

Natural colors

Plein air painter exhibits landscapes and seascapes in Concord

By Angie Sykeny
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For Newbury artist Debbie Campbell, living in the Lake Sunapee Region provides endless inspiration for her plein air landscape oil paintings.

"I've done a lot in the Lake Sunapee Region, from the top of Mount Sunapee to around the lake and at the Fells [Historic Estate & Gardens]," she said. "The majority of what I paint is around there."

About a dozen of Campbell's paintings are on display now through March 19 at the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce gallery, managed by the New Hampshire Art Association, in a solo exhibition called "Nature's Palette."

The exhibition features Campbell's plein air paintings of landscapes and waterscapes in the Lake Sunapee Region as well as in Vermont and on the Seacoast.

"Most of my paintings have some kind of water, whether that's a brook or a lake or the ocean," she said. "The exhibit in Concord has some sailboats, some marshes in Vermont, a little bit of everything."

Campbell said she plans on spending more time painting on the Seacoast and is especially interested in painting ocean waves.

"That's my latest thing now — studying waves, like what makes a wave green right before it crashes? Part of that is the algae in the water," she said. "From a painting point of view, it's fascinating. It's beautiful."

Campbell said she prefers plein air painting over painting from a photograph because she loves the outdoors — skiing, water sports and hiking are among her favorite pastimes — and



"Peaceful Haven" by Debbie Campbell. Courtesy photo.

because she believes that painting from a live, three-dimensional scene "makes for a better painting."

"When you paint from a photograph, it flattens the image, because you lose the ability to see what's behind it," she said. "I think if you can be in nature and observe nature and see what's happening around you, it allows you to be more creative, and I think the paintings come out stronger."

Campbell said her artistic style incorporates some aspects of realism with "a heavy influence from impressionists," and has a focus on light, composition, color and shape.

Oil is her one and only medium, she said, because it is more forgiving and dries more

slowly than acrylics or watercolor, which is helpful when painting plein air, and because of its vibrancy.

"With oil, you can adjust it and play with it and blend it more easily," she said. "It is definitely preferred."

One of Campbell's personal techniques is to start with a very limited color palette — "two blues, two reds, maybe three yellows and a white and a black," she said — and mix all of her own colors on site.

"A limited palette allows me to connect to the colors in nature, because everything in nature draws from the same colors," she said. "It lets you get a more atmospheric perspective."

For her day job, Campbell owns and runs her

own graphic design and web design business. She holds degrees from Northeastern University and Massachusetts College of Art, was formerly an adjunct professor at Colby-Sawyer College and the New Hampshire Institute of Art (now the Institute of Art and Design at New England College) and is a juried member of the New Hampshire Art Association, through which she participates in various exhibitions throughout the year.

In June, she'll be one of three artists featured in a group show called "All Mixed Up," on display at NHAA's Portsmouth gallery. The other two artists will include a photographer and an artist who does abstract art. Campbell will present primarily seascapes.

Campbell chooses not to state the location of the scenes depicted in her paintings in the paintings' titles; she doesn't want to take away from the viewer's interpretation.

"I want them to see my paintings and not think about where I was when I painted it, but what it reminds them of, like a place they went as a kid or a place where they had a good memory," she said. "I want them to see the place that they want to see." 🌿

"Nature's Palette" by Debbie Campbell

Where: Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce Gallery, 49 S. Main St., Concord

When: Now through March 19. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Visit: debbiecampbellart.com

19 Art

Includes listings for gallery events, ongoing exhibits and classes. To get listed, e-mail arts@hippopress.com.

Art

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• **18TH ANNUAL ART & BLOOM EXHIBIT** Concord Garden Club and League of NH Crafts-

men present floral arrangements created by Garden Club members and local floral professionals, inspired by works by League craftsmen. On view Jan. 16 through Jan.

21 Theater

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18. League of NH Craftsmen, 49 S. Main St., Concord. Visit facebook.com/concordgardenclubnh.

• **"THE ROAD: PAINTINGS FROM 2009 TO 2019"** London

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21 Classical

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