

CAPE ANN Museum

Portrait Project invites community, children, elders, and others to contribute self-portraits for opening of new Cape Ann Museum Green



Image courtesy of the Cape Ann Museum

GLOUCESTER, MASS. (March 2020) – Kendall Reynolds, Education Coordinator at the Cape Ann Museum, is touring Cape Ann to instruct schoolchildren, fishermen, senior citizens, and community members from all walks of life to draw self-portraits that will be displayed during the opening of the Cape Ann Museum Green and the Museum’s new Collections Center in June.

Cape Ann Museum Green, located at the gateway to Gloucester at the intersection of Washington and Poplar Streets, is comprised of three important historic buildings—the White-Ellery House (1710), an adjacent Barn (c.1740), and the recently acquired Babson-Alling House (c.1740)—in addition to a new, state-of-the-art 12,000-square-foot Collections Center built to address the Museum’s critical need for expanded collections and archival storage. The new building, designed by designLAB Architects of Boston, follows strict environmental performance requirements set out by the Museum’s leadership and will house a roof-top solar array. The new center also includes a flexible exhibition, programming and education space for school programs, contemporary art exhibitions, and community events that the primary facilities in downtown Gloucester cannot accommodate.

Inside the new Collections Center is a public exhibition area where Reynolds is planning to hang all of the portraits collected during this community-wide project. “Having an art education background, I have a deep understanding of the importance of all people having access to creating

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artwork,” said Reynolds who was an art teacher in the Gloucester public schools before taking the full-time position at the Museum last July. “I worked with Museum Director Oliver Barker to develop this initiative to welcome all members of the Cape Ann community to join together with us to create a public display of artwork that represents us all. The portrait project is all about building community by breaking down barriers among people, allowing them to create freely.”

To make the creation process as collaborative as possible, Reynolds decided that all portraits would be done in group sessions held in various locations. She teaches self-portrait basics in every class, and the artists themselves decide how to incorporate those skills in their final creations. As Reynolds intended for her classes to be bonding sessions between neighbors and community members, participants sit at long tables and are encouraged to converse with one another while drawing.

Outside of sessions held at schools, senior centers, and other venues such as the Open Door, participants can also attend portrait workshops at the Museum from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on every second Saturday of the month through April. All portraits are scheduled to be collected by mid-May, and every single piece submitted will be included in the June 21 public opening of the Cape Ann Museum Green.

Prior to the June installation at Cape Ann Museum Green, a small selection of portraits will be on view in the Central Gallery at the Cape Ann Museum’s primary location at 27 Pleasant Street. The Museum’s goal is to collect 1,000 portraits in total, with each one unframed and cut to measure 8x8 inches in dimension. If more than 1,000 portraits are collected, these additional works will be placed in a scrapbook, which will be displayed in the middle of the exhibition space at the Cape Ann Museum Green.

Cape Ann Museum Director Oliver Barker shares Reynolds’ enthusiasm for this portrait initiative. “In recent years the Museum has held wonderful exhibits showing compelling images of local Cape Ann individuals and families by photographers Jim Hopper and Jason Grow. Building on community interest in these exhibits, we are delighted that all members of the Cape Ann community will now have the opportunity to work with Kendall to capture their own likeness,” Barker said. “This collaborative project, the first of its kind at the Cape Ann Museum, is integral to the Museum’s commitment to be a welcoming, accessible and relevant institution and to its desire to enrich the cultural life of every Cape Ann resident and visitor.”

The Cape Ann Museum has been in existence since the 1870s, working to preserve and celebrate the history and culture of the area and to keep it relevant to today’s audiences. Spanning 44,000 square feet, the Museum is one of the major cultural institutions on Boston’s North Shore welcoming more than 25,000 local, national and international visitors each year to its exhibitions and programs. In addition to fine art, the Museum’s collections include decorative art, textiles, artifacts from the maritime and granite industries, three historic homes, a Library & Archives and a sculpture park in the heart of downtown Gloucester. In June 2020, the Museum will open a new 12,000-square-foot collection storage and public exhibition space in Gloucester as part of its Cape Ann Museum Green campus. The campus will also include three historic buildings – the White Ellery House (1710), an adjacent

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Barn (c. 1740), and the recently acquired Babson-Alling House (c.1740) which are located on the site at the intersection of Washington and Poplar Streets in Gloucester. Visit capeannmuseum.org for details.

The Cape Ann Museum is located at 27 Pleasant Street in Gloucester. Hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sundays from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is \$12.00 adults, \$10.00 Cape Ann residents, seniors and students. Youth (under 18) and Museum members are free. Cape Ann residents can visit for free on the second Saturday of each month. For more information please call: (978)283-0455 x10. Additional information can be found online at www.capeannmuseum.org.

For a detailed media fact sheet please visit www.capeannmuseum.org/press.

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Print quality images are available upon request.

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