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COMMUNITY STORIES

new bedford
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SOUTHCOAST Artists Index

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

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Storyteller Name: Barbara Healy

Ron Fortier

Hey this is. One video with yet another podcast episode. This is now podcast episode wow, Let's see. Where are we up to now? We are. At 100 and. 9 Now so our next guest is podcast. Guest 109 This is brought to you by the artist index. Please check out our website at the artist index.com, generously supported by heavenly Spirits Importers and working in collaboration with the Whaling museum. And the wedding museum's common ground project. More about that will be coming up in in the next few episodes. And also thanks to our friends at Spectrum Marketing Group. And the Mass Cultural Council so. With all that in mind. I want to to have our guests as per usual, introduce themselves and spell their name.

Barbara Healy

Hi Ron. My name is Barbara Healy BARBARRAHEALY, and thanks for having me.

Ron Fortier

You're welcome. You're welcome. It's funny because you know the the spelling, your name. I think it was a old television show. What's what's my line? And they, I think they would have the guests do the exact same sort of thing. It was sort of an interesting opening, kind of a soft opening. How did you get? Into this whole. Art thing?

Barbara Healy

I've I've always been in the art thing. I grew up in an artistic family. My grandmother that lived next door was an artist in Connecticut, and she studied with a famous artist there, Albertus Jones, and she was pretty much a hobbyist, although I think she sold a few of her paintings and my aunt was a artist. She lived on the other side of my grandmother. So my whole family was artistic. My mother always worked and I think was too busy to. Do much. For herself. But she always brought us to museums and encouraged us to be artists.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. So it is, it is, you know, I said I strictly believe after listening to so many stories that a lot of it is by exposure just being exposed to the arts and and that brings me to a something I had read years ago that said that a child whose bedroom is full of books, even though they've never opened or. Any of the books have been read to. We'll end up doing better in school just because they were surrounded by books. It's kind of a weird thing. You know.



Barbara Healy

We had a lot of books in our house. They're they're still there. My parents are both 92 and they live in Connecticut.

Ron Fortier

Oh, God. What's what part of Connecticut?

Barbara Healy

South Windsor it's a suburb of Hartford, and it was much more rural when I was growing up there.

Ron Fortier

South Windsor. My uncle Ernie, who had beauty salons in Hartford. Had a home with one of his wives. He had about four of them in Windsor. I think I made you know, it was really interesting because they were just, like, stuck into the pine. It was like I remember the development. It was like sticking houses in the woods is really what it was it was. It was amazing how many trees there were there in that development, but. When did the? Moment of truth strike you that this is what I want to do. This is, you know, the rest of my life.

Barbara Healy

Well, I I guess in high school I did a lot of artwork. I was voted Best Artist in my class, so I just decided to go to college for art and I went to. I started at Yukon and I didn't really like it. The school is huge and I started in graphic design and I just didn't feel like it. Was a good fit. So I transferred to SMU and I took textile design. And I really thought that was. Going to be what I did in between. I took a short term. I thought at the time job with the post office because I had done that a couple summers and right when I got out of school they offered me a job and I was there for 33 years. So then I really feel like I've reinvented myself as an artist about 25 years ago, I got back into painting, and it's really a different kind of art than I went to school for. But I really throw myself into. It and I love it.

Ron Fortier

So 33 years of the post office. Ohh that's. That's a long time.

Barbara Healy

I was a city carrier in Fall River. Where the bag? On my shoulder? Yeah.

Ron Fortier

So you're in good shape then?

Barbara Healy

Well, I've been retired for nine years.

Ron Fortier

Right now, would you may have missed it. I'm thinking about something else. Did you continue? Painting at all, even like you know, occasionally or intermittently during that time.

Barbara Healy

When I first was working at the post office, I really didn't. I used to work 60 hour weeks and we built our house. I got married and I really put art aside for a while and I guess I did some. But not a lot. And then at some point I decided I really want to get back into it and started taking classes. The Susan Cabral from Dartmouth and I joined Bear Art Society in New Bedford. And that really helped me get back into art.



Ron Fortier

Does the views thought society still exist?

Barbara Healy

I don't think so.

Ron Fortier

OK. I mean, that was an asthma to us at SMU because our Southeastern Massachusetts University, for those of you who are from the area and familiar with the history, it's SMU, Southeastern Massachusetts University, is now the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. UM. I they I I think they were, they were going full bore around that time in the 70s and but they were traditionalists, you know, very traditional objective painting and we were just a bunch of wild and crazy abstract painters hippies from from SMU. Your your work that you do now, how would you describe yourself as to your imagery?

Barbara Healy

I do mostly landscapes. I'm really inspired by this beautiful place that I live in and I just find it ever changing. The weather's constantly changing, the seasons are constantly changing. I do a lot of plain air painting. All you need to do is turn around and you have a whole new scene. I am trying different things. I'm always taking classes. I'm trying different approaches but and I do some other things I try to do some figure work and some still lives. But I will say the landscape here really inspires me and I think I'm an outdoor person. I love to boat and kayak and walk the beach and garden and those are the things that I like. So that's what I like to paint.

Ron Fortier

The the plane there. Thing seems to. Have really taken off in this area specifically. I think intuitive. I I was watching these posts on Facebook and Instagram and I know that you know your association with the Dartmouth Cultural Center and Joe Law and the the wet paint and all those other. Planner events. Those were pretty much a one day thing, but in 2000, for example, it looked like it was going on constantly and it's it's kind of interesting to see. You know, people out there painting. Playing there, just like you know, 100 plus years.

Barbara Healy

Well, I I paint with the Westport Art group on Thursdays, and I've been doing that ever since I retired from the post office. And I I was dying to do it before. But occasionally when I had a Thursday office, I used to have a rotating schedule. I would paint with them. And they paint plain air the whole summer. Even spring fall when it's. A nice day. And it's a really fun group to go with. Why wouldn't you want to be outside on a nice day in a beautiful place painting? And I find a lot of inspiration painting with other people. It it's so amazing what they pick. You go to a place and you see what this is. What interests me. This is what I pick. And they pick something completely different. And it it's really interesting to me to see what people pick and and how they make a. Piece of artwork.

Ron Fortier

OK. Yeah. The other aspect of playing their painting and I haven't done it in a long time is it's really excellent training because that cloud isn't going to stay there because you're painting it. The light is constantly changing. I mean, there's just so many factors that you have to be you have to be totally lit up. You have to be totally connected to your environment. To be doing plan there, right?

Barbara Healy

I think it makes you edit. It makes you edit.

Announcer

In your mind.



Barbara Healy

But you you can't put in everything. It's not like when you're working from a photograph and you can pick at each little thing. And so I'm going to put that into I'm going to put that in. You have to decide what's important. You have to get it down there. And and I I. Think if you let yourself go into the moment and really absorb your surroundings, it comes through in your painting.

Ron Fortier

Now, have you ever done a session where and I don't know how regimented you are. I'm a Virgo. So that's what this guy should. But to say, OK, I'm going to do plenty of, and I'm going to do this one. This one scene that I'm looking at. I'm. Going to do 4 canvases. UM. And just, you know, just keep painting because obviously each one of those campuses is going to, even though it's the same composition, primarily the color has changed, the light has changed, everything has changed. Even the more boat will start to spin on its on its mooring. And so it won't stay in the same profile or three quarter view or whatever.

Barbara Healy

Yes. And I think I have done that and sometimes the one that you labored over first and spent the most time on. Is nowhere as good as the second one that you do that you think you're going to do in just a short amount of time, but you've been studying it and looking at it and things have changed and you really can get it down there in a hurry and and get it correct.

Ron Fortier

Is it in print in your mind? Do you think it is is? There to become an imprint, I mean. Where it's become second nature.

Barbara Healy

I I do try to. Mix it up and try different approaches. I I think it's a I I like it to be a struggle if it gets too easy, it's. Not really making yourself reach as an artist. So I I try to do and sometimes they come out crappy. I have a whole bunch. Of those.

Ron Fortier

Well, when were you at SMU?

Barbara Healy

I graduated in 1980.

Ron Fortier

In 1980, so did you take any painting courses there?

Barbara Healy

I did not. I took like some introductory ones and I'm really sorry that they told me at the time they were too full. And I and afterwards I think I should have been much more assertive and said I'm paying for my college education. You need to fit me. Into this class.

Ron Fortier

Right. Because, you know, Tonya Elliott, McCoy and Cummings. And Herb Cummings especially always used to say that don't get too attached to anything that you do. It's all perspiration. It's all perspiration. It's it's the sweat of your artistic labor and where you get trapped is when you think it's oh so pretty and also exquisite. And then. This is. You're doomed from that point on. But that was his philosophy.



Barbara Healy

Well, like a teacher that I, I took a class with last year that I really enjoyed. SE chesser, Vic. He's from the Cape. He's a wonderful painter and he taught us about the 3P's which I really like. That perfectionism leads to procrastination, which leads to paralysis. And I I. Think I'm guilty of it. I when I'm starting new painting, I I'm looking for the perfect. Photograph like the perfect next thing that I'm doing instead of just doing it. And sometimes it's the one that's kind of nagging in the back of your head and go well, it probably won't. Come out that great that really. Is better.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, that, that's that, that that's interesting. When you're working, have you ever had? For lack of a better description. Of an out. Of body experience, where you see yourself. I mean, and your hand is moving and you're putting stuff down and you're going. Oh my God, I can't. Believe I'm doing this. This is so great. I'm not even thinking. About it and. It's just like all. Coming together, and have you ever had? Moments like that or.

Barbara Healy

Ohh wait, I think so. Yeah, especially outside when I'm. I'm busy. Like looking at my whole surroundings and I'm painting and I'm not really thinking about it and really getting the zone. I ever dreamed about it. I wake up and I'm paying. I'm. I'm painting in my. Dreams. Hey, Colin.

Ron Fortier

Wow, that's pretty cool. Now, have you had experiences? And I I remember, you know, one of my, I mean, this is years ago. I was. I can tell you exactly what it was. It was on Smith Neck Rd. W Smith Neck Rd. in Panera and and. Painting and being very conscious of, you know, cars would be going by and you could hear them slowing down and give you became self-conscious of that.

Barbara Healy

Painted enough outside, it really doesn't bother me.

Ron Fortier

I mean, after a while it's just. You know, you just. Erase all that from your head so. People could come up behind you. And be standing, standing there staring. At what you're doing and. You would have no idea that behind you, right?

Barbara Healy

But I I just. I think, and maybe from years of being a letter carrier, I can zone out dogs people. All kinds of things.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, because you you definitely want a mission every single day, right? I mean, you have to have that. Will you have to stick to that route and then obviously Bob and weave where? It was required so that I. Guess that's a very interesting parallel training for your artistic career. So you're a member of the South Coast artists?

Barbara Healy

I am.

Ron Fortier

How long have you been a member?

Barbara Healy

I was trying to think that I think I've been on the tour now, almost like 10 years. I didn't look exactly for for quite a while now and I I really enjoy having people come to my house, my studios, over in my garage so I don't have a



lot of hanging space, but I set up my garage doll. No, it's not fancy like some peoples, but I have a lot of visitors. It's really wonderful. I have a lot of people that come back year after year. And I love being part of the group. I've learned so much from being part of this group with professional artists and. Made a lot of friends.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. Now the the tour, that's. Actually kind of a feather. In everybody's hat that it's. How how many years has? It been, I mean actually, no, I'm also a member. But I've I've I've just only recently. Joined within the last year or? So but. How how many years has this thing been going on?

Barbara Healy

I think it's 6/16.

Ron Fortier

16 years. Wow, that's that's.

Barbara Healy

Well, like I say that I'm. I'm not sure I should know. I'm on the board.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, I mean this is. Just it just goes from day. To day, right?

Barbara Healy

So what I do for South Coast artists is I help people do their registration for the for the tour. And I learned a lot about that. A lot of computer stuff which I. On the. Learning training while doing it but it to me it's I'm not very techie but I'm willing to try.

Ron Fortier

Right, right now. What towns does it cover?

Barbara Healy

Dartmouth, Westport, Tiverton and Little Compton. So it is a large area for people to cover.

Ron Fortier

We would ever come over to our side, over here in Fairhaven, in New Bedford, because I was thinking, Oh my gosh, that would be. That would be huge, I mean. It'd almost be like an entire other organization I'm assuming.

Barbara Healy

Well, I think the problem is right now we limited it to 75 artists because really. Even with that, you can't do the whole thing in two days and you kind of have to pick and choose. And we usually always sell out for those 75 artists. So I don't really think we can get any bigger.

Ron Fortier

Right. Well, you have two tours. Two tours. A year, correct? Alright, so the first tour cover is. One part of that territory, no.

Barbara Healy

So now they both cover all of it.

Ron Fortier

OK, alright.



Barbara Healy

And we encourage artists to do both tours.

Ron Fortier

OK. All right. So it's you. I mean it would be I mean because from yeah, having a studio but not being in the in the area, in the tour area, you have slept all your. Stuff over and. You're of course with COVID. I mean, last year it was really kind of interesting that the show went on, so to speak. Some people didn't do so well and that, you know, could you tell us about that? The during doing this tour, the South Coast Artists Studio tour during the time of COVID.

Barbara Healy

Well, everyone felt very uncertain. You know, a lot of people that regularly have done the tour didn't do the tour, especially people that have health problems or someone in their family has health concerns. And I certainly can understand. And that and and probably a lot of our normal customers didn't come, but a lot of people did do the tour, people wore masks. We encouraged people to do out, to have more of their artwork outside, to feel safer about it. I didn't feel like I had any. Problem at my house with I was still very busy, had a lot of people come.

Ron Fortier

Are you on a well traveled road or no?

Barbara Healy

I'm in the middle. Of I'm in the woods.

Ron Fortier

You're in the woods and people still. Be the pastor your door.

Barbara Healy

Yes, and I it is a lot of people that have come year after year from doing it for a few years. They make sure they always come back and see me and what my. New artwork. Is and I try to self promote. Besides the South Coast and send out an E blast, and through my Facebook, Instagram and it's all marketing is part of being an artist now.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Now, what is it that attracts the the buyers, slash collectors?

Barbara Healy

I think people have to feel like they love a piece of artwork and especially. I can look at a lot of different kind of artwork that I find very interesting, but if. To buy it, to have it in my home is something I want to look at every day. And I I have people who call me and e-mail me and tell me all the time that they are so happy that they look at my artwork every day and that's just a really nice thing.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, that is that that definitely is. That definitely is. So let's let's let's roll back to when you decided to. You're doing this full time now, right? I mean, as full time as you can possibly do, because I mean none of us paints full time not with the social media and and the entering shows and writing grants and yeah.

Barbara Healy

Well, and and I like to feel like I'm sort of retired and goof off a little bit.

Ron Fortier

That's a good thing. So what would? Have been your high points. And in these, how many years now, nine years,



10 years?

Barbara Healy

Well, I think we've gotten. To back into painting like 20 years ago. And and one of the things I did about. I was thinking about it in 2000. I spent a week on the Ernestina. Which was it was supposed to be an artist trip, and we sailed from Philadelphia into the Chesapeake. And we did tall ships, Delaware with all the other tall. Ships from all over the world. And we didn't do a whole lot of. Artwork on the ship. But it was just such a great experience. I think that was like a a really fun thing that got me back into art too.

Ron Fortier

I mean I, you know, I've been on her a couple of times, but it was basically out into the Bay, you know, do a big circle come back. And that was thrilling. I can't imagine what it was like to be out there now. Did that trip at all Foster any. More investigations or studies into seascapes and and and the ocean and you know boats. And water and that kind of thing.

Barbara Healy

Well, interesting in old boats, but I'm I grew up being a fisherman with my dad. And my husband and. I have always been into boat. We we used to have a sailboat. We have a power boat. That's hibernating in my garage, right? Now, but we have. A 16 foot skiff. We take out all the time and I have my own kayak. I spend a lot of. Time in the. Water. That's and I love to do reference photos. On the water in my kayak, it's great. For exploring, I love that. Point of view where? I'm really low in the water. You feel like your. Rate ended almost.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, it's almost like you're riding a bubble. It's the weirdest, the the feeling of buoyancy to me has always been really, really interesting.

Barbara Healy

And you you really get out in quiet nature and you see a lot of birds and and time to think and look. I I feel. Like I'm always observing, even when I'm not painting. I'm looking at colors and shapes and thinking about it. I play a game with myself sometimes. What color is it? You look at a road and it's Gray, but the part in the sun is kind of orange, yellow. The part in the shade is kind of blue, purple that day and on a different day, maybe it's red.

Ron Fortier

So you're painting in your head pretty much. Yeah. Yeah. Now beside the South Coast artist group and and and the the tour and such exhibiting and that that takes quite a bit of.

Barbara Healy

I am.

Ron Fortier

Also, I guess I mean you've always got to be ready because you know it always seems like when those call for submissions show up for some reason, it's like, why didn't I see this before? And now I've got three days together to get ready to put something in the show. Yeah.

Barbara Healy

It it is I'm I'm looking I'm. I'm in two galleries in Norton Gallery and Peyton Arum and Rogers Gallery and Media Poison. I'm also an exhibiting juried, exhibiting artist at Cape Cod Art. So I do some of their shows. I I do my open studio. I just entered something in spring bowls, fakes and forgeries. I do some shows down there. There's such a nice Co-op gallery in Newport and I I belong to a lot of the art associations, Marion and Taunton in Westport. And I really. I enjoy doing my local art, ones I love the. Association being part of a art group. Being part of our



community.

Ron Fortier

What? What? What is it? About the the art community. Part that you like the best.

Barbara Healy

I think we're very supportive of each other. I learned from other artists. I love my friend Robin Nunes, and I do a lot of art things together. We like to go to shows and. Look at art. We go enter things together and. I think everybody. Really helps out everybody else out. I I think it's a very positive feeling. I know some people feel competitive and they're not happy if they don't do as well as other people. I I don't really feel that.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, I mean, I just. I'll just a couple of things. I mean, you know we you. Know we had, we've we had a tragedy. In our community with a A, a husband and wife, both of us, they, they, they lost a member of the family and the outpouring was was phenomenal support and and and you know sympathies and and and and such. You know we've had situations where. Other artists, if if falling on hard time. And people are there to help out, you know, with whatever they can do. So it is a very tight knit, maybe is a good. Word don't know. But it's it's a very close community and and there is a lot of support for each others work and the competitive aspect of it is. Is I? I really never really felt it, and if if it was there, people just they don't say anything. Thing, but they've been.

Barbara Healy

The one good part of that, I think, is that when I I see some of my friends being very successful. Sometimes it gives me a little push and say, well, yeah, I like being retired, but I I should work a little harder. I should enter that extra show. I should do a little more.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. Yeah, we had a situation where a couple of really adept artists who you know, enjoyed them, enjoy a a modicum of success. They both got rejected from from shows that they enter and they were like kind of stunned about about that and. Yeah, I I guess. It happens. I mean we we are always setting ourselves up for evaluation regardless of. You know, if you think it's just a show now, it's actually an evaluation. I mean, you know, what is, you know, our worth of our self value is based on whether or not we get into a. Show you know.

Barbara Healy

I've I've been rejected from a lot of.

Ron Fortier

Well, yeah, the more you answer, the more. You get rejected, right? There's got to be some sort of a ratio between the accepting the the shows that we get accepted into and and no, once we get rejected from. Now God, I've been hearing a lot. Of of that Jill law especially. Has told me about it. Could you tell me a little bit? Tell us a little bit about about the Cape Cod Art Association and why is it that? Stop and think about it. It's on the end of God's finger. If you to to use that expression. This is not exactly a place that you drive by. This is the place you have to drive to. And yet the Cape and this aren't seen seems to be as vibrant as any other.

Barbara Healy

Well, the keep has a history of being. The big art scene. For for a long time, tea town has been artist Mecca. For 100 years and actually I think Jill's associated with the Cape Cod Cultural Center, which I go to there for shows all the time. That's wonderful. But I belong to the Cape Cod Art Center, which is different. It's in Barnstable.

Ron Fortier

They have a lot.



Barbara Healy

Of classes and they have shows there. And it's a great organization.

Ron Fortier

Ohh, good. Good. What? What benefit is it to you to, to, to, to belong to something that's not exactly in your your title pool. You know of of the same zone that that the South Coast artists covers.

Barbara Healy

Well, I love taking classes down there. I usually take one or two a year and I I turn it into a art day that I drive down to the Cape and take my class and I do some hiking down there and I do some photography or I paint for a while on my own or go to galleries. So I really love doing that and I like showing down there. It's another pop group, so associate with one fun thing that I did last year with my friend Robin Nunes. We both through them participated in the Hydrangea festival. Which is they gave. They had gardens all week that people visited. It was a big flower festival and we painted for one day and we were really lucky. We painted in this man. Who's Mr. hydrangea? No, Condon. He's like 80 years old. Well, and has a wonderful garden and we got to paint his house and they had, like, hundreds of people that came through while you were painting. And you got to paint in this gorgeous spot. It was really fun.

Ron Fortier

Now I can't remember and I could be wrong on both counts, but one or the other is a native plant. The hydrangea or the rhododendron.

Barbara Healy

The word addendum is native.

Ron Fortier

It is native. All right, so the hydrangea is Chinese or Asian.

Barbara Healy

I think Chinese, although it's very big in Portugal, Azores, it's all wild hydrangeas.

Ron Fortier

The Azores, yeah. Yeah, they're they're absolutely a a beautiful flower. The the type of artwork that that is is exhibited at the Cape Cod, Cape Cod Art Center, comparative to the type of art that is exhibited at, you know, Wag Westport Art Group. Dartmouth Cultural Center, the South Coast Tour Am I missing any other big ones or? Ohh. Marrying outside of the Mac as they refer to it now how different is is it? I mean, do we have a? Is there a style? Is there a A? Yeah. I mean, Southwest art, for example, is pretty simple because it's, you know, it's sand skulls, some, you know, cactus, that's pretty easy to pick up. But is is this style that is either similar to what what goes on here in South Coast, Massachusetts or they have one of their own.

Barbara Healy

Both the Cape Head Art Center that I belong to and the Cultural Center that Jill does, both of. Them are very eclectic. So they have artists of of all different, very traditional artists who are painting landscape for boats, which is kind of what I do, but also very modern artists, all different. So I think they have a, there are a lot of artists. On the Cape. Uh, it's a lot of competition, but in a good way. You see a lot of different kinds of art.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. So I, I I remember, I think writing an artist statement once saying well-being an abstract artist in in a coastal. And and historic coastal seaport town has its challenges, you know, because a lot of these associations, I mean you have the only abstract guy in the group and and and there's this whole this whole you



know you you don't kind of fit but it seems like it's. Evolved quite a bit. Right.

Barbara Healy

Yes. Well, and I think Key Town always had very modern artists. If you go to galleries there, there are some traditional artists that there's a lot of modern art in Provincetown. So and the the couture center of the art, that's a a wonderful gallery bakery. Really eclectic, shows all kinds of art. Some of it's very modern.

Ron Fortier

So what would a midwinter trip be worth it to to take to Peter?

Barbara Healy

Oh, I think definitely. I think maybe. Some of the galleries closed in January. You really have to check schedules.

Ron Fortier

OK. So they, you know, like a lot of places will. Paint and Polish, that kind of thing. They'll. They'll close down. They'll do all the repair work. So remodeling or whatever they have to do and it's. Also a respite for them.

Barbara Healy

I think I think. A lot of them take a vacation somewhere warm.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, that's that's that's.

Barbara Healy

Maybe, maybe not. This year I I thought I. Would and we're not so.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, the. And this is an area where I mean. These buyers and these collectors. How do you differentiate between both? Or each.

Barbara Healy

Well, I'm lucky I have a couple collectors. I have a couple in Maine that has bought about 8 paintings from me. And I have a a woman in Ohio that originally lived around here. That has quite a few of my paintings, and I've shipped them out to Ohio to her. And it's really nice. I I have people that have come back after buying one, painting it, maybe buying us a small painting one year and come back and say ohh I I really love that painting. So I want to buy something larger. So that's really nice.

Ron Fortier

So how large is your largest penny?

Barbara Healy

I I think that I've been. Working on some that are. 2 feet no. 36 by 48, three feet by 4 feet.

Ron Fortier

3-4 yeah, right. That's a good sized panning is there. Is there a market for that size? OK.

Barbara Healy

Definitely. I think people with uh. Bigger houses. Some of these houses have huge walls.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. Yeah, good, good, good for the artist, that's for sure. Have you? I would say have you noticed? But you



know there are so many artists there. Does this seem to be more artists than ever before? Or is it that? Just more visible than they've ever been. Before you think.

Barbara Healy

Well, I think in our area, maybe because our area really supports the art. With things like the South Coast Studio tour and then everything that New Bedford has going on with the Hot Nights and all their things supporting the arts there, I think artists maybe gravitate to this area. I don't know if there's more artists everywhere, but we also see more artists because people are on Facebook and Instagram. And I mean I look at artists that are in Russia. Get you know, different places that I never normally would get to see, but I'm aware of them because of that.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's true. So. Well, this is January. Even though we're heading towards the the, the bottom of of the month and this podcast probably won't be. Available until sometime in February because we we line them up you. Know try to. Get a a. Good bunch ahead of time because sometimes what happens is it's with this that or the other. It's it's a little hard getting people scheduled to to to line up to do a podcast and and and so on and. So forth, but. Any resolutions, any any pronouncements, any big, big plans for you for for this? This year for 2022, my goodness.

Barbara Healy

I actually I sent out a Thursday e-mail to my group that I paint with on Thursdays and in the summer it's where we're going to. And so I sent him out some resolutions this year to.

Ron Fortier

Think about.

Barbara Healy

And the first one was no. More born art.

Ron Fortier

No more boring art. How you going to prevent that? I think odd is boring because that sounds. Almost like a.

Barbara Healy

No, I'm just trying new things. I just tried an experimental piece that I'm I'm donating to the Westport Watershed Alliance for their winter show. That I use new tools on I. Did a different approach. So I'm I'm trying new things.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. And and what do you think of of of, of of this that it seems that? This this is such. A huge concern or curiosity or or need for technique. You know it was like encaustic for example, that hasn't gone away in a long time.

Barbara Healy

I just tried it this week. It was so much fun. I tried with Jodie Arkins at the Art cafe. Yes.

Ron Fortier

And and what did you get out of it? I mean, cause when when we did it with toner SMU, it was pretty dangerous because we were using white lead, yeah.



Barbara Healy

We were using a a little pop.

Ron Fortier

The black oil, if they called it, yeah.

Barbara Healy

Hot plate thing and it it just was. It was interesting a whole different way to. To do things. And to put on color and and move it around. And I just. Like the feel. Of it and. The Sheen of it, it was interesting.

Ron Fortier

There's a couple of method styles I guess, like it's when it's. Cold and one of those. What is hot, hot or warm because?

Barbara Healy

Well, that that was hot and that was my first time doing hot. But I do use cold wax when I'm painting. Sometimes it's it's something new. I've tried. I usually work in layers and sometimes the cold wax can make it a little more transparent and bright colors. I use some like spatula tools to put it on. Take it off. I like to have some of my layers showing through so it shows that process even when it's done. I have no interest even though my things are representational. Usually I don't want it to look. Like a photograph? That's. Not my theme.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So it's obvious that you're an oil painter. Excuse me versus a an acrylic painter.

Barbara Healy

I I do a little acrylic too. I'm playing around with it.

Ron Fortier

What's what's the big difference for you? What's the likes and dislikes of of each?

Barbara Healy

Well, oil paint you can. It stays wet for a long time, so it blends more and acrylic paint.

Ron Fortier

I think.

Barbara Healy

The best thing? About it is it dries so fast and the worst thing about it is it. Dries so fast.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, it's true. And Once Upon a time too, I used to, you know, when I was. Still an oil painter. I found that the acrylic colors were very acidic. They they they just looked off for some reason they didn't. Have the same sort of. I don't know density, the same hues, the same values as as as as oil did in the other thing about oil too is that. It smells. You know the smell of the oil.

Barbara Healy

It does and I. I get it everywhere from a messy painter.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, the the smell of the oil was was something else. And then when we were doing it, which is basically black



oil, it was almost like an ointment. So it was very buttery and it was just something really, for lack of a better term, sexy. About how the brush goes over the surface of the canvas when it's all that creamy and buttery Ness that that goes with it and the pain just doesn't lay flat it has, it has depth to it. So there's more light penetrating the layer of paint you know. So yeah now. OK. Do you do printmaking at all?

Barbara Healy

I tried it. But I can't really say it's my thing.

Ron Fortier

Would you try it? And I'm I'm. And I'm asking, you know, several people this because somebody was asking me, what do you think are the things that we lack in this area that artists would like to see more of? And I thought of two things. Basically one of them would be great to have a ceramics Center for lack. Of a better term. Where instead of buying all that hardware, you know the wheels and the kilns and all the. Stuff you pretty much go in there and it's like adult daycare. You pay your fee. You get so many. Pounds of clay. You throw your clay, you know you you dry it. You know the the whole process and you're using someone else's equipment and you're providing them with a a source of income. And you could also take lessons if you wanted to advance your pot throwing skills, but on the other side of that would be print making, and that's one of the things I in particular miss a heck. Of a lot. Is is the. Not being able to. Print it. Use it. You know do print making.

Barbara Healy

Well run actually at Westport Art group. We have a fantastic press and it has not been being used lately. So we're hoping to get printmakers to come back and use our wonderful press that we have and not. Yeah. Josie Arkins is is one of the people that. Hoping to help make that happen. But yes, so you'll have to come in and look at it.

Ron Fortier

I'm gonna have to ask my friend and and BFA 75 classmate Bob that he's a new member of, of Wag of the Westport Arts Group. About that and I think, yeah, I mean, he was a. We did a lot of printmaking when we were where we were in school. I have to ask him about that because that's that's again. It's it's just, it's a, it's a whole nother. It's a whole another way to explore. It's a whole nother way to. Create these connections in your in your the synapses in your brain, things that you discovered during one kind of art compare comparative to another, like for example, all what I was doing, primarily abstract work doing abstract drawings. For the sake of drawings and not as studies for our for an abstract piece, I always found that bizarre. Why would you do? Drawings for an abstract piece of work and then copy the drawing it. It didn't make any sense in my. Head. But the biggest failure I think I ever had as an artist was not being able to interpret the same. Feeling the same vibe, the same results. That I, you know, would get drawing. Into painting cause two totally different media. You know, one's wet, one's dry, that kind of thing.

Barbara Healy

But I think I like to draw and I'm. I'm really working on trying to do more drawing and works on the sketchbook and and draw all the time and try different things drawing that. I'm never going to be something that I sell. That's one thing. You're just a different mindset. You're not making something that you're going to sell. It's just playing around. It's just drawing. And I think it's totally. Making your hand do what your mind is telling you to and and looking for shapes and design and not necessarily your brain getting into things. I am painting a tree up here and. It's totally different. But I don't usually draw out my paintings. To me, it's I I may draw to a sketch first a small sketch, usually not a detailed sketch, maybe a value sketch, and no Tam. And then I go into painting, but I I do think the drawing helps me. I just don't do a detailed drawing of any painting that I'm going to do. It's it's just not my approach.

Ron Fortier

Right. It seems too sad. I'd write an article. Someone posted that schools are getting away from drawing. It's the



weirdest thing, and yet it seems like of all the artists that. I know of of of of. A certain age. Everybody's going back to it as much as they possibly can because the value there is, it's invaluable.

Barbara Healy

And and I think it's a skill that everyone should learn, not just artists. I have. I have pictures that my grandfather drew in elementary school that are wonderful, and it used to be everyone had to learn how to do some draw. Like and I think like observational drawing, it's something fun I like to do. I like to do nature drawings with a sketchbook outside. When you're really observing how that flower is is put together scientifically. And when you just look at something, you don't get that grasp of it until you actually start to dry it. And I do think I I substituted in Westport schools for about 7 years after I got done with my letter carriers career. I haven't gone back since COVID. I substituted a lot of art, but I did all different classes. But in art I think so many kids today. They want to do the Manja are and are out of their head and that they really felt like they didn't want to draw real things.

Ron Fortier

You can give afraid of failure.

Barbara Healy

And I I. I just think they find the Manja. Gaming art, as I don't know, it's what sexy the kids now it's what's fun to kids. I I don't know if it's really failure. I I don't think they've tried it that much and I don't think school pushes it that much.

Ron Fortier

Right.

Barbara Healy

I mean.

Ron Fortier

The mechanical skill. And you know. At the very very least, I mean, you know, aesthetics aside, it's a mechanical skill. It's observation. You have to learn scales, composition. You have to learn the art of observation itself. It makes a a big difference. I mean, for the longest time. I've I've been hoping that somebody with deep enough pockets and you know, someone who's well connected, well endowed, you know, to to support just kind of endeavor would create a A. High School of Visual performing arts. Because I think there's so many kids that really need that kind of direction, whether they pursue the arts or not, I think it's. It's just good discipline.

Barbara Healy

Well, then I do think like they say kids that learn music are better at math. I I think using the creative side of your brain helps in in other ways.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, exactly, exactly. Our groups that you belong to what what have been the biggest takeaways for you from each one of them? I don't mean to put you on a spot, but it's, you know.

Barbara Healy

Well, Westport, our group and I am on the board there too. I'm I'm the chair of adult Ed. So I I help find teachers there. I love painting with my Thursday group and I helping them do shows. It's been a good. Journey with them. I've I've done a lot of. We used to do artists in the garden and it's a good group to paint with. We also have a group of Monday painters that's unofficial that just sit together and playing their paint on Mondays. That's another group that's from there. My South Coast artist is really more. Many of the artists are more professional. That I really learned how. To do the art business from and that's been really interesting. I've been a. Member of



Taunton for a long time they have wonderful artist demos up there and I went to them for years, made a lot of friends up there this summer. I did a demo up there. I also did one at Taunton and that was really, I mean, at Foxboro. And that was really fun.

Ron Fortier

Let me let me stop you. There's two two peoples names popped up. One I think she was one of the founders of the Westport Art group. She was also on our BFA 75 class. She's kind of disappeared and it it because she now has a married name or she's totally moves out of the area or hopefully nothing less than that. Patty Churchill does that name ring the. Bell at all.

Barbara Healy

I don't. I don't know her.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, she saw an enigma cause like I said, she was. I think she was a driving force for the the she started it. It had to be. So we graduated 75, so she had to have either. They began her involvement or or be started. The group somewhere between 75 and.

Barbara Healy

Mostly the Westford art. Group has been. Going since 1956.

Ron Fortier

OK. Wow. So obviously, maybe she was because I remember her that that's all. She ever, you know, she LED it. For, for for several years and such, but. OK. And then? The other one is Vivian Lewis, a neighbor. Who I was contacted by her daughter because unfortunately Mrs. Lewis is an early onset of her dementia, but she was a commercial artist. She was, she was.

Barbara Healy

I I took a class from her years ago. Yeah.

Ron Fortier

Did you? Ohh. That's so wonderful. We'll have to talk more about that. We're trying to get her on a show with her daughter Heidi.

Barbara Healy

I took out a watercolor class from her years ago, and I also was lucky to study with Christine being watercolor. She's now 101.

Ron Fortier

Right, I've been trying to get her on the show and I think Nancy Hayes has been is either Nancy or Carol Way. Carol Way would has been trying to budget because I remember seeing Christina's work, Oh my gosh, had to be 50 years ago, and I was thunderstruck by by. Her head.

Barbara Healy

She, she and she is was such a good teacher. We used to meet and her seller, her husband would bake US cookies. And it was a wonderful experience. And she's just such a nice person.

Ron Fortier

Wow. So do you remember Ruth Atkinson as well?



Barbara Healy

Yes, but I I can't say I I knew her well.

Ron Fortier

Right. She had the her studio and she. She sold art so. Wise just a couple of doors. It was the building was set back. I think it's Strawberry moon or whatever. Now was at one time, you know, just behind behind Norton framing and gallery. But wow, that's interesting. So we're going to wrap this up. And because, wow, it's it's amazing how fast the time has gone. By and I I really do want to speak with you a little bit more about Vivian Lewis and if you wouldn't mind. I'll ask Heidi. I'm sure her mom would love you on her. More lucid days. Would love to hear former student talking about her. If if it's, and plus, there's a whole bunch of artwork that's for sale. We're trying to get a retrospective show of of hers while she's still able to absorb that. Kind of just, you know that hour so. What's the one thing? Rather than one thing that you wish you could do more of. What's the one thing that you wish you could have done more of? So more putting you more into the past than into the present and future.

Barbara Healy

Well, I wish I had gotten back into our sooner when I was working at the post office. I I put it off for a long time. I just felt too busy and I think we could all do. That we're too busy for our we don't take the time.

Ron Fortier

That's right.

Barbara Healy

To do it.

Ron Fortier

Right, 40 years in advertising, you know, brain exercises all day long. I would have come home less exhausted if I was doing physical labor than doing mental labor all day long, you know? And I'm sure with the post office, it was being a leader. Care is a little bit of both. I mean, you have to think and.

Barbara Healy

Make it a priority.

Ron Fortier

And body and mind have to work together.

Barbara Healy

Yeah, but mostly you're physically tired by the time. You get home.

Ron Fortier

Right, right, right. So.

Barbara Healy

But I'm I'm I'm really looking forward to. Taking more classes myself. I know that people say to me. Well, you teach classes and I do, but I don't think I need to stop learning myself. I'm I'm hoping when COVID is relaxed, I'd like to do more traveling and take more workshops other places. I'm really looking forward and I really like this plain air thing. I was really lucky this fall. I was invited to a Invitational plain air and protect. It one of 12 art artists and and that was really fun. And I'm hoping to do some of more of those. Like plain air events.



Ron Fortier

Oh, good, good, good. Alright. Is there anything that you want to leave our listeners with because this is, I don't want to scare you, but this is kind of for the historic record, this is all going to be archived in the whaling museum and the Whaling Museum's archives. And, you know, words of wisdom for for the people of the President and those of the future. Could be like your. I don't know if you have any grandchildren or great grandchildren, but this will be accessible. To to them.

Barbara Healy

For art lovers, I would say we all get so used to seeing things on the computer that goes the art in person. It is so much different to see it. In person up close it, it doesn't look the same. It doesn't have the same feeling, so there's plenty of places. Was he had art galleries and museums and? I I find that I look at our on the computer and I see in. Person I just. Think wow that that. Is so different, vulnerable and COVID it was difficult for people to get out. But I hope. You can get out places and and see. Artwork and for artists. I I do feel like I like to work in my studio sometimes alone and really concentrate on things and try something that I feel like I have to mentally work on. I often work late at night, I don't get myself started till late and then I I end up working late at night. I don't want to stop. But I also really enjoy being part of an art community and and I think that is one way to really forward your artwork is to join a group, take a class. I don't feel isolated. I I like painting with other people. I think it's fun.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, that's great. That's great advice. Well, thank you so much. Barbara Healey for joining us. I really, really appreciate it. And that wraps up episode. 109. Fine. And this is Ron Fortier, your host of the In Focus Podcast, brought to you by the artist index.com, supported by heavenly Spirits Imports and also in collaboration with the. The Rift whaling museums common ground project and the Mass Cultural Council. So with all that in mind, thank you so much and we'll see you next time. Bye bye.