



Williamsburg County School District

"Imagine Greatness"

Post Office Box 1067 • Kingstree, South Carolina 29556
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Dr. Angela K. Jacobs, Interim Superintendent

January 5, 2025

MALIK HAYWARD SELECTED FOR THE 2026 ARTFIELDS FESTIVAL, ONE OF THE SOUTHEAST'S LARGEST ANNUAL ART COMPETITIONS

Malik Hayward, Art Teacher at Greeleyville STEAM Academy is honored to announce his acceptance into the 2026 ArtFields Festival, a prestigious art competition that anchors the 17-day festival, held annually in Lake City, South Carolina. Through the festival, ArtFields transforms the town of Lake City into a massive gallery experience, showcasing a diverse range of works by nearly 400 selected artists from across the Southeast. The festival awards over \$100,000 in prizes each year and draws thousands of visitors, curators, collectors, and art lovers from across the country.

"This year we had well over 1,000 submissions, making this achievement something to celebrate," said Caitlin Bright, the festival director. "We're so excited to display works from these artists for even longer than usual in April."

Malik Hayward will exhibit RAIN, a work that explores grief, faith, resilience, and remembrance. This work reflects personal loss while emphasizing spiritual endurance, healing, and the strength revealed through pain and adversity. RAIN is an acrylic painting on canvas in honor of the Hayward's mother, integrating both personal narrative with spiritual symbolism. Her direct gaze towards the viewer establishes presence and connection, while imagery from Hayward's earlier work R.E.A.C.H. appears within her eyes, representing faith and resilience. The background depicts the actual site of her passing, illuminated into a night landscape of memory. On March 17, 2022, she was struck by a drunk driver while walking home in Rockdale, Georgia. As part of the KEEP GOING series, the work affirms perseverance, healing, and the enduring power of love after loss.

During the festival, artworks are displayed in venues across the downtown area, including renovated warehouses, shops, restaurants, and historic buildings.

"I feel deeply humbled to be a part of this year's ArtFields Competition & Festival, one of the Southeast's largest and most esteemed visual arts festivals, where the vibrant art community inspires and uplifts me to grow as an artist. I firmly believe that connecting with fellow artists from across the region and experiencing their unique stories in a shared exhibition is truly remarkable. Understanding the artist's intent provides an enriching

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experience and deeper insights about the artwork's significance. ArtFields Competition & Festival embraces a town-wide immersive art gallery that welcomes people from all walks of life. I am grateful to be involved in a festival that radiates love for art and community." said Hayward

ArtFields recently announced that its 2026 Festival would be nearly double the length of previous years to accommodate growing crowds, expanded programming, and increased opportunities for participating artists. In addition to the visual art competition, the festival also includes a student art competition, a makers market, a Plein air event, a portrait contest, live entertainment, and much more.

Submitted artwork was rated by a panel of art professionals, and the highest-rated works were invited to participate in the festival. The selection panel this year includes Mitchell Burleson, the 2025 Grand Prize winner; Ben Davis, author and art critic for ArtNet news; Lauren Schell Dickens, chief curator at the San José Museum of Art; Christopher Ho, artist and curator; and Anne Collins Smith, chief curator of the New Orleans Museum of Art. The 2026 ArtFields Festival takes place April 10th – May 2nd, 2026 in Lake City, SC.

For more information on the artist or their exhibition details, please visit:

Instagram and Facebook | @Yung4LifesArt or Malik Hayward

Learn more about ArtFields at: www.artfieldssc.org

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