PHOTOS + VIDEO: Ogunquit's Inaugural Perkins Cove Plein Air Art Event

If there were any questions as to whether Ogunquit remains one of the most lively, enduring, and relevant Art Colonies in America, they have now been answered — thanks to the inaugural Perkins Cove Plein Air Painting Event which occurred on 9/17/21.

There are very few towns in the world, especially tiny towns like Ogunquit, that have been depicted so many times by such a wide variety of artists over the years. Throughout the decades, this little town has been a non-stop parade of colorful artists drawing, painting, etching and photographing each and every one of its visually-enticing nooks and crannies.

From Charles H. Woodbury (the widely-accepted godfather of Ogunquit art with his Ogunquit Summer School of Drawing and Painting) — through a vast-diversity of names including Edward Hopper, Peggy Bacon, Henry Strater, Marsden Hartley, Hamilton Easter Field, Bernard Karfiol, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Alfred Bellows, Harmon Neill, Peggy Bacon, William Ehrig, Todd Bonita, Walt Kuhn, Ernest Fiene, George Carpenter, Bruce McMillan, Elwyn George Gowen, DeWitt Hardy, Richard Lahey, Stan Moeller, Christopher Volpe, Ernest de Nagy, William H Lippincott, Gertrude Fiske, Madeleine P. Hopkins, Beth Ellis, Adam Sherriff Scott, Ric Della Bernarda, John Laurent, Tom Hughes, Mary Byrom, Joseph B. Davol, Jon Allan Marshall, Benjamin Williamson, Edward Betts, John Neill, John Bartok, John Laurent, Anne W. Carelton, Michael Palmer, Harmon Neill, Daniel Corey, Bernard Karfiol, Michael Walek, Todd Bezold, Emil Carlson, Dennis Poirier, Leo Meissner, Carrol Thayer Berry, Gayle Fitzpatrick, Don Gorvett, Edward Henry Potthast, John David + Rachael O'Shaughnessy, Niles Spencer, Norman West, Antonio Mattei, John Ross Palmer, Mable May Woodward, David + Pam Lussier, Clarence K Chatterton, Leon Kroll, Eric J. Taubert (myself) and hundreds-upon-hundreds of others. Too many to name! They have all created work in (and inspired by) Ogunquit, Maine! Some of them continue!

Then, back in 1928, Charles H. Woodbury, Gertrude Fiske (and so many other notable artists) got together to form the storied **Ogunquit Art Association – Maine's original artists' group** – which is still going strong at **Barn Gallery** in Ogunquit. This list of juried artist-members this organization has attracted over the past (almost) one-hundred years reads almost like a Who's Who of American Art. Through the ups and downs of artistic activity taking place in Ogunquit — Barn Gallery and the Ogunquit Art Association has always kept the flame of the original Ogunquit Art Colony alight.

All of these are among the reasons I created the **Ogunquit Art + Photography Group on Facebook (CLICK HERE)** – so people interested in artwork created in (and inspired by) Ogunquit, Maine would have a dedicated place to share and discuss the full body of work.

All of this is also why, when (over a year ago) a VERY small group of local residents and shopkeepers (including Amy Fitzgerald Forbes, Jen Lewer, Jason Corbin, Ric Della Bernarda, Todd Bonita, David + Pam Lussier, and others) started discussing ways to honor the artistic legacy of Ogunquit with a painting event in Perkins Cove – I knew I definitely wanted to be involved!

That's ALSO why it was so unbelievably rewarding for me (and very many others) to walk Perkins Cove and along Marginal Way on September 17th, 2021 during the inaugural Perkins Cove Plein Air Painting Event and see artists at work all over our harbor, coves, and shoreline!

Planned quickly (in just over 7 weeks) by a small and scrappy group of doers, this event garnered a notable amount of buzz online from participating artists AND eager spectators in the weeks and days beforehand.

Once the big-day arrived, with well over 60 artists registered and painting on almost every corner of the shoreline between Perkins Cove and down the Marginal Way cliff-walk towards Ogunquit's Main Beach, the atmosphere looked gloriously reminiscent of the vintage photographs we've all seen of Charles H. Woodbury surrounded by his friend and student painters back in the early 1900s. Easels and palettes everywhere covered with rainbow globs of paint!

Speaking of the vintage photographs – it was such a treat seeing some of those cherished Ogunquit Art Colony and Charles H. Woodbury images on the banners for the event throughout Perkins Cove – a reminder of how far Ogunquit has come and how important the arts were (and still are to this town today)!

The Cove was filled with live music and activities, including historical art and Perkins Cove talks by Christopher Woodbury, Richard Perkins, and Jay Smith. Brenda Yorke Goodale (author of "The Pride of Perkins Cove" and "Marmaduke Under the Bridge") hosted a storytime for the young at heart.

At noon there was a moment of silence for the victims of 9/11. The quietest I've ever heard the Cove on a bright and sunny late summer day. Absolutely heartfelt and moving.

The moment of silence was followed by the National Anthem plus a flag-raising in Rotary Park and on the Perkins Cove Footbridge.

Amy Kelly from Talespinstudio generously hosted a 9/11 20th Anniversary – First Responder Project fundraiser wherein a Commemorative 2'x6' Freedom Tower Art Piece was raffled for the benefit of the Ogunquit Fire and Ambulance Squads for necessary emergency equipment.

There was also painting demonstration by award-winning contemporary impressionist and nationally-recognized plein air painter and workshop instructor David Lussier.

I love living in the type of town where I can stumble upon artist Ric Della Bernarda teaching a Plein Air Art Class for the Firemen (and women) of Ogunquit — and I was truly inspired by how great all of the firefighters paintings looked! Great job!

Car and pedestrian traffic into Perkins Cove was at a stand-still (way above-and-beyond what we normally see this time of year) during this widely attended event. Visitors to the Cove were delighted to watch the many painters create their masterpieces outdoors throughout the day in the plein air tradition!

Judging of the paintings (in two categories, Amateur and Professional) took place at 3:30PM. The three judges were Chris Caravello (owner/operator at Ogunquit's Van Ward Gallery), David Lussier (award-winning contemporary impressionist and nationally-recognized plein air painter and workshop instructor), and myself, Eric J. Taubert (contemporary fine-art photographer, juried artist-member at Ogunquit Art Association, and arts writer).

After the judging, and announcement of the winners, there was a "wet paint sale" in Perkins Cove from 4pm – 6pm — and there were an enviable amount of sales!

This Plein Air Painting Event is exactly what Perkins Cove has been missing – and exactly what Ogunquit deserves EVEN MORE of — and the organizers of this event all deserve a deafening round of applause PLUS all of the support the town can afford to give them to bring this hugely popular and very successful event back to Ogunquit year after year!

And we're sure you'll all be pleased to know that discussions are already taking place about what can be improved upon, expanded, and made even more magical for the Perkins Cove Plein Air Event 2022!

Imagine if Charles H. Woodbury could see us now!

Many thanks to the sponsors of the inaugural Perkins Cove Plein Air Painting Event: Jackie's Too Restaurant, Ogunquit Barometer, Hartwell House, Salty Lewer Fishing, Footbridge Lobster, Perkins Cove Candles, PLUS the Ogunquit Chamber of Commerce, Town of Ogunquit Parks and Recreation, Perkins Cove GSWC, AND all organizers + volunteers + participating artists!

***NOTE:** Images + writing by Eric Toubert. This piece was reprinted with permission from Ogunquit Barometer.*

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Ogunquit's Perkins Cove Plein Air Event

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