

THE VIEW FROM BONAC

Interior And Exterior Landscapes

BY KELLY ANN SMITH

The end of the summer seems like a good time for reflection. It's a stressful time too because we try to fit everything into the last week, which flies by with lightning speed. Priorities are spending time with friends and relishing the last hot rays of the sun.

Relaxation is not always a part of that equation. In the rush to milk the summer, panic sets in. Stress over the unknown, such as new school and work loads, hover like an alien spaceship over our heads.

The best way for me to reflect as well as de-stress, is to look at great art.

I met two artists this week who have helped me do just that, without a trip to the city.

Christine Scialli and Susan Vecsey both live and work in East Hampton and find inspiration in the landscapes I love.

While Ms. Scialli's work reflects the interior landscapes of the mind, Ms. Vecsey bases her increasingly abstract work on familiar places, like Main Beach and Hither Hills.

I felt an immediate affinity to Ms. Vecsey's oil-on-linen landscapes, showing at the Quogue Gallery through September, when they appeared on HamptonsArtHub.com. I met the artist at the new gallery in the truly quaint village of Quogue, on the way from her apartment in the city to her home in Northwest Woods.

Ms. Vecsey spent 13 years on the same trading floor in Tribeca that Martin Scorsese featured in the film "Wolf of Wall Street."

Stockbroker by day, artist by night, she kept her double life a secret from her co-workers until she took a year off to create a coherent body of work. She bought a house here in 2000 and had her first solo show at Ashawagh Hall in 2006.

In addition to Quogue Gallery owner Chester Murray, I got to meet her primary representative, Christine Berry of the Berry Campbell gallery in Chelsea, who was on vacation in Quogue and on her way to the beach.

We wandered around the small but beautiful space, stopping to meditate on each of the dozen minimalist, stained color fields.

Her recent works go back to 2009 with "Santrey's Beach, East Hampton," and you can clearly see it's a walk

down a sandy beach, the blue sea bleeding on the right, brown brush to the left and golden sky ahead.

Ms. Vecsey sketches the landscape first in charcoal, then works through detailed color studies in pastel before staining her custom-made linen or paper frames. All of her color fields have soft edges.

"I actually don't like the line, even when I draw," she said. "I use a pallet knife either way and try not to use brushes so much. They leave a hard or edge."

Lines are dropped in her newest work, "Untitled Red," 2014 and all references go with it. This time, the natural linen becomes the beach and the path blurs into an expanse of red. If you saw the play "Red" at Guild Hall this spring, you know what Mark Rothko thought of the vast experience the color can evoke.

Her work also brings to mind another one of her favorite artists, Helen Frankenthaler, who was married to Robert Motherwell. You can see his work right now at Guild Hall.

When Guild Hall acquired Ms. Vecsey's "White Main Beach" for its permanent collection, she was beyond thrilled.

"The best part about creating art is that you never know what's going to happen," Ms. Vecsey said. "I think that's really exciting."

Three hundred people came to the opening of Christine Scialli's "Quiet Riot" show at Dock Creek Farm on Three Mile Harbor Road, on view in the John Little Barn through September 26. That's pretty exciting.

I happened upon Ms. Scialli working on "Quiet Riot" when I showed up a week too early and she took time to give my niece and me a preview.

She blacked out all windows and door openings, hung string from two rafters, then draped and tied white netting throughout the barn. With three projectors shining circles onto the mesh in pitch black, Ms. Scialli turned an old barn into a mesmerizing and calming experience.

"I was using lines for about six years and thought maybe I should branch out," she said when I asked her the significance of the circles.

Her largest work, "Expanding Circles," projected circles onto thousands of people on Central Park's Great Lawn during the Global Citizen Concert in 2013.

Ms. Scialli grew up in the suburbs

of Philadelphia and has lived in Amagansett with her husband and three children for four years. She held a residency at the South Fork Natural History Museum in Bridgehampton, where I first saw her work in a barn and its surrounding field.

"Persist in things you are passionate about, as long as you do no harm," she said. "The world would be awful without it."

The world would also be awful without the good people who keep the Springs community alive and well. The first annual Heart of Springs Summer Gala was held on the green at Ashawagh Hall last Sunday. The truly "magical evening" would not have happened without the help of many volunteers and donors, however. I'd like to especially thank Dru Bailey who helped organize the event.

Great Culinary, consisting of Ms. Bailey's daughter Dee Bailey and her partner Jeremy Seaton, prepared much of the food out of the church kitchen across the street. Yummy tidbits like mushrooms and fontina parini bites with truffle oil were passed around as Joe Sullivan of Montauk Brewing Company served Driftwood and Summer Ales and Irish Frazer of Springs Wines and Liquors served wine courtesy of Woffler Estate. Alex Hubery, Bryan Campbell and Joshua Brussell provided the music.

Besmond Taxy Larson gave everyone a cute, silver clam pin in lieu of cheesy gift bags and before I even pinned mine on, I saw so many friendly faces, like Tom and Lianne Miller, Jeanne and Ricky Muller, Paul Hamilton and Sharon McCobb and James DeMartis, who works in the blacksmith shop on the other side of the historic triangle.

More than 300 tickets were sold at \$100 a pop which will go to improvements at Ashawagh Hall, Springs Library and the Springs Community Church.

Whoever said the people of East Hampton are unfriendly got it dead wrong.



Kelly Ann Smith lives on Amagansett with her husband and three dogs and is fascinated by Bonac culture, pop culture, agriculture, poetry and nature—human and

otherwise.