



The Cherry Stone Gallery: *Cause for Celebration*

THIS YEAR, VETERAN GALLERY director Sally Nerber celebrates both her 90th birthday and the 35th anniversary of her famed Cherry Stone Gallery. This tiny but influential gallery is renowned for showing fine contemporary art by both local and nationally-known artists such as Robert Motherwell and Robert Rauschenberg.

The gallery started out as a grass-roots project exhibiting a few local artists and a couple of blue chip photographers in Cora Holbrook's empty and abandoned general store on Railroad Avenue. Her father had kept horses in the back room some years earlier, and Ms. Holbrook once commented, "my father buried his horses in the yard here after they died." In the years that followed, visitors to the gallery often speculated why the strawberries Sally planted in the same yard grew so abundantly. This remained mostly her little secret.

The gallery was started by Sally Nerber and her partner Lizzie Upham, two retired school teachers, "who sort of stumbled into being art dealers," as Nerber puts it. "I had been recently divorced and was working as an elementary school teacher with no intentions of opening a gallery. We were summering in Wellfleet at the time, since I had family there, and I was looking for a studio for Lizzie in Wellfleet. Lizzie had a wonderful eye for art. She went to Cranbrook Academy in Michigan, and then went on to Hollywood where she was involved in making clay figures for cartoons." When Nerber showed her partner the old building, Upham realized instantly that it would make a wonderful art gallery, but it took a year of visiting Ms. Holbrook's jelly stand up on the highway before she would rent it to the pair. And she made them swear that for as long as they leased the property, they were to tell no one what they were paying; she did not want people to know that she was charging so much. Nerber and Upham paid \$300 a year for rent, and in exchange installed electricity, a new roof, and a well.

The relationship between the Cherry Stone Gallery and the artists' community on the Outer Cape happened organically. Berenice Abbott was a long-time friend of Nerber's, and agreed to exhibit her own photographs, as well as photographs by Eugene Atget that Abbott had printed using his original glass negatives. Other local artists followed. Nerber recalls, "Marty and Jack Hall were among the first local artists to exhibit at the gallery and did a great deal to spread the word to others about our call for artists. Thereafter, we had regular exhibitions and openings that were exceedingly well attended, so much so that the town became concerned that we were blocking Railroad Avenue with so many cars. We felt it necessary to add a traffic cop to our operation."

Says artist Christina Schlesinger, "Sally and Lizzie were a great team. Lizzie was a great raconteur, she had a distinct personality which veered from curmudgeonly to hilarious in an instant." Upham, who was the gallery's curator, handled the artistic direction, and Nerber looked after the business infra-



Sally Nerber today, at 90 years of age.



Above: Frances "Lizzie" Upham as a young woman, c. 1940s.



Below: Portrait of Sally Nerber as a young woman, Chicago, early 1940s



Below: Upham and Nerber, late 1970s



The Cherry Stone Gallery takes part in the Wellfleet July 4th parade, mid-1980s, with Sally Nerber driving. Photograph: Barbara Wise



Above: Sally Nerber at work in the Cherry Stone Gallery, 2006

Right: Sally Nerber, Stephanie Terrenzio, Robert Motherwell, and Frances "Lizzie" Upham in the Cherry Stone Gallery's kitchen, 1985, just after Terrenzio had published "The Prints of Robert Motherwell: A Catalogue Raisonné 1943-1984." Photograph: Renate Motherwell



structure and public relations for the gallery. Together they experimented with different guest curators and poetry readings, and provided a forum for published authors who lived on the Outer Cape. Upham once said, "around here, showing 'local talent' often means showing artists that are known internationally."

"Lizzie had seen Robert Motherwell at a lecture at M.I.T. and was impressed by his brilliance," remembers Nerber. "She was determined to show his work, so she called him on the telephone at his house in Provincetown, and he said yes, just like that. He was so generous, so good to us, so pleasant to deal with. He really liked our gallery. Jack Tworkov was the same, just the nicest person."

Myron Stout also exhibited at the Cherry Stone. A few years before his retrospective at the Whitney Museum in New York, he had a small solo exhibition at the Cherry Stone Gallery, and Nerber recalls that Stout's New York dealer, Richard Bellamy, drove the works up in "a very rattletrap truck" with a piece of canvas for a rear door flapping all over as the vehicle made its way to Wellfleet. When Nerber asked, "aren't you concerned about someone walking off with Myron's work from the truck?" Bellamy's reply was, "Who would ever suspect I have highly valuable artwork inside a truck like this?"

Changes

The Cherry Stone Gallery moved in the early 1980s to a more central location at East Commercial Street along Duck Creek in Wellfleet where it continues to thrive today, but, sadly, Upham passed away suddenly on July 1, 1988. This was a difficult time for Nerber. "It was necessary to keep active in the field and the gallery was already well established," she reflects. "Always in the back of my mind, I knew the right person was needed if I was going to continue with the gallery. I was looking for a person with a fairly sophisticated background, and I didn't envision that I could find someone to work with me who understood the Cherry Stone, how it functioned and what was needed to carry out its mission. There were lots of young kids around in Provincetown, but I wanted someone who understood what we were about."

For more than a decade Nerber continued to run the gallery primarily by herself, always keeping things interesting by finding new artists. "Robert Monk was very helpful thinking up new ideas and continued to bring shows



Robert Motherwell, "Gesture Series III," lift ground etching and aquatint, 1976-77

up from New York that were interesting, even witty, like Pop By The Sea," says Nerber. "It's so easy for a gallery to get stale. It's important to feature your stars and equally important to exhibit inventive and challenging work by other artists, as well. Bob Monk was great, always producing world class shows of the highest quality."

In 2001 Nerber began a working relationship with Brenda Correia, the current executive director. They met somewhat unexpectedly at the Cherry Stone Gallery at an exhibition of work by Paul Bowen. This encounter turned



Sally Nerber and Selina Trieff at the Cape Cod Museum of Art in Dennis, 2004.

into a long discussion between the two women, and a friendship developed that eventually turned into a rewarding partnership. They have found they work well together, combining their individual talents to operate a successful gallery. "Brenda's diverse art school training started out with the conceptualists and then moved on to study with the color field painters. Her academic background in teaching and international exhibition record has provided the gallery with a proficient kind of know-how," says Nerber. "It's important to understand that Brenda's arrival was a very important move forward for the gallery. I couldn't continue by myself, and I would have closed it. She is absolutely perfect for the Cherry Stone, she has the energy and enthusiasm needed and has taken on the responsibility that I wanted to forego. I had done it long enough and wanted someone else to take on that load."

One of the first projects Nerber had on her wish list when they decided to work together was to widen the scope of the gallery. Correia brought a strong research background to the table and charted out a course of action. Together the gallery directors worked with a major slide registry in Boston and selected three mid-career sculptors—Joe Wheaton, known for his welded steel and stone; John Tracey, who works in bronze; and Lynn Newcomb, who forges steel combined with wood. A second search was undertaken to acquire four late career painters, who are Nora Speyer, David Loeffler Smith, Leatrice Rose, and Joe Stefanelli. This was followed by the acquisition of three estates: Robert Beauchamp, James Gahagan, and James Lechay.

Sally Nerber turned 90 this year and feels that maybe it is time to think about semi-retirement. She and Correia are in the process of restructuring the gallery, and announce that this will be the last year for regularly scheduled



Cherry Stone Gallery executive director
Brenda Correia

BURDICK GALLERY



Charles Burdick, "Peaceable Kingdom," acrylic



Margaret Burdick, "Bay Sail," watercolor



Charles Burdick, "Van Gogh at the Farm," acrylic

acrylics • watercolors • drawings

Charles, Margaret & Joanne Burdick

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exhibitions on-site. They will curate shows off-site as special projects develop in the future, and will be private dealers, available by appointment and through e-commerce outreach. "The business of art on Cape Cod has changed a great deal over the years, and we have a responsibility to make informed decisions about what is best for our artists and the gallery," explains Correia. "Our goal is to be forward thinking as we look at the most optimum ways to make important contributions in the years to come." —GILLIAN DRAKE

Myron Stout and Berenice Abbott at a Cherry Stone Gallery opening on Railroad Avenue, 1970s. Photos by Gloria Nardin



Cherry Stone Gallery

35 @ 35 Anniversary Exhibition

June 24 – September 10, 2006

Reception: July 25, 2006, 5 to 9 pm

Cherry Stone Gallery is proud to present **35@35, a 35th Anniversary Exhibition** showcasing 35 artists, a season long, gallery-wide group exhibition of artwork by mid-career, late career, and estate artists we proactively support here in the artists' colony.

INCLUDED IN THE EXHIBITION ARE:

Berenice Abbott Eugene Atget Donald Beal Will Barnet
Jackie Battenfield Robert Beauchamp Louise Bourgeois Paul Bowen
Brenda Correia Paul Davis Eric Fischl Sideo Fromboluti
Kathleen Gilje April Gornik Red Grooms Karen Gunderson
James Lechay Lisette Model Bruce Monteith Robert Motherwell
Lynn Newcomb Gloria Nardin Claes Oldenberg Jules Olitsky
Leatrice Rose Christina Schlesinger David Loeffler Smith
Joe Stefanelli Nora Speyer Adele Travisano Rufino Tomayo
Jack Tworikov Peter Watts Joe Wheaton Nadine Valenti

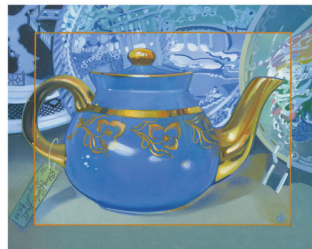
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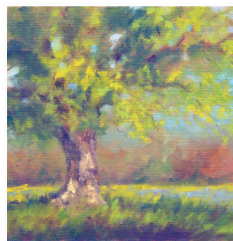
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Traci Harmon-Hay



Vincent Amicosante



Lorraine E. La Pointe



Eric Abrecht



Blair Thornley



Cynthia Guild

2006 Show Schedule
Saturday July 1st - 6-8pm
"People" by Eric Abrecht
Saturday July 22nd - 6-8pm
"Tea by Two"
Traci Harmon-Hay
Vincent Amicosante
Saturday August 12th
"Traffic to Chairs"
Cynthia Guild & Blair Thornley