



KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

Centennial Celebrations!

The Hawthorne School of Art marks its 100th anniversary year in Provincetown as an established art colony with a past and present approach on the subject of art. The school, housed in a large barn on the peak of Miller Hill, has been listed on the Register of Historic Places and is heading into its second century as a continuously active and functioning school. This large open studio barn contains 25 built-in artists' cupboards still in use as well as the original model platforms, original easels spread to the precious northern light cast on all by a 15' x 15' window.

The charm and the easy intensity transport you back in time, into all time. You can't help but feel introspective and interpretive in this setting. The mundane stops at the foot of the hill and the pilgrim's eyes open with every step. To sit in the serenity of this barn is to become a part of the imagination, of the performance of artistic expression. This is the viscera and the work which will eventually pose itself on museum walls and lift the world from that "foot of the hill" thinking. One still has to return to laundry, food shopping and diurnal chores but a visit here makes them a little easier.

The Hawthorne School of Art did not stop with Hawthorne's teaching of American Impressionism and "en plein aire" painting. In the 1930's Hans Hoffman occupied the buildings and ran his school of abstract impressionism here. Morris Davidson operated a school



in the 60's teaching non-objective painting. The tradition of summer art schools and teaching in Provincetown has continued through the decades reflecting the many movements of 20th century art.

For the past seven years Peter Gee has been the master and artist in charge. Peter Gee is a colorist, a painter and a designer who worked in London and Paris until he travelled back to New York where he organized experimental color workshops at the School of Visual Arts, then at Harvard Architectural School and The New School. His theory still finds expression at an experimental color workshop held at the Hawthorne Barn with much outdoor experimentation. Students learn to think of color as a choice and how to use it, to eliminate and to discard color until they arrive at a range of color productive to their personal work. Natural found objects, light and the palette all mesh until intuition leads each individual to a personal way of seeing

color—to their color path. I have seen students struggle with red as a color, seemingly so simple an objective color, but it is theirs to use whenever they want to. Peter Gee states “We begin to relate to color before we walk and read. Color is the simplest, most natural form of visual communication.”

Among the other courses at the Hawthorne School of Art, Sal Del Deo will teach landscape, portraiture and figure painting in a course entitled “An Homage to Hawthorne.” Through all of these approaches Sal will teach a “painting discipline,” a painting procedure that students can always use. Live models, nude and clothed, studio and outdoor painting, form part of the experience. Hawthorne’s classicism will be stressed. (Sal Del Deo is represented by the Berta Walker Gallery.)

Bill Evaul will teach the white line woodcut, a Provincetown invention. Bill’s prints go as long as 6 feet. Bill still experiments and brings forth new ideas with this established genre.

John Grillo will teach “Drawing as an Avenue to Good Painting.” John’s large colorful, lively canvases express a zest for life and will be sure to add a dimension to each student’s work. (You can see his work at Café Heaven and at the Cove Gallery in Wellfleet.)

Students can take classes in paper making, black and white photography, video computer editing and children’s art classes, grade school and teenage groups. Painting and drawing from life through the use of flower gardens and pet animals, paper making, constructions and dollmaking use the Waldorf methods of Rudolph Steiner to teach a child what he or she needs. Classics such as “Gilgamesh” and “Aesop’s Fables” are read during these workshops. Outdoor science skills are taught through gardening, wood walks and drawing and painting from nature at the nearby ponds. Children’s Art shows are presented in the Round Barn Gallery just below the Big Barn.

Anne Lord teaches ceramics and handbuilding using red clay, porcelain, gray clay and a kiln.

Peter Gee teaches painting on the beach in the Hawthorne tradition “en plein aire.” Students get to observe and interpret the great Cape light as they view coastal scenes of marshes or wharves, of the bay and the backshore with gourmet lunches at the barn, picnic lunches when on location, an opera star for background, and great music both live and recorded to soothe them, evening parties out of doors with great food, good company and a warming fire.

Peter Gee and Olga Opsahl-Gee aptly run this more than ever diversified school with the assistance of two monitors. The monitors, usually with an international background, add even more learning experience for all. Monitor Rosa Pagani, a charming young woman of Greek-Italian extraction from Montreal, accompanied me on the outdoor tour. We rambled through brush and over hills of blueberries occasionally coming upon a student rapt in the creative process surrounded by nature in a niche each self-designed out of the wild.

With trees used as hand tools and finished work, stones to hold down flapping papers, branches pulled over for shade, birds and insects for company, the students toiled in earnest coming to their chosen color code.

Rosa Pagani showed me her work nestled in the foot of a dune—a 6-foot in diameter nest which will continue to grow until ready for the harvest moon. Rosa, a sculptress and a weaver collects environmental objects. She also has an interest in dwellings. The “nest” is strong. It has been moved eight times. Now it is ready for filler such as mud and leaves. Rosa has yet to determine its end, but thinks it will be like the nest of an Oriole, oval and tall with an opening. The nest grows gradually and fits in with this property that has such charming and comfortable dwellings such as the Family House, the Big Barn and the Round Barn. Robinson Crusoe alcoves, a giant nest, and a building on the National Register all making comfort and thinking-at home.

To follow the delineation of our 100th Anniversary as an art colony there are many turns in the study. Master, student, teacher and learner. The Berta Walker Gallery will have an exhibition opening Sept. 10th closing the 21st on just this idea with Charles Hawthorne and his students, Edwin Dickenson, Henry Hensche, Ross Moffett and John Whorf, Dickenson’s students, Salvatore Del Deo and Phil Malicoat, Hensche’s students, Richard Anuszkiewicz, Ed Giobbi and Franz Kline, Moffet’s students, Jack Tworikov and Whorf’s students Carol Westcott and Nancy Whorf. The works are from the collection of Berta Walker and will give a well thought out summing up of the history of Provincetown art of the last 100 years.

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