

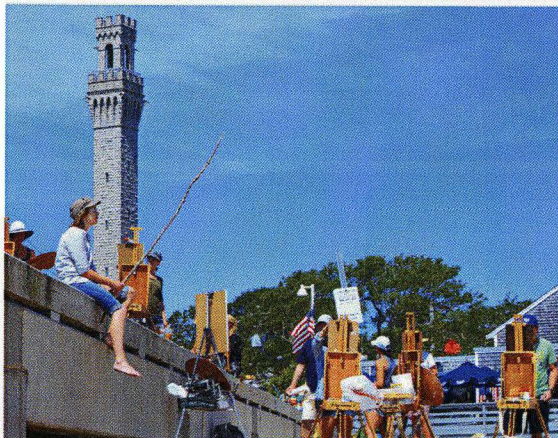
the Heart of Provincetown

America's Oldest Continuous Art Colony

JACKSON POLLACK, NORMAN MAILER, TENNESSEE WILLIAMS and countless artists have all found their inspiration at the tip of Cape Cod, in a place called Provincetown.

As America's oldest, continuous art colony, Provincetown boasts 60 art galleries in a town of 3,000 residents. Not only do the arts thrive, the town is often defined by art, performance and creativity. Surrounded by water, artists of every stripe are drawn to this three-square mile creative zone by the special light and aura of free expression.

Blanche Lazzell, *Untitled*
Town of Provincetown collection



Opening the Door to Destiny

All of 28 years old and fresh from schooling and roaming Europe, Charles Hawthorne, in 1899, opened the Cape Cod School of Art in Provincetown with an emphasis on open-air painting.

The exceptional expressive possibilities of the town were not lost on student artists, and the school soon began to produce graduates who went on to extraordinary careers. Artists began to converge on Provincetown. Anything with a roof and walls was converted into an artist's studio.

The Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM) held its first exhibition in 1915, a year after being established. By 1916, Provincetown had six art schools.

The 1934 arrival of Hans Hofmann's summer school ushered in an explosion of Abstract Expressionist painters. Stories abound of Jackson Pollock, Lee Krasner, and Mark Rothko practicing their styles and techniques in Provincetown, which would lead them to international fame.

Acceptance

Eugene O'Neill produced his first play, "Bound East for Cardiff," in Provincetown in 1916. Tennessee Williams arrived to write and stage plays. Norman Mailer made his home in Provincetown, calling it "the Wild West of the East." It was a new frontier – a place untamed and eccentric, where new ideas were embraced and the unconventional celebrated.

Provincetown is America's oldest continuous art colony because art is interwoven into the town's history as a defining feature of the community's DNA. "The harshness of life at the edge of the sea teaches a certain tolerance of things including acceptance," Provincetown's Art Commission Chair Stephen Borkowski says. "While artists are, by the nature of their craft, isolated and solitary in their work, there is a need for community – to be supported intellectually and creatively."

Artistic excellence is the hallmark of the Fine Arts Work Center, which awards fellowships to talented young artists and writers. Fellows receive a studio, living space and a small stipend. Past Fellows have won nearly every major national award, including the Pulitzer, MacArthur, Whiting, Pollock-Krasner, Tiffany, Prix de Rome, Guggenheim, NEA, and the National Book Award.



Charles Hawthorne, *His First Voyage*
PAAM collection

Looking to the Future

PAAM, at 2,000 members strong, is about to commemorate its centennial. Signing up and paying a minimal fee affords members what happens best in Provincetown – the annual general membership showing of art. There is no jury process and, as a result, member shows are always unpredictable and surprising, which allows the museum to be keep evolving and to stay tightly connected to the town's disposition for self-expression.

PAAM has expanded and built a new wing, which allows artist members to exhibit current and contemporary work. Venues showcase jazz, spoken word, and dance performances and festivities include retrospective shows displaying works of former members in the context of the history of 20th century art.

While the styles worn by bathers at the beach change and performance artists and festival costumers reflect latest trends, the legacy of art in Provincetown continues to remain solid. Updated and renovated arts facilities breathe new life into an established tradition. Art walks are an endless journey, as you might expect from America's most celebrated art colony. This is Provincetown, where one constant remains – against this backdrop you find a town obsessed with art.



The Provincetown Art Association and Museum



**Provincetown,
America's First Destination**
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