

Pleasure of Looking at Art At the Tuckerton Seaport

By PAT JOHNSON

The theme of the 2009 Tuckerton Seaport art exhibit, "The Bay at Play (Pleasure of Looking at Art)," was conceived by exhibit committee member Kathryn Conrad to segue into the Seaport's big, historic installation "The Bay at Play," focused on traditional bay and shore recreation, which will open in May.

"I didn't want artists to do paintings of surfers, exactly, but I wanted the artists to pick a subject or a technique or medium that they really enjoy, something that would give them pleasure as well as be fun to do," said Conrad.

The effect of the show is lighthearted and bright with many of the paintings reflecting what we all love of the shore: the light on sails, the natural beauty all around us and the joy of living in a bay community.

Here are just a few examples of what's in store from the 102 artists who entered work. Harvey Cedars artist Roberta Giannone painted a boat and shack in vignette, using the white area of the canvas as a design element. Her "Cedar Run Dock Road" is sure to touch the nostalgia bone.

Eagleswood artist Thomas Rutledge also used white space to envelop his serene "Bayman," a fisherman powering an outboard on his way to a day of fishing. Behind him is the full moon outlined in gray.

Though Giannone paints in acrylics and Rutledge in watercolor, both these artists embrace the best of realism, directing our gaze to just the emotional sweet spot they must have felt when creating the works.

Michael Budden from Chesterfield felt less was more when he painted "Sunrise Sensation," leaving most details out of this atmospheric painting.

Medford artist Susan Barnes caught the beauty of sun on sails and turquoise water in her "Cats on the Bay," while Little Egg Harbor artist Tom O'Connell shows sunlight through the crest of a wave in "Surf."

Kathy Johnston exhibits her award-winning "On the Way to Barnegat Bay," a watercolor of a flock of pintails flying over the Tuckerton salt meadows. Johnston won the 2008 Ocean County Decoy and Gunning Show cover art award. Johnston teaches out of her Sweetwater studio, and her student Erin Ritson of Egg Harbor City shows her painting "Working Boats at Rest," an exceptionally clear and light-filled watercolor.

Ann Malatin from Medford Lakes painted one of the area's historic places, "Randa's Mama," in oils.

For sheer fun, Sherita Grabursky asks for

audience participation in her "Movable Art #13," a black shadow box with three small abstract paintings that are on Velcro strips and can be arranged in various ways.

Margarita Levin is a Princeton sculptor by way of Venezuela, and her "Fufirro de Primavera" or, in English, "Spring's Whispers," is poetic and playful. The body of a woman is made of clay embellished with mosaic tiles. A school of resin fish is floating about and through a square hole in her chest while on her shoulder sits a bird made of copper.

There really are too many excellent pictures to describe, and those who attend the opening of the show Friday, April 3, from 7 to 9 p.m., will want to return again to see the works at a less-crowded time. If it is anything like last year, the opening of the show promises to be an event to remember, with catered hors d'oeuvres and wine. Admission is a \$10 donation.

The Seaport continues its April Arts at Tuckerton Seaport with a full slate of events. On Saturday, April 4, artist Tom Rutledge will give a gallery talk from 1 to 2 p.m. Basket and carving classes take shape during the day, and a Poetry and Improv workshop starts at 3 p.m.

On Sunday, April 5, a Pickin' on the Porch jam session of acoustic music, hosted by Linda and Bill Salmonis, is held at the Lighthouse from 3 to 5 p.m.

Saturday, April 11, finds watercolor artists Kathy Johnston and Mary Walker painting on site, and a display of children's art from Pine Shores Art Association will fill the visitors center. On Monday, April 13, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., quilter Mary Bean talks about the history of New Jersey quilts at the Lighthouse, and Evan Zodyl teaches intermediate origami to those who have a yen for folding paper.

On Tuesday, April 14, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., master basket maker Mary May talks about Jersey basket weaving and demonstrates patterns.

Wednesday, April 15, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., master decoy carver Fred Reithner talks about the unique history of New Jersey decoy carving and gives a painting demonstration.

There are many more exciting events for every day through April, including a boat building demonstration, nature and bird photography workshop, single stroke painting, songwriters workshops and a Plein Air Paint Out, an artist competition on Saturday, April 25, starting at 8 a.m., with cash prizes. Keep an eye on the calendar section of The SandPaper and Leaders for more events, and on the Tuckerton Seaport web site, tuckertonseaport.org.

The Tuckerton Seaport is located at 120 West Main St. in Tuckerton. Call 296-8868 for more information.

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