



Art of the Ocean State

June/July 2020

William Heydt – Juror

The exhibition “Art of the Ocean State,” opening on June 26th, 2020, attracted a wide range of talented artists throughout New England. Curating the show proved difficult given the uniform strength of the work submitted. Varying in age, sensibility, artistic background, each artist approached the exhibition's theme, Rhode Island, from different perspectives. Through a spectrum of stylistic and aesthetic avenues and a myriad of mediums, the representation of the Ocean State varied from the literal to the abstract. In some cases, the theme was tackled through the depictions of iconic landmarks, while others took on a more conceptual interpretation or personal adaptation of the theme.

Regardless of the approach, the visual dialogue between artists gives way to a collective expression of the creative community that resonates throughout the exhibition. From the bold strokes and harmonious light of Ann Hagan's *Breaking Wave on Bonnet Shores*, to Linda Kings' mixed media abstraction of the coastline in *New England Summer*, there was no shortage of strong work. However, limited wall space necessitated the exclusion of some works — not necessarily on the basis of skill, but rather their connection to the theme. That said, there were a few pieces in the exhibit that were particularly striking, and worth noting.

Jenni Tire, by Robert Lavoie, was ultimately chosen for first place due to its distinctive style, technical mastery and indebtedness of color to light. Laura White Carpenter's porcelain and seagrass sculpture *Barnacles* (2nd place), was recognized on basis of its originalities and creative use of recycled material as a method of construction. The subdued light, vibrant color, prosaic yet unique perspective of Rick Catalozzi's photography landed his work *Summer Palate* in 3rd place. Honorable mention was awarded to Jillian Barber's ceramic sculpture *Fishes Jardiniere*, for its high level of craftsmanship and poetic interpretation of the theme. As was Aleen Quinn's watercolor *The Perfect Storm*, which struck me as small, but powerful piece with details communicated through minimal brushstrokes. The dynamic, but subtle range of color depicting a typical Rhode Island marsh in Diane Webb's *Zeek's Creek* won a Judge's Award alongside Lori Jeremiah's ephemeral illustration of the coastline in *Seaglass*.

- William Heydt