater-museum-art/>

Outside:

<https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/exploration-survival/leg-found-at-sea/>

Travel Awaits:

<https://www.travelawaits.com/2477580/americas-first-underwater-museum-in-florida/>



Project Producer

Jennifer Steele

Executive Director, Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County

After receiving a BFA from Valdosta State University and then working in the development office in Atlanta's Center for Puppetry Arts, Jennifer moved to her childhood summer home of South Walton to co-found the Seaside Repertory Theatre, Northwest Florida's first professional yearround theatre company. She was the Rep's Managing Director and a professional actor for seven years before moving on to form a consulting firm for non-profit development, marketing and event production.

In 2008, Jennifer took on her current role as Executive Director of the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County, the Local Arts Agency that advances the arts through leadership, advocacy, funding, programs and education. She oversees the production of the ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival, 30A Songwriters Festival, Flutterby Arts Festival, and other large and small-scale events, including over 250 art workshops annually.

Under her leadership, the CAA has opened the county's first professional artist collective, The Foster Gallery (named for the CAA's founder), which showcases rotating regional artists, special exhibits and featured guest artists; and in 2018, the CAA launched the Underwater Museum of Art, a permanent underwater sculpture installation/reef, which is the first in the nation.

Jennifer has served as a member of the Walton County Tourist Development Council (TDC) and is past chair of the TDC's Arts, Culture, Events and Activities Committee, which implements the South Walton Artist of the Year program. She also serves on Visit Florida's Culture, Heritage, Rural, Nature committee. In 2016, she was awarded the Van Ness Butler, Jr. Hospitality Award, which recognizes excellence in hospitality service, travel/tourism marketing, advertising, promotion and contributions to the local community.

Jennifer lives with her family in Point Washington, FL.

Project Producer

Walt Hartley

SWARA President & Owner Dive30A

Growing up along the shores of South Walton, Walt Hartley fell in love with the water at a young age - "It's a part of me," he explains. "But being under the surface... that's my 'Zen' place." An avid spearfisherman, cave diver, and underwater videographer, Walt loves sharing his passion for the underwater world and introducing folks to all the possibilities and opportunities diving offers.



Walt has worked tirelessly to support the efforts of the South Walton Artificial Reef Association, joining the board in 2016, and serving as Board President since 2020. Frustrated by the lack of dedicated dive resources in our community, Walt began working to launch Dive30A to help share the wonders of our marine environment in a safe, fun, and convenient way. He believes "You shouldn't have to leave 30A to dive on 30A."

Dive30A is South Walton's premier dive operator located in the heart of Grayton Beach, Florida. We're the closest Dive Shop in the world to the USA's first Underwater Museum of Art! We currently offer Guided Snorkel Tours to Grayton Turtle Reef and Inlet Beach Grouper Reef, as well as Snorkel & Dive Gear Rental, plus some killer merchandise and Snorkel & SCUBA Gear and accessories for sale. Very soon we'll be running Dive Charters to the Underwater Museum of Art and beyond, plus taking care of all your Air Fill needs! Explore Beyond the Shore with Dive30A!

Visit dive30a.com for more info.



Project Producer

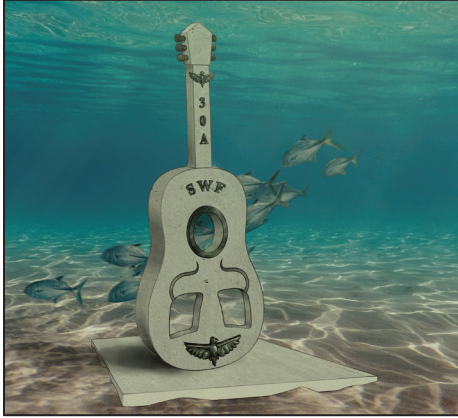
Allison Wickey

2018 UMA Artist

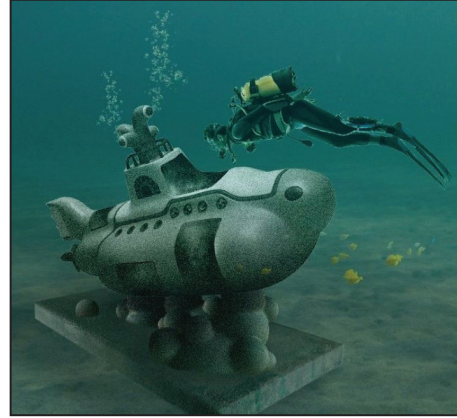
Allison Wickey resides on 30A in Blue Mountain beach, FL. She has been painting coastal scenery and coastal inspired abstracts on 30A since 2007. In 2011 she received South Walton Artist of the Year and in 2012 received BEST GALLERY on the Emerald Coast. Her passion for art and diving inspired her idea to bring the arts underwater in Walton County.

Allison has been a supportive member of the local arts community and longtime board member of the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County.

2022 Underwater Museum of Art Sculptures



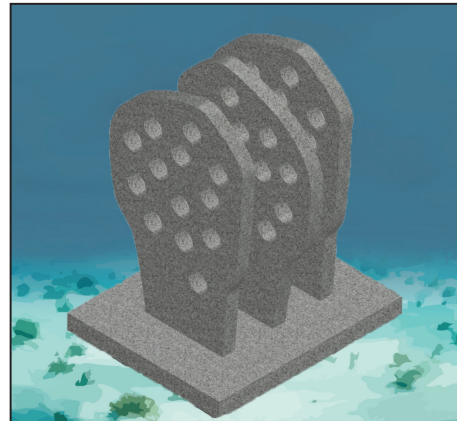
Common Chord
by Vince Tatum



We All Live Here
by Marisol Rendón

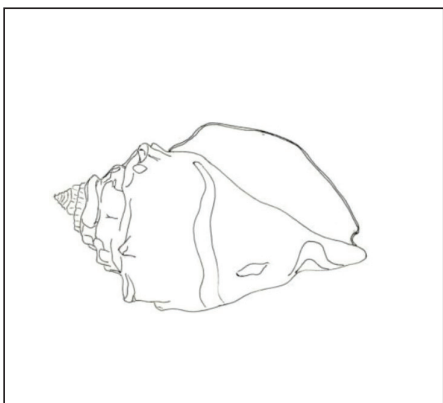


Arc of Nexus
by Tina Piracci

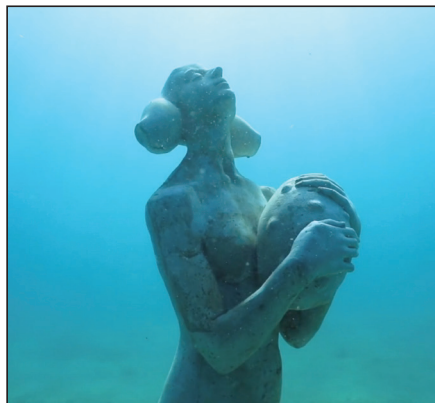


New Homes
by Janetta Napp

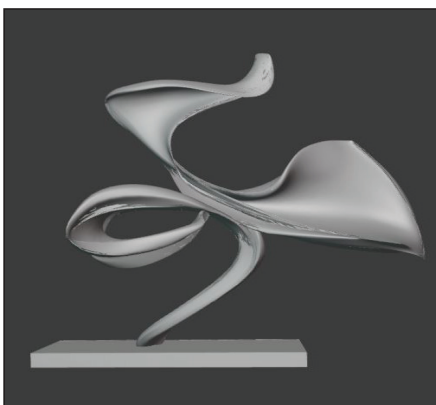
2022 Underwater Museum of Art Sculptures



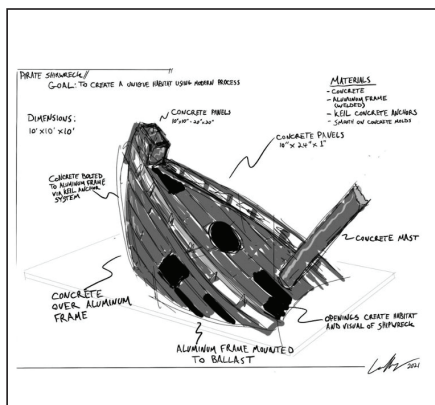
Fibonacci Conchousness
by Anthony Heinz May



The Seed and the Sea
by Davide Galbiati



Bloom Baby Bloom
by Brit Deslonde



Pirate Shipwreck
by Sean Coffey



Currents and Tafari
by Joe Adams

Artists Revealed For Fourth UMA Installation Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CULTURAL ARTS ALLIANCE OF WALTON COUNTY AND SOUTH WALTON ARTIFICIAL REEF ASSOCIATION REVEAL TEN DESIGNS SELECTED FOR FOURTH UNDERWATER MUSEUM OF ART INSTALLATION

SANTA ROSA BEACH, FL – The Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA) and South Walton Artificial Reef Association (SWARA) are proud to reveal the nine sculpture designs, including the UMA's first international selection, chosen by jury for permanent exhibition in the fourth installation of the Underwater Museum of Art (UMA).

The 2022 installation will include the following pieces of sculpture: ***Currents and Tafari*** by Joe Adams (Ventura, CA) ***Pirate Shipwreck*** by Sean Coffey (Pittsburgh, PA), ***Bloom Baby Bloom*** by Brit Deslonde (Santa Rosa Beach, FL), ***The Seed and The Sea*** by Davide Galbiati (Valreas, France), ***Fibonacci Conchousness*** by Anthony Heinz May (Eugene, OR), ***New Homes*** by Janetta Napp (Honolulu, HI), ***Arc of Nexus*** by Tina Piracci (Richmond, CA), ***We All Live Here*** by Marisol Rendón (San Diego, CA), and ***Common Chord*** by Vince Tatum (Santa Rosa Beach, FL).

Named in 2018 by TIME Magazine as one of 100 "World's Greatest Places," the UMA is presented as part of CAA's Art In Public Spaces Program and augments SWARA's mission of creating marine habitat and expanding fishery populations while providing enhanced creative, cultural, economic and educational opportunities for the benefit, education and enjoyment of residents, students and visitors in South Walton.

UMA sculptures are deployed with SWARA's existing USACOA and FDEP permitted artificial reef projects that includes nine nearshore reefs located within one nautical mile of the shore in approximately 58 feet of water. The 2022 installation will join the 25 sculptures previously deployed on a one-acre permit patch of seabed off Grayton Beach State Park, further expanding the nation's first permanent underwater museum.

Deployment of the 2022 UMA installation is slated for Summer. Visit UMAFL.org for more information on timeline and events surrounding UMA's launch. Project and sculpture sponsorships are available. Please contact Gabby Gallaway at gabby@culturalartsalliance.com for sponsorship details.

2022 UMA SCULPTURE AND ARTIST DETAILS:

CURRENTS AND TAFONI is a limestone sculpture by artist Joe Adams. Adams will create a vortex of shell-like structural anatomy, whirling currents providing curve-linear "shelves" for coral to live abundantly with three hole spaces between allowing fish to flow through it. The sculpture will be shaped with diamond saws, grinders, air hammers and hand worked with chisels and files. The "detail" will be in the larger sense of how the curves and spaces interact with each other allowing for future coral expansion, like the 12 visible shallow embossed shapes mimicking "Tafari" erosion to propagate coral reproduction. There is a sense of playful dance in this concept, providing a harmony with water currents and the movement of marine life.

PIRATE SHIPWRECK designer Sean Coffey is based in Pittsburgh, PA. His concept is based on the visual aesthetics of a sunken pirate ship. With years of ultra high performance concrete design experience coupled with more than a decade of building custom metal sculptures and structures, he will create a sunken pirate ship from 1/2" thick aluminum angle and clad it in custom poured concrete planks that resemble wood creating the framework of a sunken ship buried in the sand. As sand and coral eventually consume the sculpture, it will resemble a ship that was lost long before its placement. The piece will be large enough to allow fish and other sea creatures to utilize the structure as a habitat also allowing divers to interact safely.

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BLOOM BABY BLOOM Florida-based artist Brit Deslonde's inspiration was heavily influenced by the textures, forms and flows that she holds dear when thinking about her diving experiences. She wanted to create a piece that felt positive, and reflected the hope that artificial reefs and reef restoration bring, while still providing a welcoming home to fish and flora that may find their home in her artwork. The "off balance" yet elevated structure to her sculpture signifies strength where we can find it, (albeit from where we don't expect it at times) and the uplifting nature of those who put forth the effort to find that strength, especially for causes that may not give personal gain such as this.

THE SEED AND THE SEA artist Davide Galbiati's goal at the UMA is to educate the public on the fragility of marine ecosystems and the importance of preserving the balance of marine life with all of its members. To succeed in his message, he relies on the metaphor of the Seed in Nature. The Seed... nothing is more important in Nature. It represents the matrix which will make it possible to have thousands of trees. For Nature what matters is the seed. It conquered territory, redraws landscapes, transformed biodiversity, got involved in fragile interstices, and was reborn after destruction. The information that is contained within it must be transmitted. This is the seed's mission: to transmit. The surface of the statue will allow the development of new plant and animal organisms; the sculpture itself will be transformed into a Seed, into a matrix which will allow a new Life and which will have to be protected.

Readers may recognize **FIBONACCI CONCHOUSNESS** artist Anthony Heinz May from his recent Roost and Puddle sculpture addition to the Watersound® Monarch Art Trail. His concrete conch shell design for the UMA reflects site-responsive specificity of location of UMA and existentialism between museum goers, natural/human-built environments and precarious human-nature relationships. The conch will lay on its side with flanges extending from a welded frame substrate of steel rod/wire mesh underneath layered concrete. This tested true prototype holds the highest structural integrity and best suitable for the natural underwater environment as well transport/install methodologies. Conch shells can be found along Florida Panhandle beaches while combing sands near the water's edge, however in small sizes and typically commandeered by rogue hermit crabs. The increasing scarcity of conches housing sea snails and mollusks from years of harvesting Florida waters has made them illegal for anyone to remove. Several narratives of the conch include sacred Native American histories, musical instrumentation, used in cultural recipes, as well exemplified in mathematical formula established by Leonardo Fibonacci in the 13th century. Architecture uses ratios in designs elucidated by the conch as a form of pure aesthetic. In reclamation by algal plant life and for organisms to anchor, the intentions of his proposal continue expansion of his public art portfolio which include concepts involving nature, humans and technology. Reinvestment of the organic existence of large conch shells once omnipresent in these tropical waters pay homage to nature, natural cycles and patterns. Remnants of conch shells wash ashore along the Northwestern Panhandle of Florida as archeological fragments depicting severity of history in travel to where it lay in the sand. The perilous trip of conch shells, affected by storms, laws of entropy and human intervention in natural environments, is reversed in his sculpture which depicts the conch shell as a complete and unbroken whole.

Hawaii-based artist Janetta Napp is creating an abstract cement sculpture, **NEW HOMES**, that alludes to a row of cone snail egg casings reimagined as three vertical ovule panels. In total, the three panels together will weigh approximately 2090 lbs and will be 36" long. This piece is titled New Homes because each panel will have identical 6" diameter holes and randomly scattered .5" diameter indentations approximately .5" deep. One hole will line up across all three panels so that if a diver is facing the front of the sculpture, they could see through to the other side. These holes and indentations will create resting places and encourage marine life to settle. Each panel will be set approximately 1' apart and will alternate front and back to provide an asymmetrical appearance like a row of cone snail egg casings. To create this artwork, Napp will use clean concrete cement reinforced with rebar and stainless-steel mesh connected with stainless steel ties to create a rough grid within, reinforcing each panel. Her fascination with the aquatic world has led her to volunteer for marine research projects with the University of Hawai'i sparking her interest in the combination of science and art. By creating an artificial reef structure, she can contribute to the conservation of coral reefs.

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From the depths of our reefs, to the soft tissue in our heads controlling our every move, the reaction-diffusion pattern expressed in **ARC OF NEXUS** from artist Tina Piracci exemplifies the synergy and wonder of the macrocosm we live in today. Enchanted by the uncanny echo of these patterns across various scales, the artist aims to illuminate similar algorithmic arrangements through the intersection of science and art. Inspired by Vitruvius and DaVinci, the divine connections found in nature influence Piracci to create and research within the context of the natural world. This imaginary portal acts as a passage between realms inviting the viewer to investigate and understand the world around them. The process of this work included drawing this diffusion pattern from personal photos gathered on diving trips around various coasts in Florida, some of which were restoration trips with the Coral Restoration Foundation. With a sister sculpture located in St. Petersburg, this doorway acts as the underwater portal to its counterpart. Doors and portals are often a theme in Piracci's work as they allude to "another realm." Through dreams and weird coincidences, the artist finds this notion of a portal intriguing as a threshold between worlds. Inspired by her passed brother who visits her in dreams through misplaced mysterious doorways, these works provide the artist with the hope of another world. Through exploring the patterns found in nature, Piracci emphasizes the magical nature of the world as we can find the same structures in our eye's irises out in the cosmos. Connections like these bring life to the artist as she knows she must protect nature as it is the one thing she holds sacred.

WE ALL LIVE HERE artist Marisol Rendón believes being underwater changes our experience of gravity and time. It makes us aware of our breath. We are acutely aware we are visitors to another world bound by very different rules. This change of perspective, and the mindfulness it helps to generate is a main ingredient in experiencing art within UMA, and is the foundation for fantasy, interspecies empathy, and activism. *We All Live Here...* proposes a further change of perspective as we peer in through the open portals of a submerged submarine and the fish that will find refuge within its form peer back out at us. *We All Live Here...* will echo the playful and ever recognizable silhouette of the Beatles Yellow Submarine. Its round volumetric form constructed of stainless steel and clean concrete mortar invites us to let our imaginations wander into a fantasy realm where ocean animals come to visit us in their own "submarine," or, where unlikely heroes battle the injustices of uncaring Blue Meanies. Physically the form of the submarine will be hollow with special attention paid to proper turtle ingress and egress points by strategically "removing" panels from the hull. As to keep the submarine playful and not feel as though it has been wrecked at the bottom of the ocean the piece will be elevated above the mounting plinth on a series of organic forms that mimic large bubbles. Further interactive possibilities will be explored through some of the faux mechanical details of the vessel, like the 4 periscopes, propeller, portholes and such. It is Rendón's hope that as that catchy refrain "We all live in a yellow submarine..." plays in visitors' heads they remember the creatures they saw that day sharing space within that vessel.

The Gulf of Mexico and live music are two common chords that bring people together on 30A according to artist Vince Tatum. His sculpture, **COMMON CHORD**, combines these two local loves by joining music with nature in perfect harmony. The sculpture is a celebration of the natural beauty that surrounds us all and brings us together. Whether it's gathering on the beach with Osprey soaring overhead, playing in the Gulf while stingrays glide below, or dancing like nobody's watching while the band plays into the night. The natural beauty of it all, brings us together. It's the Common Chord. The sculpture will be a beneficial addition to UMA as it is designed to be a thriving marine habitat that will add visual interest for divers. The hollow stingrays and sound hole features of the guitar will make cozy coral-nooks for creatures to take up residence. The body of the sculpture will encourage coral growth with an ample clean cement surface and quickly become its own marine ecosystem.