

July 25<sup>th</sup> 2011

From: the Candace Whittemore Lovely Studio

## **PRESS RELEASE:**

### Local Artist Offers New Take on Rebel Love *Confederate Battle Flag in Pink Fails to Fly*

Candace Lovely never imagined that she could paint anything that might upset anyone. As the *Grand Dame of American Impressionism*, the Hilton Head artist is far more



accustomed to people falling in love with her paintings of fair women barefoot on beaches, children at play, and low country landscapes. What she isn't accustomed to is the look on the faces of locals when they first view her rendering of that fabric field of stars and bars associated most closely with Old Dixie: the Confederate battle flag.

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#### *Turning sticks and stones into hugs and kisses*

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At first glance, *Good and Plenty Kiss* is equal opportunistically disturbing. Descendents of *the Great Cause* wince to see their cherished flag gussied up in hues of candy color pink, while others see any rendering of it at all as a reminder of crueler times. It doesn't help that the original battle flag continues to be a key prop in the battle for the hearts and minds of the New Dixie.

Maybe if Candace were southern-raised, and not Vermont-born and Boston-schooled, she would have hesitated to take on this sacred cow. She would have realized that when it comes to the flag, everyone south of the Mason-Dixon Line has an opinion. And never minding geography, South Carolina -- where the first shots of the civil war were fired and where new secession resolutions are still entertained -- is as south of the line as one can get without going back in time.

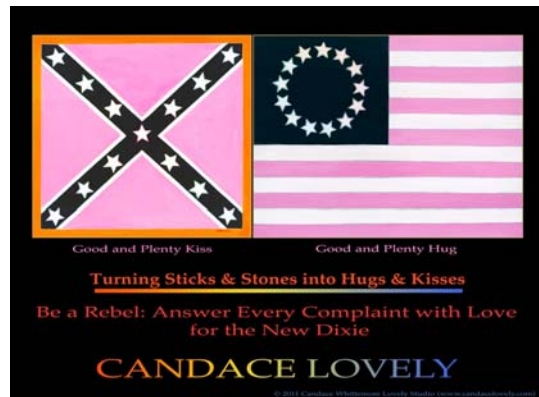
Even as the years have washed *the cause* with vagueness, South Carolina's defiant ones continue to rankle at the thought of being told what to do. These protectors of the state's Confederate birthright are not deterred by the fact that flying the flag on state grounds continues to bring multi-million dollar economic embargos on the state by the NAACP, the NCAA, and others. They take it as a point of stubborn pride that every other state has put this issue to rest.

On meeting Candace Lovely, one will quickly realize that *Good and Plenty Kiss* is the vision of an artist who rarely thinks about politics or choosing sides. *Kiss* is actually one painting in a series of Good and Plenty paintings that includes fair women and charming

still lifes, as well as a candied rendering of the first colonial flag, itself another flag of rebellion.

“If we can think of these symbols of war as hugs and kisses, dress them in candy colors, then they become far less scary and less able to frighten us,” says the artist. “If the image won’t go away,” adds one sympathetic native, “then it is up to us to make it something of our own, something gentle and beautiful rather than something that reminds us of so much senseless bloodshed and violent prejudice.”

After setting with it for a while, most do see the flag as the artist intended, but even then they are reluctant to be associated with it. And what that means is that this artist with paintings hung all over the island -- as well as all over the country and the world -- can’t find anyone in South Carolina who is resolute enough to hang her *Good and Plenty Kiss* for public view. While they may not be personally opposed, those in government buildings, museums, and private galleries aren’t ready to take the lead on this one, not ready to stand up against the slings and arrows that are likely to be fired from all directions. So the painting remains in the northern-lit island studio where Candace has painted and taught for more than two decades. Kiss did appear in an inside page of the July issue of *Pink Magazine*, the cover of which featured a more typical Candace Lovely woman of leisure.



“I’d love to see it hanging in Columbus or Charleston,” says the artist. “I’d love to see people who used to be afraid of it, hanging it on the sides of their barns. If I had the money, I would splash it onto a highway billboard for everyone to see.”

Maybe then people would sit down and finally finish this unfinished discussion and move ahead to embrace a New Dixie.

“It’s all about that final surrender,” the artist adds. “It’s time for people on both sides of the argument to surrender their complaints, surrender to their better selves and just start fresh from a place of love.

Though Candace painted it from her own mind’s eye, she’s certainly not the only one or the first to think like this. A few years back, some people in the black community made their own rebel flag using the colors of Africa. People weren’t quite ready to accept it back then, “Maybe South Carolina wasn’t quite ready to give up all its ghosts,” says Candace. “But I think we’re ready to move past the old angers , with all the problems the world is facing, we have to be, if we’re going to move forward.”

For more on Candace, her original paintings visit [www.candacelovely.com](http://www.candacelovely.com) For Rebel Love posters visit [http://www.etsy.com/people/CandaceLOVELYaRT?ref=si\\_pr](http://www.etsy.com/people/CandaceLOVELYaRT?ref=si_pr)

