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If the Pilgrims accidentally landed at Provincetown after being blown off course on their way to Virginia, then artists of all kinds—painters, poets, sculptors, dramatists, novelists—have been doing just the opposite for well over a hundred years, setting a course from all points of the compass directly for the tip of Cape Cod. They came, and continue to come, for many reasons. The light. The isolation. Or for the opposite, the community they know that's there. They come for the legacy of art that fosters both tradition and experimentation. Provincetown is reputed to be the oldest continuous art colony in the world. The Provincetown Players were instrumental in prying open the door to the American modern theater by helping launch the careers of Eugene O'Neill and Susan Glaspell.

Charles Webster Hawthorne established his Cape Cod School of Art in 1899, though he wasn't the first: A woman, Martha Dewing Woodward, beat him by two years. But Hawthorne did study under William Merritt Chase, who studied under Monet, which makes an unbroken lineage from Monet's haystacks and water lilies to herald what is still the school's and Provincetown's standing as a major center for American Impressionist painting. In 1934, Hans Hofmann, painter, teacher and influential member of the American Abstract Expressionist movement, opened



Top: The Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM) is an integral part of Provincetown's diverse art community. Above: Sculptor Ramon Alcolea has been a working artist in Provincetown for over 30 years. He uses found objects to create his art, focusing on form and mass to create a visceral experience. Left: Cape Cod Art Center's annual Mastering Your Mark conference is a hands-on master class for artists of all levels.

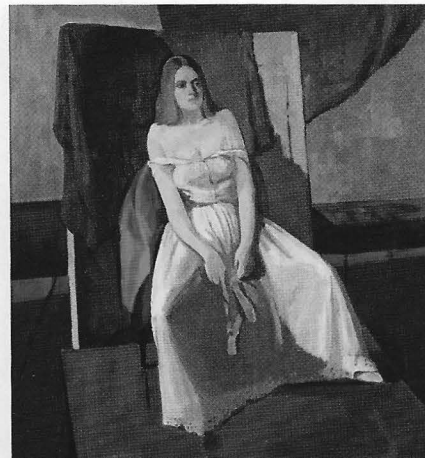


a school of fine arts under his own name in Provincetown espousing anti-formalism.

While Provincetown is known internationally as an artists' colony with its own current crop of hometown heroes like Anne Packard, the Del Deo family and Hilda Neily, Christopher Quidley of Quidley & Company on Nantucket says that every town or village on the Cape and Islands has its own history. "In Cotuit and Barnstable, every collector in their late 60s to 80s wants to show off their Ralph Cahoon," he says. "In Chatham and Dennis it's Harold Dunbar."

Still, there's a certain cache to being a Provincetown artist. Sculptor Ramon Alcolea says: "Provincetown gives me periods of time that are basically free of major distractions, and as an artist I have found I need those parameters to create my best in the relative isolation at certain times of the year. I do consider myself an artist working in Provincetown. The key word here is 'working.' I left New York 30 years ago because of a combination of many factors, but also I felt my creative life was being preyed upon from all the distractions there, many that I realize now would have damaged or destroyed my artistic needs and creativity."

To Alcolea, "an absolute best starting point" in town is the Provincetown Art Association and



Above: Works by acclaimed Provincetown artists Romolo Del Deo (left) and his father Salvatore Del Deo (right). Left: The work of iconic Cape folk artist Ralph Cahoon is quite distinctive, thanks in large part to the use of his signature mermaids. Below: In the village of Hyannis, the HyArts cultural district is thriving and attracts a myriad of talented artists.



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Above: Quidley & Company on Nantucket features an array of contemporary artwork. Below: At Gallery 31 in Orleans, owner Sherry Rhyno says the common thread among the landscape and seascape work represented is an inherent timelessness. “A well-done painting,” she says, “can bring home memories of special places.”



Museum (PAAM). “For a nominal fee to become a member you are guaranteed a part of the members’ open exhibition,” he notes. “The fact that you will have work up at a major museum is incredible.” People come from the world over to study at PAAM. “People come because of Provincetown’s legacy,” says PAAM’s Executive Director, Christine McCarthy. “It’s the oldest continuous living arts colony, and people who pay attention to these things want to come and study here. They believe it’s a place for artists.”

Hilda Neily is one of those artists. She has been affiliated with the Cape School of Art for almost 45 years. She came to Provincetown in 1974 to study with Henry Hensche, who served as assistant to Charles Hawthorne and took over the school when Hawthorne died. Neily, who has her own gallery in Provincetown, is a master painter in her own right, considered one of the Cape School’s most adept practitioners. She tells the story of how Hensche let her sit behind him and watch him paint, a most extraordinary thing for an artist to be allowed to do, akin to petting a unicorn. Neily continues in the school’s tradition, which may be best summed up as painting the illusion of light. “You never get it,” she says. “You always see more, your eye develops, but it’s always a challenge to see a new color and you never get there. Henry felt he almost got there. He was always trying, too.”

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Supporting these artists is a strong gallery scene. "I'm always continually impressed by the talent that's here in such a small geographic area," says Grace Hopkins. She's the director of Berta Walker Gallery, an accomplished visual artist in her own right, and also the daughter of abstract expressionist Budd Hopkins and art critic April Kingsley. As a child she was raised in the rarified world of the major abstract art movements in New York during the 1960s and '70s, where she learned a thing or two. This year marks the gallery's 30th anniversary, and of course in those 30 years times have changed.

"At Berta Walker, we really are like a family, not just a way to make money," says Hopkins. "I still take some of our artists to the doctor."

"What I love about my clients is that they still come into the gallery and get so lit up," explains Hopkins. "The art in the gallery gives them permission to nurture those questions they have within themselves."

Chris Quidley says he's seen changes in his existing collector base. "There's been a paradigm shift," he says. "I started seeing younger collectors who didn't want what previous collectors wanted. I think they perceived it as what their parents and grandparents collected." Quidley says that he's seeing more cautious buyers, but also more

Gallery 31 Fine Art



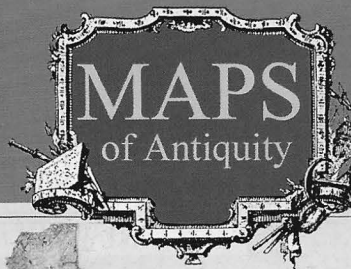
Detail of Bowl of Cherries
8 x 10 pastel by Tony Allain

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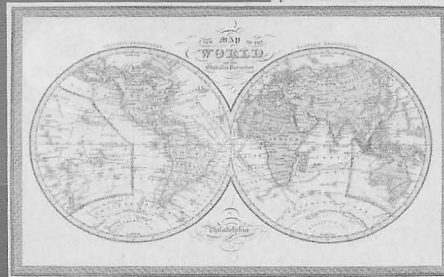
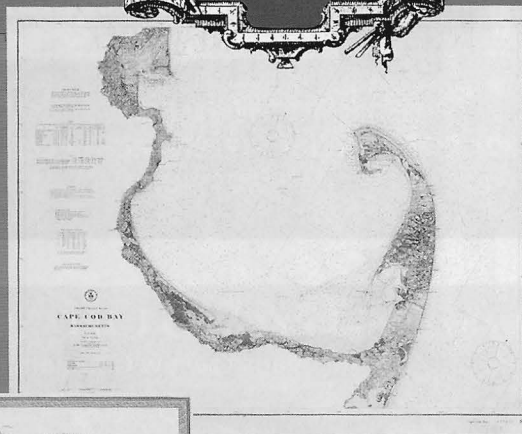
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educated buyers, too. "The internet has helped in that regard," he says. "As for online auctions, I still think of art as being tactile and you need to see it in person."

Just south of Provincetown, Wellfleet boasts a tight-knit community of small galleries that offer a wide variety of artistic styles that appeal to residents and visitors alike. Cove Gallery and Left Bank Gallery are just two of several galleries that dot Commercial Street, with another handful just around the corner as visitors meander toward Main Street on foot. The concentration, variety and accessibility of galleries have given Wellfleet the recognition of being a "gallery town."

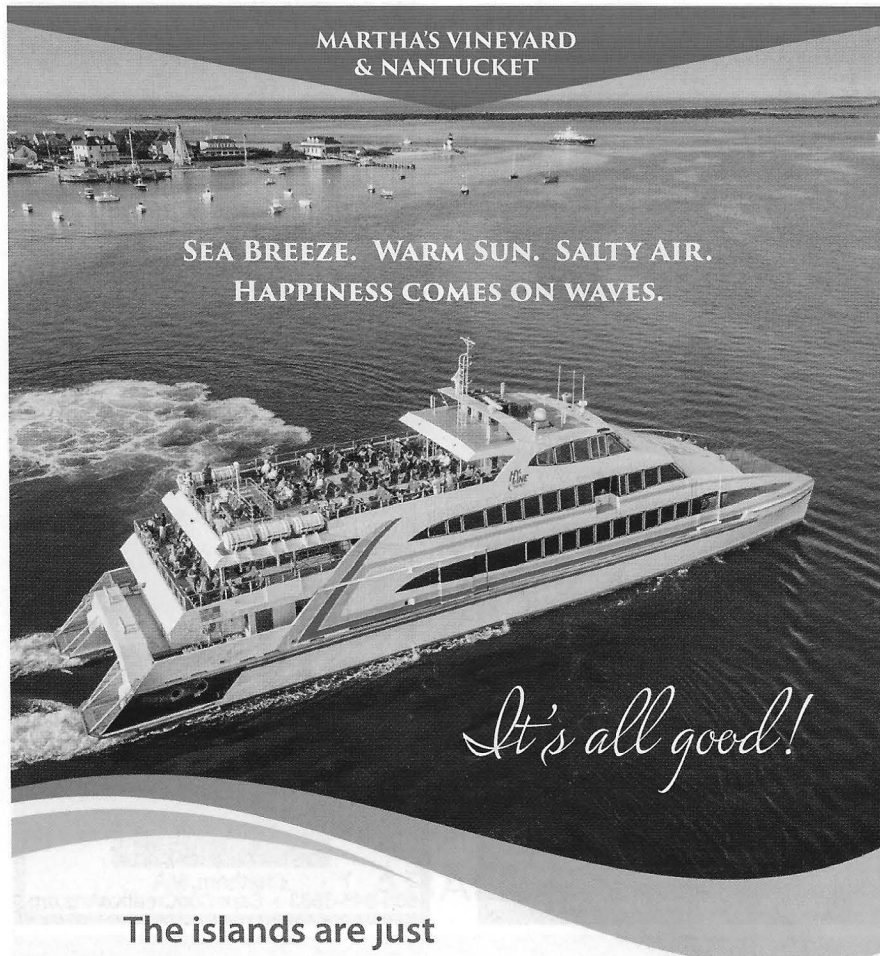
As you travel away from the Outer Cape artists' colonies, you'll see how towns have best utilized their artistic capital. Art and economic development go hand in hand. The solution has been cultural districts, specific areas that have concentrations of culture, arts, history, dining, shopping and natural beauty that have proven successful in rounding up, organizing and presenting art to the paying public. Across the Cape and Islands, there are nine cultural districts, in Barnstable, Sandwich, Orleans, Wellfleet, Provincetown, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, and a recent grant provided by the Massachusetts Cultural Council will ensure two more districts in Harwich Center and Harwich Port

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within the next year. No two cultural districts are the same, a fact that speaks to the diversity and cultural differences across the region.

Sherry Rhyno, owner of Gallery 31 Fine Art in Orleans, was an early art advocate who was instrumental in helping Orleans achieve the cultural district designation. Rhyno, who is a co-chair of the district, says Orleans was one of the first communities in the Commonwealth to achieve the status. "The designation is only for five years," she explains, "and since we were one of the first, we actually had to reapply this year for our re-designation. Thankfully we were successful," she says with a wry smile. The district committee is formally recognized under the Town of Orleans and is focused on defining their arts and culture to include the diverse offerings found in Orleans. Those include their maritime history, the French Cable Museum, the historical society, the renown local theater enterprises as well as all of the galleries.

According to Rhyno, the acclaim for the various galleries in town has put Orleans on the map. "Not only are visitors coming from all over the world, but we are also attracting artists of note who are known on the international stage." One of those artists of distinction is Tony Allain, award-winning member of the prestigious Pastel Society United Kingdom, and represented by Gallery 31 Fine Art. In addition to the



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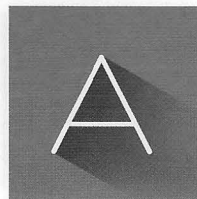
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artists' exhibits, Rhyno explains that the gallery offers workshops with some exciting new ones planned for the summer of 2019.

Another newly named district in Hyannis (under the umbrella of the Barnstable Cultural District) has seen an immediate response from the public. "There are a great many artists on the Cape for a variety of reasons, and we have an extraordinary number of fine art centers that offer classes, workshops and exhibit venues that support the art community: Cape Cod Art Center, Cotuit Center for the Arts, and the Cultural Center of Cape Cod are just a few on the Mid Cape," says Kathy Edmonston of Gallery Artrio in Hyannis. "What this means

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for Gallery Artrio is that we have the opportunity to present art from many viewpoints and to keep our gallery fresh and interesting with local talent. We have a range of artists in our gallery. We show full-time artists, some who are retired who finally have the time to pursue their art, and some who are just beginning their artistic journey. We're located in Hyannis' HyArts cultural district, and many of our customers who are on vacation tell us we are on their list of 'must do's' while on Cape Cod."

Melissa Hersh Chartrand heads up the Hyannis HyArts Artist Shanties program—also part of the Barnstable Cultural District—which offers artists and artisans space to work

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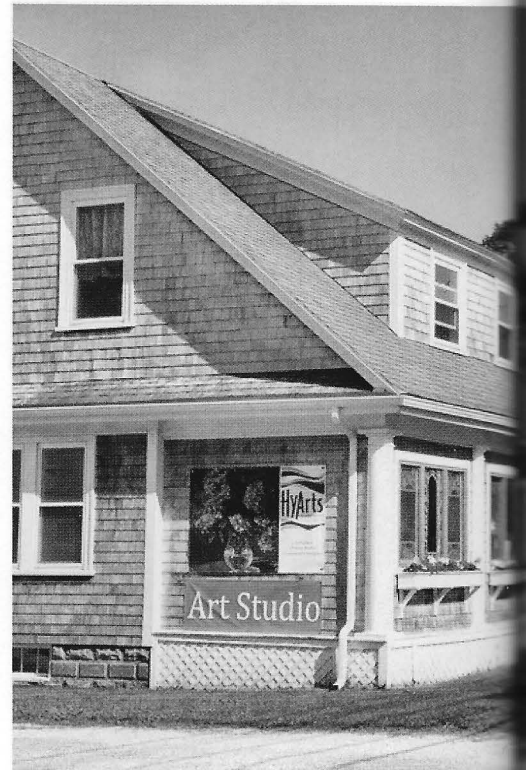
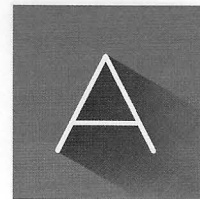
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and sell their wares on a rotating basis throughout the summer in what can best be described as a village of sweet little Cape Cod cottages. "Artists can be isolated in their studios," she says. "The shanties are a modern little artists colony where they can be with their fellow artists and meet and sell to visitors from around the world."

Photographer Kevin Bennett, who specializes in landscapes, seascapes, and architecture unique to the Cape and Islands, has taken part in the HyArts shanty program since 2014, and he recalls his first two weeks that summer working in a shanty. "I didn't know what to expect, but I sold a lot of my work," he reports. "The experience jumpstarted a lot of excitement for my work." Bennett



now owns his own gallery on Main Street in Hyannis.

According to Chartrand, cultural districts bring people together to share stories, whether it's a visual experience or perhaps a historical story—so many stories that she says people don't realize the number. And she says that cultural districts are fundamental to the economic survival of Cape Cod. "People are attracted to the districts, and businesses and real estate flourish," she says.

Just like the Cape itself, the art scene is shifting. And also just like the Cape, its roots and the people involved seem to assure that it will be here for a long time to come.

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