

# The Sag Harbor Express.

## A Thoughtful Space For Art

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Sometimes it's simply easier to think in an uncluttered space, and Silas Marder knows as much. He knows that by not filling the old Christys Auction House space on Main Street to capacity, by letting the space breathe and with the assistance of some old sea chanteys and whaling songs, visitors to his temporary gallery will have no problem imagining the Sag Harbor of old.

For the space's first exhibit, Marder wanted to pay homage to his new locale and enlisted a number of artists, some local, some not, to create works related to the sea. He could have gone overboard, hanging buoys and fish net and giant harpoons, but instead chose only to provide a little background music. The result is an exhibit that is equally respectful of the art, the space and this village.

"I've been here for a while and I'm still finding new things," said Marder about the building from 1843. "There is just so much detail."

He's calling the space the "Temporary Silas Marder Gallery" because, well, he's not sure how long he'll be there. His lease is up in October and from there he'll go "month to month." But for the time being Marder has embraced the three rooms that make up the 2,500 square foot basement with their cement and stone walls and bricked archways. And Marder knows a little something about unique spaces. His main gallery, located in Bridgehampton behind his parents' landscaping business, is a gigantic barn.

With the new space he saw a lot of opportunities that don't exist in the barn, mainly the smallness and the intimacy. It also allows Marder to have a project space, something that's missing in Bridgehampton.

The back room currently holds a single piece by Cynthia Knott entitled "At the Horizon I and II" consisting of two enormous canvases suspended in mid-air by a series of C-clamps and cables. One canvas represents the sea and the other the sky and they're arranged in a way that allows you to walk inside them and become engulfed.

But Marder hopes the two spaces also work together. He's currently planning an architecture and space exhibit that he plans to open in his main gallery one weekend and then continue in the temporary gallery the next to create a continuation of a body of work. "One of the advantages of having the two spaces," he said, "is having a dialogue

between them.”

The new space is also allowing Marder to experience what a Main Street gallery feels like, something he’s been thinking about for a while.

“We’ve been playing around with the idea of a temporary location for the last couple of years and thought it would be a great way to try out a Main Street space - to see if it suits us and see what it does for the artwork.”

He said he’s certainly enjoyed being in Sag Harbor over the last two months.

“In Bridgehampton, we’re sort of a destination space. People are coming to find us there,” said Marder. “Here we’re getting all sorts of different backgrounds and different people coming through the door and different reactions to the art work and it definitely gives the installation a different type of energy.”

The energy of the new space is central to the current exhibit it holds, which consists of 13 works by six different artists. While Knott’s piece is by far the largest, the other pieces are just as exquisite. Oliver Peterson’s collage serves as a nostalgic ode to a forgotten maritime and Stephanie Stein’s tiny watercolor ships on paper are gentle reminders of the ocean’s vastness. And some pieces like Raymond Pettibon’s lithograph of a giant wave are, in Marder’s words, “a little dark and sinister.” Overall, the space and the exhibit compliment each other perfectly.

“There’s a delicate balance,” said Marder. “The space could dominate, but at the same time you want to give the artwork a place as well. You don’t want one to overwhelm the other.”

Photo: Cynthia Knott’s “At the Horizon I and II” hanging in the back room at the Temporary Silas Marder Gallery - photo by Danny Gonzales

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