Fall/Winter Newsletter 2026 - 2027

Maine Art Gallery Wiscasset
SINCE 1958

Food, Wild Nature and History, With a Little Alchemy Mixed In, Made for a Diverse and Fascinating Season

Our first major exhibit of the year was "Art to Table: Visual Sustenance," a multifaceted artistic look at all things related to food in Maine. It was a rainy day for the opening so everyone was packed in the gallery like, well – sardines! (The image we used for publicity was Jean Kigel's boldly colorful painting of sardines, "Close Comfort.") People flocked to our talk on farms and food with Maine Farmland Trust (MFT), one of the new owners of The Commons at Morris Farm, and others involved in the sustainable agriculture industry that's so much a part of Maine's culture and economy. We were glad to collaborate again with MFT, our partner last year in the landmark Joseph Fiore exhibition.



Sarah Gladu speaks to the crowd during "The Impact of Air" talk.

Next up was our wild and scenic "Song of the Wild: Celebrating the Natural Beauty and Wildlife of Maine." For this exhibit, we collaborated with Coastal Rivers Land Trust. The organization's Community Science Director, **Sarah Gladu**, provided an informative talk, interweaving images of work from the show in her topic "The Impact of Air." As one audience member and artist remarked: "It was fascinating to learn something about the nature behind the art." Well-known artist and co-curator of the exhibition, **Jane Dahmen**, said this: "Maine Art Gallery is a treasure. ... The show looks beautiful in the space — every artist's dream!"

Our annual plein air exhibit featured a program of four artists entertaining the audience about their adventures climbing rocks and dealing with the elements while painting outdoors. On the second floor, "The Art of Alchemy," a collage and mixed media show, received rave reviews for its quality and eclectic nature.



From the left: John Sawyer, Elizabeth Reed, Jan Arabas and Carolyn Gabbe.

"Made in Maine," our annual member exhibition, offers all our members a chance to show their work. This year we dedicated a section of the upstairs gallery to art by our early members as well, including Leo Meissner, Francis Hamabe, and F. Wenderoth Saunders.



Les Fossel speaks to audience during the preservation talk.

On September 19, we hosted a well-attended presentation featuring long-time supporter and architecture preservation professional **Les Fossel** in a colorful look at the gallery's architectural history and renovations through the years. Board President **Kay Liss** thanked the many entities, including the Town of Wiscasset, the Davis Foundation, and the 1772 Foundation, involved in providing funds for the upcoming cupola repair work. She also thanked those involved in the staircase renovation, and the handsome history timeline gracing our lobby. On yet another history note, we were thrilled to score a Maine Public State of the Art radio interview featuring Kay and **Mark Coates**. You can find a link to the program on our website's News page from September 13, 2026.

The gallery held four classes and one demonstration during the season: a popular photography class with board member **David Griffin**; Drawing and Painting our Feathered Friends with **Kat Logan**; an Asian fish printing demo with **Jean Kigel**; watercolor with **Deena Ball**; and a collage class with trustee **Deb Arter**.

This is what one student said about Deb's class: "Yesterday's collage class was so much fun I could cry...it was exactly what I needed...your humor, your extensive knowledge and sharing. Thank you so much!"



Board member, artist, and instructor Deb Arter during her collage class.

A Few Highlights from 2026



Cameron Alosio with his work "Medieval Castle." Photo by Bob Bond.



Artists from the "Song of the Wild" exhibit gather for a photo by Bob Bond.



Folks enjoy the "Made in Maine" reception and art.

Preview of Our 2027 Exhibition Season:

Next year the gallery will cover a few themes, including Maine's captivating natural beauty, as well as its architectural environment. We will also carry on the recent tradition of including work from legacy artists in some of our shows as a way to honor where we come from while cultivating our contemporary Maine artists.

April 15 – 18 | Annual K-12 Wiscasset Public Schools Student Art Show
May 6 – June 13 | "Into the Waters: Maine": An investigation of all things water in Maine: rivers, the ocean, harbors, fishing, swimming ... all water activities, above and below. This exhibit will be juried and on both floors.
June 17 – July 25 | Annual "Made in Maine" Members Show
July 29 – September 5 | "Plein Air; Paint It Maine": Our annual plein air show will be on the first floor.
July 29 – September 5 | "Creature Features": Depictions on the theme of animals; abstract, realistic, and all in between. This show will be on the second floor.
September 9 – October 17 | "Maine's Built Environment": An investigation of buildings in Maine from past to present, realistic to abstract, isolated in the ladnscape, derelict, newly built, and more. This ehxhibit is juried and will be on both floors.

Some Goodbyes with Gratitude ...

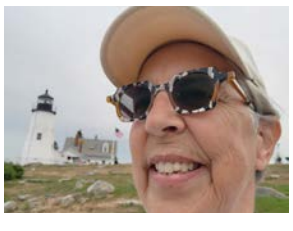
Thank you to **Kay Liss** for four years on the board, three as vice president, and this year as president. She created the "Generations" show catalogue in 2024, and worked with **David Griffin** to produce our beautiful history timeline in the lobby. She's enjoyed organizing and promoting lively programming this year that complemented and enhanced exhibits.

And a big thank you to **Cecelia Ludwig**, past trustee extraordinaire, who was a board alternate this year and stepped up to fill in as a trustee when Emily Hopkins had to leave. In the short time Cecelia's been with us she contributed many useful ideas, particularly relating to membership.

Welcome Our New and Returning Board Members



We're thrilled to have **Wendy Sortwell Ross** back on the board! She served as a trustee for many years, and was president for two terms prior to Richard Riese. She oversaw a period of revitalization of the organization that helped put us on a sound footing financially and culturally. Her family dates back generations in Wiscasset. She retired here after a career in Washington D.C. as a journalist for the United States Information Agency.



New trustee Jan Arabas has shown a keen interest in the gallery, entering various shows and participating in a terrific plein air talk we had during that exhibition. She has art in the collections of the MFA in Boston, the Boston Public Library, and numerous other public and private institutions, as well as a National Endowment for the Arts Fellow in Printmaking. She lives in Bristol.



Debra Claffey has been an artist member of the gallery for a couple of years, and now joins as a trustee. Her paintings have been exhibited across New England and have won several awards, including the Juror's Award at the 19th International Encaustic Conference Juried Exhibition in Truro, MA. She holds a BFA in painting from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University and an associate's degree in Horticultural Technology from the University of New Hampshire. She says her background in horticulture adds a scientific perspective to her aesthetic appreciation of the natural world.

Volunteers Are Always Welcome

Much goes into running the gallery, and we could use your help. Volunteering is rewarding and fun! Email info@maineartgallerywiscasset.org to learn more.

Gratitude for Our Sponsors this Season:

We couldn't do this without them.

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