

Taking the Grand Tour

When I think of the Future is on the Table/ConNECKtedTOO project, I tend to think of artisan crafts, hands-on work, and trades utilizing skills that have been passed down through the generations.

I think of old school folkways grounded in pre-internet materials.

It was much to my surprise that I recently had a ConNECKtedTOO experience that was “trippy.”

Do you feel challenged to see what I mean? Go to ConNECKtedTOO.org / TINYisPOWERFUL.com, and take the grand tour. Explore the website. You may enjoy the ride!

You’ll know you’re in the right place when you hear the pulsing rhythms of Kurt Lamkin’s “Bet on you” (our theme song). You will start to feel vertiginous. You’ll get the thrill of flying while a camera swoops up and down among the replicas and models of Tiny Businesses formerly stationed at the Cannon St Art Center or the North Charleston City Hall. You can re-experience the exhibition from an exciting aerial view, full of curves and movement.

For easily over a decade now one of the most popular forms of entertainment have been video games. You may have played those war games that reproduce the kinetics of flying while standing still. The 21st century has produced a market for all kinds of store videos, enjoyed by ‘gamers,’ full of loops and tricks. You don’t know what you’ll find, wherever you click, until you click on it. It’s always a surprise!

The ConNECKtedTOO website is not a store game, but it’s a kaleidoscope!

You will soon see swooping arrows encouraging you to click on names of Charleston Tiny Businesses. Yes, the links will take you to info. But they will take you to much more. It’s hard to guess what else you will find under the any listing, heading, and subheading, with enticing names *Newsletters, Diaries, or Inter-racial*.

It’s less like having categories than having distinct stories within a story, An informational grid has been dispensed with in favor of a loose sense of a narrative full of unexpected materials.

Imagine wandering the peninsula on a pre-COVID19 afternoon. You never know which new shop to visit, what’s inside it, or when you will meet the stranger who will direct you to an unforeseen moment. You may briefly feel puzzled. Keep walking. You’ll find your bearings again!

The site isn’t the phone book. You may have JUST been looking for an address. You might learn something about the neighborhood.

The site can be navigated via several “tours,” I have by chance stumbled upon a short film “Portraits of Black Charleston” featuring young entrepreneurs discussing cultural displacement. I have discovered a brief history of the Edisto 13, a group of high school students who became defendants in a lawsuit that in 1966 forced South Carolina state parks to accept desegregation.

The site is built the way it is to reflect the diversity of neighborhoods and local Tiny Businesses. Everything is part of an ecosystem. Everything is connected.