

The Gallery at 4 India

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Kathleen Knight stands in her sun-filled Gallery at 4 India, surveying her eclectic selection of paintings and sculptures. "In my 28 years of exhibiting here," she remarks, "I have presented over 2 000 American artists, including several from the 19th century to today's living artists."

Since its 1989 opening, the gallery has not only reflected the town of Nantucket surrounding it with its many landscapes and seascapes; it has also evolved, exhibiting artworks that echo the changing tastes in art in the U.S. Located in our historic district, the gallery has become a destination for both islanders and tourists.

When gallery owner/founder Kathleen Knight opened Gallery at 4, she had decades of experience as an art collector. Her architect/art collector father instilled in her the collecting bug from an early age, and as a teenager, she was already buying and re-selling small works of art for profit. Then in 1979, with her BFA in Sculpture from the Massachusetts College of Art, she moved to this island town in part for its artistic ambiance.

Realizing that there were only a handful of places to buy art here, Knight at first became a private art dealer; she opened Gallery at 4 at its current location a decade later. She initially bedecked the walls and easels with classical art including paintings by American Impressionists Childe Hassam and Maurice Prendergast, and by 19th century portrait artist John Singer Sargent. She also displayed paintings from the Boston School of Art, including Edmund Tarbell's impressionist influenced pieces, and lush romantic landscapes from the Hudson River School. Visitors to her gallery, from occasional art buyers to serious collectors, were delighted to see her selections and supported her efforts by purchasing her artworks. With her ongoing success, she began adding pieces by modern and contemporary artists to her collection including pieces by Andy Warhol, Sam Francis, Louise Nevelson and Roy Lichtenstein.

Over the years, Knight has developed a cadre of collectors, people who appreciate her refined taste and penchant to obtain world-class paintings and sculpture. But, as she

explains, by around 2006, the art world was changing dramatically and the type of art she had been collecting and selling was fetching astronomical prices. She quietly adds, “Since I opened the gallery, I have sold work ranging in value from \$100 to \$1,000,000.”

While Knight continued to carry the higher priced works, she began acquiring more affordable contemporary art—paintings and sculptures by living artists—which still meet the gallery’s very high standards. (And as her loyal clientele is aging and downsizing their homes, many people are interested in buying these pieces.)

James Harrington, one such artist, eschews the edginess of many of his contemporaries. Painting in oil and paying homage to early 20th century “Ashcan School” artist Robert Henri, James creates colorful scenes of people at the seashore, in museums, queuing up at the theater and performing on stage. His slice of life paintings, while dignifying the activities of ordinary people, are deftly rendered and composed.

Another favored artist is Thomas Deininger. His paintings, segueing from realism to abstraction, maintain a hint of edginess and sarcasm. In contrast, Judy Friday’s paintings are abstract landscapes, several with ethereal aspects. Even more edgy are Bruce Rosenbaum’s Steampunk Art pieces. About these assemblage artworks—sculptures fashioned from a variety of materials—he explains that they integrate history, art and technology, and include a sense of fantasy.

The Gallery at 4 India takes as its mission to honor our historic island town through the collection and display of its artworks, while looking beyond our sparkling shores to the larger world of classic and contemporary American art.

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