

Destination Galleries Raise the Bar

By Elizabeth Fasolino

(05/24/2007) Three East End galleries, The Fireplace Project, Salomon Contemporary, and the Silas Marder Gallery, are all a bit hard to find and none is quite what you'd expect. The first is in an old gas station in Springs, the second is in a windowless space in an industrial park off Route 114, and the third is housed in a giant barn adjacent to King Kullen.



The Silas Marder Gallery and sculpture garden in Bridgehampton

With a refreshing lack of hauteur, each offers a fresh alternative to run-of-the-mill art galleries and an ambiance that allows visitors to feel confident about their own taste in contemporary art.

The Fireplace Gallery opened last year in the former Talmage's Garage on Springs-Fireplace Road, a quarter mile from the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center. Founded by Edsel Williams, an art dealer who divides his time between East Hampton, New York City, and Miami, the gallery brings cutting-edge art coupled with a unique social sensibility to a quirky little space that really works.

Mr. Williams's gallery opened for the season last Saturday and there are seven shows planned from now through October. "I'm about presenting artists, not representing them," Mr. Williams said. "I invite different people to curate and now people are starting to come to me."

On June 30, David Salle, a part-time East Hampton resident and painter, will curate a group show featuring the work of Jack Pierson, Catherine Sullivan, Amy Sullivan, Michael Bremans, Gary Stephan, and Andrew Lord, as well as other young artists.

In 1987, Roberta Smith wrote in *The New York Times*, "For American art of the 1980s, Salle's painting stands out as one of its great and most paradigmatic achievements."

On July 21, the gallery will present "Siesta Forever, Come On and Sing My Song,"

a solo show of work by Harland Miller. Mr. Miller, an artist and a writer, first received recognition for his paintings in the 1980s and 1990s, and then went on to write a novel, "Slow Down Arthur, Stick to Thirty." On view will be a series of paintings inspired by the dust covers of Penguin classic books and seen through the lens of Pop Art.



Luigi Colarullo
James Salomon in front of "Crooked Year" by Sally Egbert

Next up will be "What's Your Hobby," curated by Beth DeWoody, a philanthropist and collector known for her amazing eye. Of course, it's impossible to tell what the show will focus on, but Leonard Barton, the proprietor of Bravura Art and Objects in Southampton, provided a cryptic clue. He said that Ms. DeWoody loves to go through his bottomless collection, culled from the estates of two artists, and fueled by his passion for collecting that began when he was only 7 years old.

The show will include work by the Neistat Brothers, Jeff Koons, and Damien Hirst.

Salomon Contemporary, which is more of a warehouse than gallery, on Plank Road between Sag Harbor and East Hampton, could be called James Salomon's hobby when he's not working at the Mary Boone Gallery on Fifth Avenue in New York City. The simple spare space acts like a vacuum-sealed capsule to showcase art through simple minimalism, especially when the giant industrial doors are raised and late afternoon light floods the room.

"Surface to Air," the first of six shows this summer, will open on June 3 with a new selection of paintings by Sally Egbert, an East Hampton resident. There will be a reception from 2 to 5 p.m., hosted by poets Max Blagg and Glenn O'Brien, co-founders of Bald Ego, a literary and arts journal.

"Sally Egbert," Mr. Blagg wrote, "brings you down by the seashore, to observe the beaten silver beauty of the spring tide, shows you where each leaf connects to its branch, reconfigures the miraculous patterns of trees in winter."

Next up, on July 5, will be a mysterious show by a guru of conceptual art, Lawrence Weiner. "A Means to an End" will present one of the artist's signature installations featuring language as a metaphor for physical creation. Mr. Weiner, who is perhaps best known for saying that "art need not be built," has promised an installation with special relevance to the East End of Long Island. It will be "absolutely poetic, and charming, and beautiful," Mr. Salomon said in an e-mail.

The third gallery that deserves to be a destination this summer is the Silas Marder Gallery on Snake Hollow Road in Bridgehampton. The gallery, on 33 acres at Marders Nursery, can be challenging to find because it's hard to tell which barn has paintings, and which barn has plants and fertilizer, but friendly landscapers will point you in the right direction.

Last week, the first show of the season opened featuring work by 50 artists. In this second annual “Big” show, artists were given three 8-inch-by-10-inch canvases to work on and the results are on free-standing panels and on walls in a cavernous barn, which was built for the nursery more than 10 years ago.

In addition to the indoor gallery space Mr. Marder has an installation of outdoor sculpture that is a work in progress. This year an outdoor room has been crafted with a hedge of crape myrtle and red twig dogwood. Sculpture by William King, Hans Van de Bovenkamp, Michael Rosch, and Ryan Kitson, will be on view in June. And beginning Aug. 15, there will be a weekend-long “shed show” transforming the many small utility buildings on the property into life-size dioramas filled with artwork.

In July, the gallery hosts a free outdoor Friday night film series beginning Friday, July 20, with a screening of “The Battle of Algiers.” To view the flickering black and white film on a summer night, surrounded by the surreal display of nursery shrubs and carefully placed boulders, may not sound like a typical way to spend a night in “the Hamptons,” but it might be just the thing to prompt audiences to pause and hit the reset button. (It is suggested that guests take their own blankets and beach chairs.)

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By Max Blagg

Once a week Willem de Kooning used to walk
across Accabonac Road in Springs
and visit Pollock’s grave
to make sure Jackson was still dead.
This is their light that bleeds
into the filter of the afternoon,
the light they captured
pure as shamans making weather.
Forty-four years ago today Jackson
celebrated his birthday
kicking shots and driving down
his last hours on earth
before he flew like a drunken arrow
through the trees on Fireplace Road
to connect with a waiting sapling
which bent like a bow
as it bruised his forehead
and snapped his neck
while the women were ground into the tarmac
beneath the Oldsmobile convertible
that had flipped on its back
like a monstrous insect.
When you kneel before the mystic beauty
of “Blue Poles” or “Autumn Rhythm,”
say a prayer for the hairdresser
from a beauty parlor in the Bronx
sacrificed to the bitter gods of art and booze
on her first weekend
out at the beach.

