



common
ground
COMMUNITY STORIES

new bedford
whaling museum

SOUTHCOAST Artists Index

This story was collected through our partnership with the SouthCoast Artist Index, led by Ron Fortier.

These transcripts were produced using the Zoom transcription feature.

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Storyteller Name: Ron Fortier

Jeff Wotton

Welcome to the Artist Index podcast episode #1. My name is Jeff Walton. I'm joined today by Ron Fortier and we're flipping the script today. Normally you'll be hearing Ron's voice. He'll be the one interviewing artist. But for this podcast, just going to be an introduction to what the artist. Index is all about how it started, what the vision is and all that kind of fun stuff. So without further ado, Ron, why don't you introduce yourself real?

Ron Fortier

Quick, my name is Ron Fortier. I'm an abstract painter. I live in Fairhaven and we've we've, that's Jeff and Jeff and I have a. Resurrected a project that we started a few years back that's near and dear to our hearts. It's the artist Index project and what that entails is gathering as many artists as we can that live and work in this area and it's creative community and getting them to register on the artists. Profile website and. Taking it from there.

Jeff Wotton

So what was the? Genesis behind the idea for this project.

Ron Fortier

There was 2 two points. One is I remember seeing an ad placed in the standard times Old Sunday magazine. I believe it's called the bowsprit. It was placed there by Mary Jane. Glass Dale, who was the curator at the Whaling Museum in New Bedford. And she was working on what became her seminal book artist of New Bedford, a biographical dictionary. And it intrigued me that there were so many names that she had their names but had no information on them. And for some reason it just stuck in the back of my head. Then, in an often noted. Article in the November 2011 issue of the Atlantic Magazine. New Bedford was first listed as the seventh most artistic city in the country. The ranking was something that the researchers, Richard Florida and Kevin Stolarik referred to as the location quotient, or LQ, and basically, the LQ calculates the number of self identified. Cars per capita and ranks that figure against the average of other metropolitan areas, the New Bedford LQ was 2.393 more than twice the national average, ranking below Santa Fe, San Francisco, New York City, but well ahead of Boston, Providence and Provincetown. And that's the significant number of people making our in and around New Bedford. So that really got us to thinking about. Where are these artists? Why can't we just go to one resource and look them up? So that's where the artist index project started. But that was the genesis of it. And the sole purpose of it is to attract the creative communities living, visual, performing and literary. Artists and to encourage



them to register. We want to create this concise directory of not only living artists, but those who have passed away and left behind a legacy, something of value to this and future generations. And the goal is to ultimately make visible the creative relativity of these artists through their teachers, classmates and colleagues. Basically, we're the artist index is putting artists in their place in history.

Jeff Wotton

It's going to entail profiles on the website, interviews via podcast format. And videos down the road, right?

Ron Fortier

Right. The artists index. Project has several components. One is the the website itself, which is offering three distinct free registration platforms. One is for the artists themselves. Where they can have their own profile pages, a lot of artists who don't want, need or care. For a web website. Right. And the second one is for people who have acquaintances or family members or they just believe that the information that they have is important and they'd like to see it live on, so to speak, of artists from the past. And my particular case. Although my mom's still alive, I created a profile for her in another version of of of this in in the the genesis of this project and comes to find out that she is the only one of her generation that has been documented, and that's kind of sad. In a way. So that's another aspect of it. And then the third aspect is anyone who's doing research in the city, for whatever reason, reporters, scholars, genealogists, it'll be a great resource for them to search for and find information, especially as the database grows. So we have the website, we have the podcast such as the one we're doing now, but interviewing artists and listening to their thoughts and. Their overview on on on not just their work, but living and working in the city, and then we'll also be introducing videos at some point in time step by step process. But we're excited about it.

Jeff Wotton

So where can people find more information about the project?

Ron Fortier

The more information about the project is available at our website, theartistsindex.com. The index is going to be growing, as I said, as everyone as we can attract more people to it to register, it will grow and grow and that's where one of my my particular goals is to find what I call the creative relativity. For example, my instructor at toneri at what was SMU back then. A instructor and I believe he was also one of the presidents of the Swain School, but his instructor was Hans Hoffman, and it just goes on and on and on. So if you can imagine a creative genealogy is that's, that's my ultimate goal. I'm just very curious to see the pathways of of this creative relativity just. From the city of New Bedford to to begin with in the surrounding communities. Join us as we speak with and listen to the creative communities visual performing and literary artists will also feature those seeking information on and sharing what they have discovered about the artists who have passed away that were part of the creative communities fabric and days gone by. And we'll also have people who are. Associated with the arts in what is now being referred to as the art industry, collectors, brokers, those kinds of people for interesting and I hope, stimulating and and informative.