

ART OF HAVERHILL by Patricia J. Bruno

Amy Hamlet continues her artistic journey

When Amy Pearce Hamlet was 3 years old, she drew a portrait of her grandmother. When questioned about the tiny spots she had included on the face, Hamlet explained that they were the “pictures” (aka age spots) on her grandmother’s skin. “I am told that, from a very young age, I was observant,” she says with laugh.

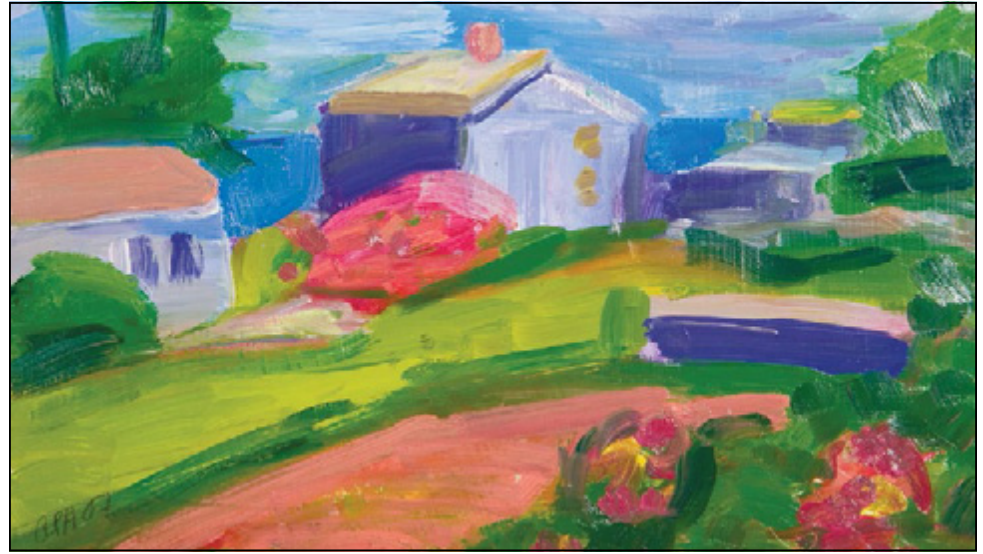
“My mom and her mom were both artists,” says Hamlet, “so they recognized and encouraged my artistic side. Growing up in South Jersey, we had easy access to the Philadelphia and New York City art museums and went often through my childhood.”

By the time she reached high school, Hamlet was convinced that she wanted to pursue art. Her education at Boston University’s School for the Arts featured what she says was a very representational form of art training. “But what they did not teach,” says Hamlet, “was how one could earn a living as an artist.” Determined to surround herself in the arts after graduation, she sought out a variety of jobs in art-related areas, such as art supply stores. All the while, she continued painting in her spare time.

After earning a certificate in graphic design from Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Hamlet landed a job



A corner of Hamlet’s home serves as her studio.



Hamlet’s style often includes chunky blocks of vibrant color, as seen in this garden by the sea piece. Courtesy Photos

as a typesetter at a graphic design firm. Eventually she moved on to doing freelance work from home. “I enjoy working with visual elements,” says Hamlet. “My design work helps me to think about and compose my personal art.”

Hamlet describes her style as “pretty much representational, until recently. While my kids were growing up, I did lots of plein air painting at local farms, mostly drawing or using gouache,” she says. “I played a little with abstracts and mixed media, but family came first during those years. Then in 2003, I attended an art workshop, which really kickstarted me into painting more regularly. At that point, I realized that I wanted to paint more abstractly, so I took a few classes in mixed-media and collage.

“My style these days is more abstract expressionism,” says Hamlet. “My color choices tend to be bold and bright. My landscapes are simplified, as I try to focus on the important elements of the scene, leaving out certain details that I feel are not necessary to the final piece. I want my work to express my feelings and emotions, while also offering something enjoyable to others, something people can respond to.”

Hamlet’s landscape paintings, with their bold brushstrokes, splashes of intense color, and slightly abstract approach have been exhibited at Greater Haverhill Arts Association shows and were displayed at the studio she used to have at the Western Avenue facility in Lowell. These days, her studio is in a small area in her home.

In addition to her landscape paintings, Hamlet’s collage work has been evolving through the years. “I took a class at the

Essex Art Center. My first project was making collages using photos of family members, bits of text from inspirational books, and pieces of fabric,” she says.

“My graphic design work overlaps with my personal art, especially the collage, arranging elements on a page.”

She sometimes begins with snippets of family photos, then creates an environment around the photos with her paintbrush, scraps of material, and tiny found objects.



A collage features photographs of four generations of Hamlet’s family.

Every project is unique and meaningful as it builds and evolves on the canvas. “Art is a journey,” says Hamlet. “Some artists find one style, and for them, the journey stops. I guess at this point, I am still traveling.”

And it looks as though she is enjoying the trip.



Patricia J. Bruno is a photographer, writer and downtown-business owner. A New England native, she shares her home in Haverhill with her loving husband and lovable cat.

Atkinson 5K run is Sept. 7

Join the Atkinson Women’s Civic Club the morning of Saturday, Sept. 7, for the Atkinson 5K run. Sign up now at AtkinsonNH5K.com to take advantage of the early bird pricing. A half-mile fun

run will immediately precede the 5K. The race’s motto is “Run with heart, give with purpose,” and net proceeds will go to food pantries in Hampstead and Plaistow.

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