

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the Shelter Island Historical Society, I wanted to celebrate the ongoing tradition of artists who have lived and worked on Shelter Island. The East End of Long Island has long been talked about for the quality of its light - a light which has lured artists to the region for generations. Shelter Island, with its quiet, magical beauty and an atmosphere that celebrates an independent spirit, has specifically attracted and continues to attract its own legions of artists, each with their own unique vision.

This selection of eight painters and sculptors spans from the 1950's to the present day. The great painter Willem de Kooning spent one summer here in the 1950's. World renowned artists Alan Shields and John Chamberlain both had deep attachments to the island. Shields was even a captain on the North Ferry! He moved his studio here in 1972 and Chamberlain in 2000. Janet Culbertson first arrived in 1967 and her house and studio are overflowing with artwork, a great deal of it reflecting her preoccupation with the natural world. The sculptor Ned Smythe built his studio here in 2001. His walks around the island and the stones and twigs he has found on those walks form the basis of much of his recent work. Karen Arm moved her practice to the island in 2002 and also finds inspiration in working here, describing her detailed meditative paintings as "abstractions from nature." The distinguished writer and cartoonist Jules Feiffer is the most recent islander in this exhibition, settling and making his distinctive and exquisite drawings here since 2017.

I built my studio on Shelter Island in 1998. The ever-shifting rhythm of the water and the patterns of light reflected on it have had a deep impact on me and on my work. Being inspired by the presence and the legacies of these other artists and by the greater artistic community in our region is among the reasons I love living and working on Shelter Island.

It has been a joy putting together this exhibition and finding surprising points of connection between the works of these diverse artists. Thank you to Nanette Lawrensen and the staff of the Shelter Island Historical Society for hosting this exhibition, and thank you to Robert Mnuchin for generously loaning us the de Kooning drawing. I am very grateful to all the artists and to the Chamberlain and Shields families for welcoming me into their spaces and allowing their work to be part of this exhibition of artwork created "Once On This Island."

-Margaret Garrett