

Get your Retro Swagger on in Bangor

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

If you're in search of a chair made out of cassette tapes, old records that have been transformed into functioning clocks, upcycled pallet furniture or some retro clothing finds, you don't have to look any farther than downtown Bangor.



SHELBY HARTIN

Retro Swagger at 10 Harlow St. opened last November, and I've had my eye on it since. On Monday I finally had the time to wander into the shop and check it out.

Inside I found trucker hats hanging from the ceiling, collages made of old belts, cassette tape purses, a vintage arcade game, necklaces made out of old dominoes and Scrabble tiles and so much more.

A young man named Cadell Gamber was behind the counter. He's one of four people in the Gamber/Hansen family that run the store.

Pete Hansen also came in to greet me and told me about Retro Swagger — a relatively new business in the downtown Bangor community.

"I guess we're kind of like a little kitschy boutique that has a little bit of everything," Hansen said.

Hansen is an artist — he's the mind behind the cassette tape creations in the store, including the purses, chairs and even desk clocks made out of cassettes. He also creates all the pallet furniture, from coffee tables to Adirondack-style chairs.

Hansen told me that his wife, Annie Gamber, and his stepdaughter Raven Gamber are the people behind the store's operations. He calls himself "one of the artists that helps run it."

Retro Swagger carries work from a few local artists, including Peg Hanson, who makes art out of woven belts. When looking for artists to represent, Hansen said the main focus is on people who upcycle items.

"We're big fans of upcycling — we're huge on it — that's our big deal. We like things that are made from something else," Hansen said.

Hansen met his wife in Colorado, where he was building electric cars. Together, they moved to Florida before relocating to Maine.

"We decided to get out of the heat and closer to family," Hansen said.

Gamber, a Maine native, and the rest of the family now live in Bangor, not far from the shop.

Hansen has a storied background. For a time he worked on rebuilding engines for 1940s Hiller helicopters. He also worked for 25 years as a lighting designer, touring with groups like Air Supply and The Brian Setzer Orchestra, and he also has done shows as a lighting designer with bands such as Slayer and Weezer. He said that he stopped working in that field when he moved to Maine, but Retro Swagger and other ventures, like graphic design, keep him busy.

"I'll tell you, the downtown business community here is like nothing I've ever seen. Everyone works together to help out each other," Hansen said.

Retro Swagger is one of the Find Waldo Local locations, a program that I wrote about last week. Hansen said he had at least 20 people walk through the store's doors on Monday just from that.

See Hartin, Page C2



KATHLEEN PIERCE | BDN

Artist Jamie Wyeth stands in front of his gull painting, one of 18 on display until October at the Ogunquit Museum of American Art.

Jamie Wyeth captures Maine

New show in Ogunquit highlights the artist's 'DNA'

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

Wyeth. The name is inescapably tied to Maine art.

So when Jamie Wyeth made an appearance at the Ogunquit Museum of American Art last week, a crowd was waiting. The 18 paintings in the museum's new exhibit, "Jamie Wyeth: Private Collection," reflect his dedication to the sea, the stern nature of gulls, island life and his friendship with '60s pop star Andy Warhol.

"Maine has always been very important to me," the son of painter Andrew and grandson of illustrator N.C. Wyeth told those gathered for MPBN's live radio show "Maine Calling," which was broadcasting from the museum. "It's in my makeup, my DNA. I couldn't survive without it."

Growing up painting by his father's side on the midcoast, a teenage Wyeth did his own take on Olson Farm, the site of Andrew Wyeth's famous "Christina's World" painting. Jamie Wyeth's version of the stark Cushing estate is devoid of the woman in the grass and marked with a dead bird and grim blueberry fields.

"It looks like it could be the hand of Andy Wyeth," Andres Azucena Verzosa, the museum's interim executive director and curator, said.



KATHLEEN PIERCE | BDN

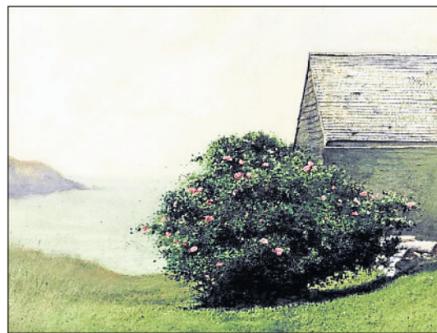
A crowd gathered July 8 to hear artist Jamie Wyeth talk about his life and work at the Ogunquit Museum of American Art. The show was broadcast live on MPBN's "Maine Calling."

Like breathing, putting paint to canvas is automatic for Jaime.

"We lived in the studio as a child. Painting to me is a very natural thing. It's not like this is where I go to be creative," the 70-year-old told the BDN. Being in Maine, amid the crashing Atlantic as opposed to a cushy studio in SoHo, is inspiration enough. "I've painted on the toilet."

On most days Wyeth works in his studios either on Monhegan or Southern islands. The wildness of Maine "permeates my work. The light ... I love islands because it focuses you."

The feeling permeates the artful abandon with which he gets paint on the canvas.



OGUNQUIT MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART AND JAMIE WYETH
A painting from Jamie Wyeth's new show at the Ogunquit Museum of American Art.

He'll retreat to the private Southern Island, pull up the dock and disappear.

"I have to physically isolate myself, and it sure is isolating on an island. No one's going to drive up and say, 'Come on, Jamie, let's go,'" he said. "I could paint for two weeks without seeing a soul, except for the gulls and whatnot. It's a device I use. I'm not some anachronism. But as far as people and focus goes, I need it. We are bombarded — just bombarded," he said. And after a self-imposed painting exile, "I'll go to New York City to shake it off."

N.C. Wyeth died in a train crash before Jamie was born, but Jamie Wyeth was more influenced later in life by the illustrator of "Treasure Island," then by his father Andrew. He recalls his father blasting records in the studio — "I spent my youth with cotton balls in my ears" — and learned devotion to the craft at his side.

"My father said he was not a good teacher, but he was the best teacher. He was almost more dedicated than I was," Jamie said. "That's all he did."

His family — along with great painters such as Winslow Homer and Marsden Hartley — has captured Maine since the 1800s, but he says the stunning state is underrepresented in the art world.

As a whole, "Maine has produced more terrible paintings that are so emblematic and touristy, not the toughness of Maine. My father was similar to Robert Frost, who writes about a sleigh going across the field on a snowy evening. But if you listen to the poem, it's not really about that. Andrew Wyeth's work is scary, very disturbing," his son said.

The most disturbing images in Jamie Wyeth's show at OMAA include a large, toothy fish approaching a seagull and the pale and ghostly visage of Andy Warhol on the Maine coast. "He was a wonderfully peculiar, sweet little man," Wyeth said of the mysterious soup can artist. Wyeth painted at Warhol's Factory in New York in the '60s. Did Warhol ever come to Maine and sit on the rocks with a camera, as he depicts?

"He always wanted to come to Maine, and I said, 'I don't think that's going to work.' He was so urbane. His idea of going for a walk was down

See Wyeth, Page C2

Pondering evil with 'Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde'

BY JUDY HARRISON
BDN STAFF

A fine cast overcomes the shortcomings in Jeffrey Hatcher's sparse script for "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" at Acadia Repertory Theatre in Somerville on Mount Desert Island and sends the audience home pondering the many faces evil may wear.

Based on the 1886 novella "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Louis Stevenson, Hatcher focuses on the malevolent

THEATER REVIEW

Hyde, the dark side brought out when the good physician drinks his mysterious concoction.

"One of the arguments I've never quite believed — and I suspect Stevenson didn't believe it either — is that Henry Jekyll is wholly good while Edward Hyde is wholly evil," Hatcher has said. "I'm trying to have some fun with the notion that Jekyll and Hyde play a cat-and-mouse game with each other, and with the question of just who we should be rooting for."

That the playwright does quite well, but Hatcher gives short shrift to goodness, something we could use more of this summer.

The small stage and low ceiling at the Somerville Masonic Hall, Acadia Rep's home since 1973, at times make the audience feel as trapped by society and circumstances as the characters do. Bernard Hope, a true Englishman, is excellent as Henry Jekyll. Hope so perfectly captures the physician's scientific curiosity and his exacting standards that Stevenson would recognize the character he created. The actor, who performs regularly at Acadia Rep, The Grand and Penobscot Theatre Company, so touchingly portrays Jekyll's realization of what his dark side has wrought that it is, at times, painful for the audience to watch.

Hatcher divided the role of Hyde amongst four actors, three men, portrayed in this production by David Blais, Frank Bachman and Jonathan Wells, and a woman, played by Mary Paola. They also play other characters but it as manifestations of Hyde that they are most memorable.

Blais is the most menacing, yet shows a tender side in Hyde's romantic relationship with chambermaid Elizabeth Jelkes, portrayed by Hannah Kulus. Blais is charmingly creepy and surprisingly seductive in a sadomasochistic sort of way that is mesmerizing and frightening.

While Blais represents the sensual appetites of Hyde, Bachman is the conniving mind behind many of his machinations. He is particularly adept at showing how Hyde's wheels are turning as he plots to avoid being discovered by Jekyll.

Acadia Rep has a strong and talented crop of interns this year and they shine in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Wells creates several distinct and strong characters, including a detective who helps Jekyll face his Hyde demons. Wells also has a highly developed sense for comic timing and wrings laughs from Hatcher's sometimes sardonic dialogue.

Paola, a 16-year-old Mount Desert Island High School student, and Kulus, who like Wells attended Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, are equally fine in their roles. Paola, who gave a nuanced and layered performance in Acadia Rep's first show this season, "Bakersfield Mist," is enchanting as the evil Hyde and exacting as Jekyll's devoted servant.

Kulus gives Jelkes a dark innocence that is drawn to Hyde's cruel sexuality. She gives the character a soul that enjoys dancing with the devil and shows the audience that even virtue can have a dark side.

The technical team of C Andrew See Review, Page C2

converge|connect|create



To see more events visit:
watervillecreates.org
207.616.0292



Colby College Museum of Art • Maine Film Center
Waterville Public Library • Common Street Arts
Waterville Opera House • Waterville Main Street

July 8 – 17 / Railroad Square Cinema & Waterville Opera House
Maine International Film Festival It's 10 days of 100 films featuring 50 filmmakers right in Waterville! Representing the best of American independent and international cinema, MIFF spotlights some of Maine and New England's most exciting and innovative filmmakers. Schedule at www.MIFF.org

July 14, 6:30 PM / American Legion, Waterville
PechaKucha Waterville Volume 21 PK Night Waterville is a fun, creative networking and social event for the entire community featuring diverse presenters faced with the same dynamic challenge: telling a compelling story in 20 slides shown for 20 seconds each. Food, libations and fabulous conversations make this a must-attend event.

July 23, 10:30 AM / Fort Halifax Park, Winslow
Rob Duquette and the Love Nuggets Rob Duquette sings his original music accompanying himself on xylophone, guitar, ukulele, and percussion from around the globe. Co-sponsored by the Winslow and Waterville Public Libraries, this fun family concert will get you dancing!

Waterville Rocks! Summer Concert Series



July 28, 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Castonguay Square downtown Waterville

Enjoy this free, family-friendly outdoor summer music concert in beautiful Castonguay Square in downtown Waterville. Local and regional musical acts performing include Chris Ross & the North, Emilia Dahlin, The Jason Spooner Band, Sweet & Savory, and Yard Sail.