

Karri Allrich



June Garden • acrylic on canvas • 24" x 30"

A woman stands, back turned on the beach, her right hand at her brow, elbow crooked just above the ocean's horizon, her flaxen-strawberry hair spun upward in a bun aligned with a glowing break in the clouds. Waves crest and crash along the sand, and ripple out in the shallows. The woman, in her white dress, her sunny hair, her tanned skin, appears born of the seashore, like Aphrodite sprung from a scallop shell, as much an element of the scene as she is its subject.

This picture is *Listening to the Sea*, a painting in acrylic on canvas by Karri Allrich, and it's a part of the artist's ongoing love affair with the ocean, with Cape Cod. She says, "The sea has forever called to me. The ocean is a magnet. I have painted women looking out to sea in various forms for 45 years. The figure is a stand-in for me, it is the sensation of arriving home."

While rooted in impressionism and influenced by Cezanne, Van Gogh, and Cassatt, Allrich's semi-abstract style encourages viewers to interpret and engage with the paintings in their own personal way. Her use of rich colors and impasto brushstrokes convey energy and sense of movement in the landscape. In her still life pieces, flowers and fruit present an interplay of traditional form and abstraction, conveying place and mood with atmosphere and light. Allrich works in layers, building up surfaces with washes of thin paint, followed by thicker areas using a palette knife and other textural tools allowing discovery to influence the process of creating.

"I use a fairly limited palette of colors," she explains. "This allows me to mix my own greens, violets and various warm tones. Rather than reaching for pre-mixed tubes of acrylic color, which are often bright

and loud, I can harmonize my colors by using a few classics to create the tone and mood of the natural world around me."

Just as Allrich's women of the sea become one with their environment, her landscape and still life subjects arise from and inhabit the elements of their settings. "I love the negative space that surrounds and interacts with a still life subject," she says. "The iris or the apples may grab a viewer's attention at first, and certainly they draw you in. Then there is the light, the atmosphere, the mood, the time of day. Those characteristics intrigue as much as the flower or the fruit."

Allrich currently resides "in the quiet woods and wilds of Northeast Connecticut," but she returns frequently to Cape Cod and its waters of inspiration. She says, "I have been lucky to have had homes across the Cape, Sandwich, Barnstable, Brewster, Harwich, and each region has its specific charms. Some favorite places are Paine's Creek and the Brewster flats, Skaket Beach in Orleans, Pilgrim Lake, the Provincetown dunes, Head of the Meadow, and the Pamet River in Truro. What draws me to a place is first, the space; the big skies on the Cape are spectacularly brilliant even in stormy weather."

Throughout the year, as works are completed, they are shown at the Addison Art Gallery, in Orleans. The



Listening to the Sea • acrylic • 12" x 9"



A Day at the Beach • acrylic on canvas • 10" x 8"

reception for her 2023 One Woman Show, "More than you See at First" will be held Friday, August 11 from 5:00 to 7:00. Helen Addison states, "Karri's expressive coastal landscapes and still lifes using rich color and layered surfaces express a dramatic sense of light and spirit of place, inspired by the rare natural beauty that is Cape Cod. The feeling of the salt air on your skin, the rhythmic sound of low tide waves gently lapping the shore, the morning light flickering across the reeds in the marsh—one feels beyond oneself when looking at Karri Allrich's work."

The title of Allrich's show draws from one of her artistic forebears, Henry David Thoreau, who believed, "It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see." She says, "Walking Thoreau's paths, tracing Hopper's sunlight, exploring the beaches where Hawthorne taught hundreds, painting on Cape Cod is a tradition spanning well over a century. Bringing the viewer a fresh look at these experiences on canvas, to paint the sensations and emotions they evoke, that is my intention. I strive to share the beauty and depth of spirit that is integral to our time here." 🌊

~Chris White

See more of Karri Allrich's work at Addison Art Gallery in Orleans and at addisonart.com