



Photo by Elizabeth DuBose

Ossabaw: Place of the Yaupon Holly

The name Ossabaw is widely believed to be derived from a Muskogean word that loosely translates to “land of holly” or “holly bush growing place.” Ossabaw has historically been recorded by early European cartographers as “Osbo,” “Hoospa,” and “Osspo.” The holly bush refers to the yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) that grows abundantly across the island.

Yaupon is “an evergreen shrub or tree that is loved for the colorful berries it produces on the female plants. Yaupon is dioecious, which means that male and female flowers are born on separate plants. Male yaupon hollies do not produce berries. The berries can be red, orange, or even yellow, and birds and other wildlife will feed on them through the winter months. Both male and female plants produce small white flowers in spring which attract pollinators. Their small leaves are oval, serrated, and dark green.”

Yaupon holly is also known as cassina (derived from the Timucuan language, a northern Florida tribe.) Yaupon is native to coastal areas from the Tidewater region of Virginia to the Gulf Coast of Texas. It was a valuable pre-Columbian commodity and was widely traded.

Yaupon is the only plant native to North America that contains the stimulants caffeine and theobromine in its leaves. This caffeinated beverage of choice for indigenous North Americans was also known as the black drink. The leaves were roasted and steeped in water to make a tea that was consumed daily. A stronger version of the tea was used as part of a rite-of-passage type purification ceremony witnessed by early European explorers.

Continued on page 9...



Executive Director's Letter

There are times when it seems that the universe is trying to send a message. For the Ossabaw Island Foundation (TOIF), this past summer was one of those times. A mailing and a phone call from two different sources brought into the forefront the need for TOIF to formalize a way for our supporters to leave bequests in support of our work.

The phone call was from an Ossabaw friend who just moved away from the Georgia coast. The move made her realize how passionate she is about Ossabaw Island and the work of TOIF, and that she wanted to include TOIF in her will. She wondered if there was any special wording she should include in her estate planning documents.

It was obvious that TOIF needed to create a “Leave a Legacy” page on our website to answer these and other planned giving questions. “How do I donate stocks? What if I wanted to make an IRA charitable rollover? What if I have a life insurance policy I don’t need and want to make TOIF a beneficiary?”

Days later we received the sad news of the death of a 1974 director of Genesis (the interdisciplinary “back to the land” program held at Middle Place on Ossabaw Island.)

Within the month we received a packet from her attorney letting us know that she included TOIF in her will.

These generous acts motivated TOIF to establish the **Sandy West Ossabaw Champions**—a legacy donor recognition named in honor of Eleanor “Sandy” Torrey West (1913 - 2021) whose vision of Ossabaw Island led her and her family to preserve the island by selling it to the State of Georgia in 1978 with permanent preservation and use restrictions. (It was Mrs. West and her husband Clifford who established and led the Ossabaw Island Project and Genesis, two interdisciplinary creative programs.)

Anyone who includes TOIF in their estate plans is eligible to be a Sandy West Ossabaw Champion. These are people who have assured their commitment to sustaining Ossabaw Island and its Heritage Preserve designation beyond the span of their lifetime by making TOIF a beneficiary in their will, life insurance policy, IRA, or final stock distribution.

Joining the Ossabaw Champions is simple: send us an email or letter notifying us of your intent and we’ll send you everything you need to get started, or go to ossabawisland.org/give to learn more. We welcome inquiries from those of you who may have already remembered Ossabaw in your legacy planning, as well as those who are just beginning those plans.

In my 25 years with TOIF, I have witnessed thousands of acts of generosity that have provided the majority of the funding for our work; from one-time major gifts to the vital recurring support in the form of small or large yearly donations from every corner of the United States. Each gift, regardless of its size, feels like a vote of confidence that our work is making a difference on Ossabaw Island and Georgia’s coast, and that we are carrying on the legacy established by Mrs. West. As a Sandy West Ossabaw Champion you will make a significant and positive impact on Ossabaw’s future.

Elizabeth DuBose
Executive Director
Ossabaw Island Foundation

Be a Champion of Ossabaw – Join the Sandy West Ossabaw Champions!





Illustration by Islenia Milien for *The New Yorker*

Ossabaw Night in Savannah

Armstrong Center

Lecture by Dr. Paul M. Pressly, Director Emeritus, OIEA

January 18th

5 p.m. Reception | 6 p.m. Program

Free & Open to the Public!

A Southern Underground Railroad: Titus of Ossabaw Island, 1767 - 1797 Lecture by Dr. Paul M. Pressly, Director Emeritus, Ossabaw Island Education Alliance

Paul Pressly offers a prelude to his forthcoming UGA Press book *A Southern Underground Railroad: Black Georgians and the Promise of Spanish Florida and Indian Country*, scheduled for publication in fall 2024. His new book is the culmination of a decade of research that began when he discovered the existence of Titus, an enslaved African American born on Ossabaw Island in 1767. Paul first published an article “The Many Worlds of Titus: Marronage, Freedom, and the Entangled Borders of Lowcountry Georgia and Spanish Florida,” in the *Journal of Southern History* in August, 2018. The idea of maroons, people who escape slavery to create independent hidden communities, enlivened Pressly’s research. He expanded his work to include the network of these communities stretching from the Savannah River into Spanish Florida.

From UGA Press: “The Southeast provided a vital connecting link between the Black self-emancipation that occurred during the American Revolution and the growth

of the Underground Railroad in the final years of the antebellum period. From the beginning of the revolutionary war to the eve of the First Seminole War in 1817, hundreds and eventually several thousand Africans and African Americans in Georgia crossed the borders and boundaries that separated the Lowcountry from the British and Spanish in coastal Florida and from the Seminole and Creek people in the vast interior of the Southeast. Even in times of peace, there remained a steady flow of individuals moving south and southwest, reflecting the aspirations of a captive people.”

Pressly’s lecture on Ossabaw Night will focus on Titus as a key figure in this little-known chapter of the origins of the emancipation movement. Pressly’s research shows that “the movement by self-emancipating Blacks across borders was an integral part of the sustained struggle for dominance in the Southeast, not only among the Great Powers, but also among the many different racial, ethnic, and religious groups that inhabited the region and contended for control.”



Visit Ossabaw Island in 2024!

Photo by Kathryn Kolb

How to Register: The following trips are open to the public. Fees vary. To register for all Ossabaw Island Foundation-sponsored events, visit ossabawisland.org OR call 912-344-3900 OR scan the QR codes below. Pre-registration required.

Get Creative on Ossabaw: Winter Day Trip

Sat. February 3

Paint, sketch, write, or take photos on Ossabaw Island. Let the island be your muse. After a brief history presentation, you'll have several hours to wander the North End on your own and make art.



Super Museum Sunday on Ossabaw Island

Sun. February 11

Visit Ossabaw Island as part of Georgia History Festival's statewide Super Museum Sunday event. This afternoon walking tour of Ossabaw's North End is free-of-charge for island admission, with only a \$50 boat fee.



Creative four day, three night retreat

Fri. February 16 – Mon. February 19

Spend three nights on Ossabaw Island creating. This is a "no agenda" time for creativity, writing, drawing, painting, image making time on Ossabaw Island.



Day Trip Tour of Ossabaw Island's North End

Sat. April 6

A day trip to the island's North End for an interpretive tour that includes ecology and history, plus time on your own for exploring.



Photography by Elizabeth DuBose

Ossabaw Island Descendants Heritage Day

Sat. May 11

Did your parents, grandparents or other ancestors live, work or own land on Ossabaw Island from 1760 - 1980? Were you an Ossabaw Island Project member or a Genesis member? This springtime gathering brings Ossabaw's people together for a day of food, friendship, history, and remembrance.



Get Creative on Ossabaw: Day Trip

Sat. June 1

Paint, sketch, write, or take photos on Ossabaw Island. Let the island be your muse. After a brief history presentation, you'll have several hours to wander the North End on your own and make art.



Lift Every Voice: Ossabaw Island and Pin Point Fee-Free Day Trip

Sat. August 10

This morning walking tour of the North End Plantation site provides an overview of Ossabaw's African-American and Gullah-Geechee culture and history; followed by an afternoon visit to the Pin Point Heritage Museum in the community established by formerly enslaved people from Ossabaw Island.



Turtle Hatching Day Trips

Sat. August 24 or Sun. August 25

Accompany Georgia DNR Sea Turtle Conservation Program interns as they inventory loggerhead turtle nests for eggs and live hatchlings on Ossabaw Island's South Beach. In 2023 there were 22,063 sea turtle hatchlings on Ossabaw.



A Hands-On Indigo Dyeing Experience: Ossabaw Island Indigo Day Trips

Sat. September 21 or Sun. September 22

Elizabeth DuBose and Mark Frissell share the history of Ossabaw indigo and provide instruction on creating fresh leaf indigo dye vats and guide participants through the dyeing process.





OSSABAW ISLAND

Foundation & Education Alliance

2023 by the Numbers



emerged sea turtle hatchlings recorded.
4 day trips to observe the Georgia Sea Turtle Program interns inventorying nests.



2,210

hosted visits.
904 day trippers
1,306 overnights



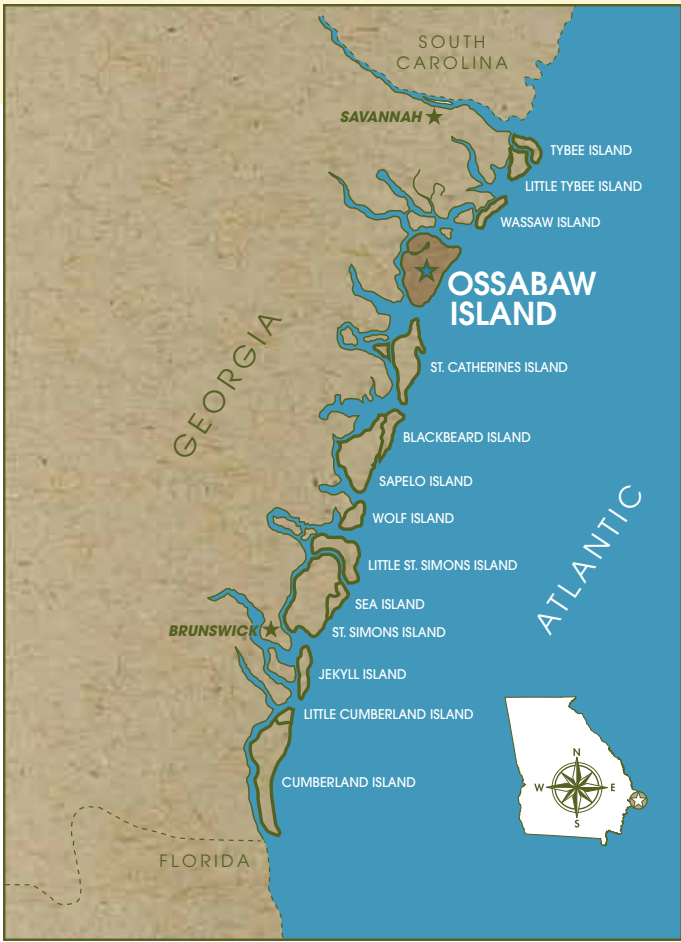
U.S. states
are home to
Ossabaw friends.



trips organized by
partner organizations,
18 new partner trips,
52 return/repeat
partner organized trips.



program days. 11 months of on-island programs
21 trips were open to the public
(TOIF and partner-hosted)



Ossabaw Island Foundation & Education Alliance Partners

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

- Sea Turtle Conservation Program
- State Parks and Historic Sites Division
- Wildlife Resources Division

Board of Regents of the State of Georgia

- Georgia Southern University
 - Armstrong Center
 - Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art
 - College of Education
 - College of Science and Mathematics
 - Department of History

University of Georgia

- Center for Archaeological Sciences
- Skidaway Institute of Oceanography
- UGA Press

Coalition to Save Butler Island

Coastal Museums Association

Georgia Conservancy

Georgia River Network

Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation

Giving Kitchen

The Landings Association

Leadership Bryan County

The Learning Center at SCI

Location Gallery

Moon River District

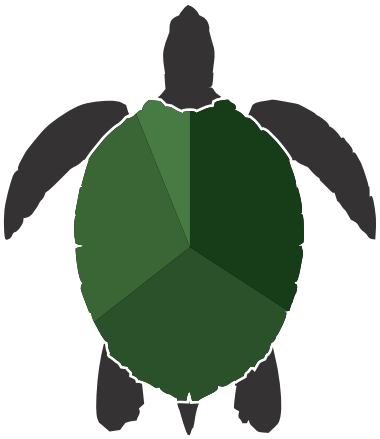
Oglethorpe Charter School

One Hundred Miles

Ossabaw Island Writers' Retreat

Pennsylvania State University

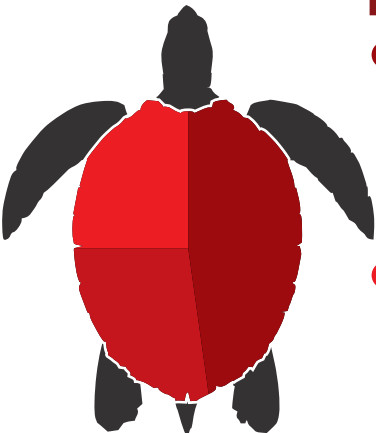
Pin Point Heritage Museum



2022 / 2023 Financial Report (July 31 - August 1)

REVENUE • \$454,600

- On Island Revenue: 34%
- Fundraising Events: 30%
- Donations: 29%
- Grants: 6%



EXPENSES • \$454,600

- On Island Expenses: 48%
 - cleaning, maintenance & repairs of buildings & equipment
 - transportation to/from Ossabaw
 - on-island staffing
- Reserves 25%
- General & Administration 27%
 - staffing
 - printing & postage
 - Ossabaw Night in Savannah expenses
 - Pig Roast expenses
 - audit fees

Ossabaw Fund Contributors

Thank you to the following donors to the Ossabaw Fund who contributed in May - October 2023. Your generous donations comprise 29% of our operating budget; this allows the Foundation the opportunity to share Ossabaw Island with the world. Thank you!

Anne Ambrose
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**DONATE
TODAY:**



Continued from page 1...

Ossabaw: Place of the Yaupon Holly

Both Carl Linnaeus, the Swedish botanist, and William Aiton, an eminent British botanist and horticulturist, are credited with giving yaupon the scientific name it bears to this day: *Ilex vomitoria*. *Ilex* is the genus commonly known as holly. *Vomitoria* roughly translates to “makes you vomit.” This name prevented cassina or yaupon from being a successful commercial commodity. Some research suggests that the name was part of a conspiracy to tamp down the trade of yaupon tea in favor of the East India Company’s virtual monopoly on the traditional tea trade.

Early settlers did trade with the indigenous for yaupon, sending it back to Europe under several different names. The English called it Carolina tea, South Seas tea and cassina. Spanish settlers referred to yaupon as Indian chocolate because of its sweet flavor. The French referred to Yaupon as Appalachine after the Apalachicola tribes that had taught them about the plant. Yaupon was also known as liberty tea, sent to Boston to replace imported tea after the Boston Tea Party. “Cassina was so abundant on the coast,” writes Charles M. Hudson in *Black Drink: A Native American Tea*, “that it could be drunk by the poor; hence it became déclassé.” Today it’s better known as yaupon, and it’s mostly planted as an ornamental throughout the southeastern United States.

On Ossabaw Island, the Ossabaw Island Foundation features yaupon holly as a history, science and culture educational program. As part of the program we brew yaupon leaves that have been harvested and roasted on the island, and serve the tea to our guests.

In 2010, island host and coastal naturalist John “Crawfish” Crawford made yaupon tea as part of a program for a coastal ecology weekend group. Program participants Kevin Ryan and Meredith Sutton, owners of Savannah’s Service Brewing Company, were inspired to create a unique craft beer brewed with yaupon tea. Since then, each fall, Service brews and serves an Ossabaw beer flavored with yaupon. This year’s brew is Boneyard Double IPA; it was served at the 2023 Ossabaw Island Pig Roasts.

Gardeners interested in cultivating a little bit of Ossabaw Island in their backyard can find this native plant at most nurseries or garden centers. Consider yaupon for a hedge, screen, barrier, or grow it in a large pot. Yaupon holly’s fast growth rate and small leaves make it a perfect choice for topiary—or for an abundant backyard source of home brew Ossabaw tea.

Sources: *American Botanical Council* herbalgram.com; *University of Florida* gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu; *Black Drink: A Native American Tea*, Hudson, Charles M. (ed.), UGA Press; atlasobscura.com/articles/what-is-yaupon-tea-cassina



John “Crawfish” Crawford, coastal naturalist and Ossabaw Island host, relaxes at the foot of the oldest tree on Ossabaw Island. Photo by Elizabeth DuBose.

Watch How to Brew Yaupon Tea
with John “Crawfish” Crawford



Boneyard Double IPA is Service Brewing Company’s 2023 yaupon brew, inspired by Ossabaw Island. Photo courtesy of Service Brewing Company.



Artwork by Craig Rubadoux

Thank You

To Our 2023 Ossabaw Island Three Little Pig Roasts Sponsors

Ecology Wildlife Foundation Fund • Janette and David Long

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Paul and Jane Pressly • Savannah Coastal Ecotours • Service Brewing Co. • South State Bank
Southern Environmental Law Center • Alice Steyaart • Zelda Tenenbaum

Beryl Gilothwest • Susan Hancock • Kurt Knoerl • Susan Laney • Mark McDonald

Thank you to all of our Pig Roast volunteers: Betsy Cain, Brad Christman, Beryl Gilothwest, Leigh Goff, Cam Mathis, Sarah Morrison, Ben Wells, Charlie Wells, and Diane Whitehurst. Special thanks to Robert Cooper, Erica Davis Lowcountry, and Sweet Potatoes Kitchen for the pig roast feast. Photos by Stacey Wells Photography.



Ossabaw Summer of Art Recap:

Thank you to our contributing artists and gallery partners

The summer of 2023 was hot on Ossabaw Island and a hot one for Ossabaw artwork! Three art galleries in Savannah held separate exhibitions benefiting TOIF. The paintings, mixed media works and fine crafts on exhibition and for sale around Savannah reflected the diversity of artists who have been inspired by Ossabaw, and the diversity of subjects on our unspoiled island.

The “anchor” exhibition for Ossabaw’s Summer of Art was the exhibition for our online art auction. For the second year, TOIF partnered with Georgia Southern University’s Gallery in Fine Arts Hall on the Armstrong Campus for a July exhibition of 46 works of donated artwork available for bidding. Thank you to Gallery Director Dr. Jason Hoelscher for his enthusiasm for Ossabaw Island-inspired art, and for his gifted eye for hanging the art exhibition.

At Location Gallery in downtown Savannah, artist Bellamy Murphy’s show featured the greens and other bold colors of Ossabaw’s landscapes. Location Gallery donated all of the gallery profits from this show to the Ossabaw Island Foundation. At The Learning Center Gallery in midtown, Raven Waters’ exhibition of nearly 50 oil-on-canvas works captured many magical yet sometimes-overlooked aspects of the island. Waters’ show was the centerpiece of a day-long partnership event with TOIF and The Learning Center, *Ossabaw Island: Personal Encounters with the Georgia Coast*, held on June 22 and featuring speakers Crawfish Crawford, Raven Waters, and Janisse Ray. Half of the proceeds from Waters’ show were donated to TOIF by the artist. Thank you to artists Raven Waters and Bellamy Murphy, The Learning Center Gallery, and Location Gallery, for your generosity in sharing your visions of Ossabaw and the proceeds of these exhibitions with TOIF.

We are grateful to all the Ossabaw art lovers who purchased art in support of Ossabaw Island and TOIF this summer, either at a gallery show or through the online auction.

Save the date – July 2024 – for the Ossabaw Island Art Auction Exhibition at the Fine Arts Gallery, Armstrong Campus of Georgia Southern! The deadline for donated artwork will be Friday, June 21, 2024.

Thank you to the following visual artists who created and donated Ossabaw Island-inspired art for the 2023 auction:

Angie Abbott	Peter Kastner
Carmela Aliffi	Kurt Knoerl
Jamie Anderson	Kathryn Kolb
Glenn G. Brown	Kathleen Kollock
Pam Bullock	Shirley Lindefeld
Betsy Cain	Nancy Marshall
Laurie Cordaro	Kelley R. Milburn
Ekron ‘Ches’ Crow	Cora Ennis Morris
Janet Csadenyi	Kristin Mulzer
Lynne Daley	Bernard Nolan
Dawn Daniels	Jennifer Nolan
Harry Delorme	Tessa Parker
Joseph Delorme	Derek Perry
France Dorman	Beth Lattimore Reiter
Joy Dunigan	Peter E. Roberts
Morey Gers	Julia Sawyer
Gay Gillies	Joy Schwartz
Rachel Green	Sheryl St. Germain
Vicki Hardy	Bryan Stovall
Carol Hartley	Barbara Vaughn
Regina Holderness	Karey Walter
Julia Hoskins	Ben Wells
Tessa Hoskins	Ellen Embree Wyatt



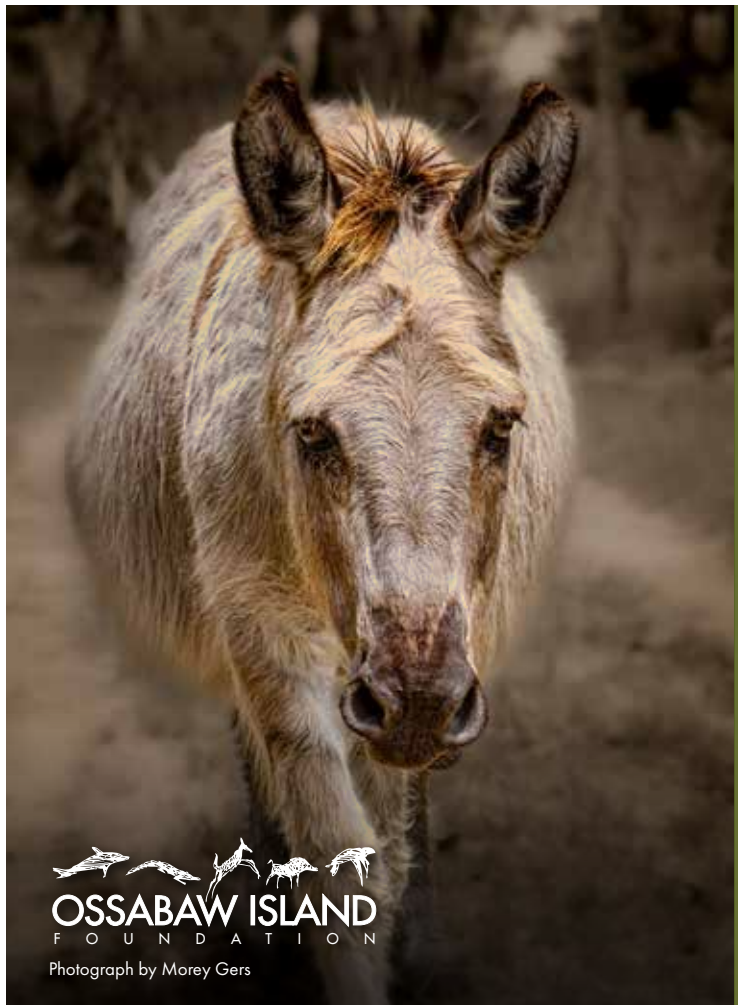
Photo by Stacey Wells



FRESH MERCH!



Available at ossabawisland.org/shop



**“Adopt” an Ossabaw Island Donkey
for \$25 or \$50**

Tuesday, November 28, support the Ossabaw Island Foundation as part of **#GivingTuesday** and **GAgives**.

A donkey adoption makes a great gift.

Adopt as many donkeys as you like at GAgives.org/story/Donkey



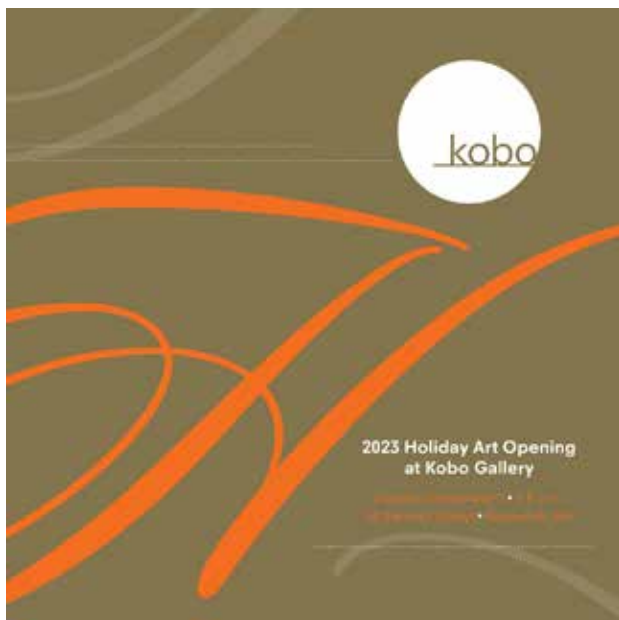
For your \$25 adoption, you or your gift recipient will receive an adoption certificate, and donkey sticker. **A \$50 adoption adds a plush braying donkey or a pair of donkey socks.**

Thank you for supporting the Ossabaw Island Foundation on

GIVINGTUESDAY



Photograph by Morey Gers



Shop Kobo Gallery's 2023 Holiday Art Event: Benefiting the Ossabaw Island Foundation, December 3-31, 2023! 33 Barnard St., Savannah

Kobo Gallery in downtown Savannah continues its annual tradition with a holiday art opening, featuring ornament sales benefiting a locally-based, non-profit organization— this year it is the Ossabaw Island Foundation!

Each holiday season, Kobo Gallery artists create and prepare ornaments for a 100% donation to a designated beneficiary—a generous act of giving back to the community. The ornaments are available for purchase exclusively at the gallery from December 3 - 31. The holiday show's opening reception is Sunday, December 3 from 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.

An artists' cooperative, Kobo Gallery features contemporary painters, jewelers, photographers, sculptors, ceramists, printmakers, designers, mixed media and fiber artists that work, live and create in Savannah, Georgia. Many are longtime "Ossabaw artists" whose works you have bid on at past Ossabaw Island Art Auctions.

To learn more, visit Kobo Gallery on the web at kobogallery.com. Follow them on Facebook and Instagram @kobogallery.



Ossabaw-Grown Poetry

Poet Julia Older (1941 - 2021) was an Ossabaw Island Project (OIP) member in 1978. That same year she published a poem in *The New Yorker* and in 2001 a chapbook, both entitled "The Ossabaw Book of Hours." OIP was an interdisciplinary retreat developed, managed and hosted by Clifford and Eleanor "Sandy" West on Ossabaw Island in the Torrey-West House from 1961-1983. Older donated copies of her chapbook, and reprint rights, to the Ossabaw Island Foundation; some copies will be included in the Ossabaw Collection at the Georgia Historical Society.

"I realize this island of light has remained with me, and with these poems" – Julia Older

Woodblock Print by Julia Older



XI All disciples but one

*You are always a voice
in the garden of those who love you,
a bird hidden in the branches,
fluttering from tree to tree,
too much a bird to divulge its feathers.*

*We would not capture you
like the hunters
that perch on a raft in the jungle
waiting to kill the song birds
on their return to Ossabaw.*

*No, we would not wear you
on a large brass ring
hooked to our swarthy belts,
or pick your tiny seasoned bones.*

*But to see you – Oh, to see you
between those secure resting places
where ground is not connected
to sky by a tree – that*

*would give us infinite pleasure
and mate our dazzled hearts
with belief.*

polished by the tidal moon

*To the poets
who ride
infrequent vessels,
dive with the ibis
and mate with the moon.*

*To the silver-gray Spanish moss
and wisteria sashes
draped like lace curtains
over the dawn.*

*To whirlpools of wind
and mud-buried turtle eggs
full of sweet liqueur
as mornings Limoges.*

*To the children of sometime
who scribble the night away
fallen by chance
on the oystershell road.*

*Hold fast the dream
of this luminous Isle
when the path is unsure
And the sun goes down.*

Noon

*The island queen's horologe
winds down to saurian sleep.
Illuminating manuscripts of red and gold,
the poets hold her burning hand
and follow.*

If you or a family member participated in the Ossabaw Island Project or the Genesis Project please consider donating your journals, letters, photos, sketchbooks or other materials from the era to the Ossabaw Collection at the Georgia Historical Society. For information on how to contribute your Ossabaw items, contact Elizabeth DuBose, elizabeth@ossabwisland.org to begin the donation process.



Ossabaw Island Foundation
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A Perfect Gift this Season!

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ossabawisland.org/shop

ABOUT OSSABAW ISLAND:

Ossabaw Island is a 26,000-acre undeveloped barrier island on the Atlantic Ocean, owned by the State of Georgia and located in Chatham County. Georgia's first Heritage Preserve, accessible only by boat, is undeveloped and set aside by an Executive Order for natural, scientific and cultural study, research and education; and for environmentally sound preservation, conservation and management of the island's ecosystem.

The Ossabaw Island Foundation (TOIF) is a non-profit 501 (c) 3. Through a partnership with the State of Georgia, TOIF inspires, promotes, and manages exceptional educational, cultural, and scientific programs that are designed to maximize the experience of Ossabaw Island, while minimizing the impact on the island's resources.

Contact us:

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Robin Gunn
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Mark Frissell
Island Facilities Manager,
Ossabaw Island Foundation
mark@ossabawisland.org

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TODAY:**



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In memoriam:

Eleanor "Sandy" T. West, Chairperson Emerita
1913 - 2021