



The Richest of Tapestries: *Between Sea and Sky*, an Exhibit by 21 in Truro

by Lauren Wolk

They call themselves [21 in Truro](#) but not a single one lives there. At least not in the physical sense.

The week they all spend in Truro each year, painting and refreshing their relationships and themselves, makes it their home in a very real sense. The 21 are all women, all artists, all in love with color and light, but their differences are many.

Some paint en plein air, some in studios. Some prefer pastels, some oils, watercolors, or acrylics. Others are printmakers and weavers as well. Their work ranges from abstract to realistic, impressionistic to expressionistic. From landscapes and seascapes, to portraits and abstracts. But they are all connected to one another and to the place where they convene for perhaps the best week of their year.



Moored on the Marsh, acrylic, Barbara Wyland

"If I were to compare the week in Truro to a tapestry," says artist Barbara Wylan, "I'd describe it as rich and intricate, and surely a work-in-progress. Its threads include all the gifts we've frequently noted: camaraderie, friendship, love, support, inspiration, growth, adventure, rest, restoration, retreat, empowerment, challenge, wonder, and, oh yes, a setting of natural beauty wondrous beyond description."

But there's something more to the retreat than a collection of nameable elements. These women know they are blessed with tradition and each other, but they are most protective of the brew they together concoct with no recipe except a single admonition: Don't waste a moment of this incredible opportunity.

"Nature changing, the wind, the tide. I can't stand it, it's just so wonderful," says painter and print maker Joyce Kavorskas. "And it's all there. All you have to do is discover it."

Jane Eccles, a plein air landscape artist long accustomed to the kind of work she does during the retreat, still finds fresh experiences waiting for her in Truro. "I am both challenged and encouraged by my fellow artists," she says. "Their opinions matter to me."



Truro Hillside Cottage, oil on canvas, by Jane Eccles.

And well they should, since another characteristic common to all twenty-one is a very high level of professionalism and skill. These are, to a woman, outstanding artists.

Even those members who prefer to work in a studio, in solitude, and who describe themselves as loners regard the week together as a rare opportunity to challenge themselves, savor new experiences, and strengthen bonds with others for whom art is at the very essence of who they are and how they live.

"I have a wonderful new respect for the power of womanhood," says Kate Nelson, an abstract painter who works primarily in a studio. "And there's joy in sharing something you love."



All Things Loose And Set Afloat II, 18x24 oilstick, by Kate Nelson



Established in 1999 by Anne Boucher and Christie Velesig and later named by Jane Lincoln, the group chose the Corn Hill Cottages for its first retreat. A month later, they mounted their first exhibit at the Old Selectmen's Building Gallery in Barnstable.

Since then, they have held over 20 exhibits in venues across the Cape, including such landmarks as the Cape Cod Museum of Art and Highfield Hall in Falmouth. They are widely regarded as one of the region's premiere art groups.

To celebrate its 11th year, 21 in Truro will mount a fresh exhibit called "Between Sea and Sky" from September 8-19 in all four galleries at the Cultural Center of Cape Cod in South Yarmouth. The exhibit will be accompanied by several events intended to share the group's excitement and incredible work with the public, including a reception, demonstrations, and artist talks, all of which are free and open to the public.



Beach Shack, pastel, by M'Lou Sorrin

"We're thrilled to host the annual exhibit of 21 in Truro," says the Cultural Center's Executive Director Robert Nash. "Several of the group have exhibited here before, and all of them are artists whose work is most welcome at any time. Each of these women is a powerhouse in her own right; collectively, they will turn the Center into a treasure chest of color and light. We can't wait."

Like Nash, those who understand that a 21 in Truro exhibit highlights not only great art but also a wonderful story and a lasting bond look forward to the September show, but perhaps not as much as the artists relish their time together.

"For me 21 in Truro is a time to replenish my body and soul," says M'Lou Sorrin, one of the original members of the group. "It is like eating a sumptuous meal with good friends after a long fast. The textures and flavors of our 21 individual lives come together for a week of sharing of ourselves and our art. Through the years we've had times of laughter and tears, of love and loss, and always we've had each other."

In 2010, the 21 in Truro artists are Laverne Christopher, Michele Dangelo, Jane Eccles, Maryalice Eizenberg, Susan Hollis, Joan Ledwith, Jane Lincoln, Jerre Moriarty, Rosalie Nadeau, Kate Nelson, Carol Odell, Julie Olander, Suzanne M. Packer, Sarah Ricci, JoAnn Ritter, M'Lou Sorrin, Lorraine W. Trenholm, Christie Velesig, Linda Young, and Joyce Zavorskas.

For more information about the Between Sea and Sky exhibit, supported by a grant from the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod, please visit www.cultural-center.org or www.21intruro.com

Between Sea and Sky: 21 in Truro Exhibition
Cultural Center of Cape Cod
307 Old Main Street, South Yarmouth 508-394-7100

- **September 10:** Reception to meet the artists, 5-7pm
- **September 16:** Artist demonstrations and Talks, 12:30-5pm
- **September 16:** Private critiques, 2-4pm

Lauren Wolk is a published novelist (*Those Who Favor Fire*, Random House, 2000), poet, assemblage artist.

She is Associate Director of the Cultural Center of Cape Cod, and a member of the Bass River Revisionists, one of the Cape's oldest and most well-respected writers' groups.

She is currently working on a new novel and a collection of poems. Lauren lives in Centerville. lwolkculturalccc@verizon.net

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