



Through Time and Place: Rachel Ellis Kaufman and Heather Blume

Co-curated by Susan Kurtzman and PAAM Executive Director Christine McCarthy, Through Time and Place features work by local artist Heather Blume and her late mother, Rachel Ellis Kaufman, highlighting both the similarities and subtle nuances between the work of these two highly skilled and distinctly Cape Cod artists.

The exhibit, which will be on display from March 23 - May 13, 2012, includes a variety of media, including sculpture, oil painting, and woodblock prints and explores the invisible influences of a mother/daughter relationship as seen through the generations of their art.

Despite having never exhibited together, Blume and Kaufman influenced each other greatly, and created bodies of work that have parallel narratives with the natural world of Cape Cod. "It is [Kaufman's] love of the Cape, where she returned year after year, that provided great inspiration for her work, as well as the work of her daughter, Heather Blume," Says Susan.

"Both mother and daughter, greatly motivated by the natural beauty of Cape Cod, create narratives elicited through the visual which are stimulated by the surrounding environment and nature," says Christine.

In a small group of essays called Far Away Places, Rachel Ellis Kaufman describes the many parts of the world she called home over her 87 years.

"My spiritual home is Cape Cod...I love the simplicity of the sand and the sea, salt meadows with the fresh water 'cricks', the rolling hills sprinkled with 'kettle-holes'...I feel at home in the unassuming small towns and villages.... perhaps it is the very smallness and fragility of the Cape which enters the heart—invasives the soul—to realize it's lying there so unprotected out at sea..."

In a WOMR radio interview (November 22, 2011) with Joyce Johnson, Founder of Castle Hill Center for the Arts, in Truro, Blume explains that she wanted to put this exhibit together "To emphasize the connection our work has to each other and to Cape Cod, Cape Cod being the main inspiration for and influence on both of us."

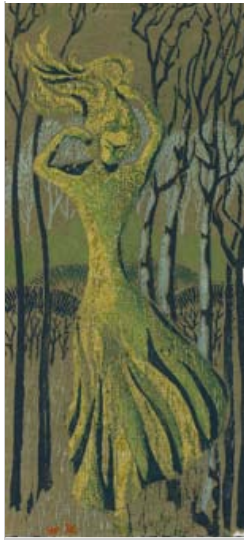
Kaufman's skillful drawings captured not only the fragility of flowers, birds, dories, and sea life around her but formed the basis for provocative paintings and later, pastel landscapes and interiors drawn from her childhood memories. A mutual love of the Cape provided great inspiration for her work, as well as the work of her daughter.

The paintings, drawings, watercolors, lithos, pastels, scratchboard prints and wood block prints are testament to her enduring fascination with a love of the land, the water, the life on Cape Cod. She was not afraid to experiment with a variety of mediums and encouraged her daughter to do the same.



"Ascending Sea Nymph", polychrome terra cotta/ mixed media, 2005, Heather Blume Image courtesy of Diane Worthington

The woodblock prints, also on display in this exhibit, show Kaufman's strong ability as a printmaker and mastery of composition. They are lithe and spirited visions of flowers, plants, birds, a beached dory, even a wood nymph, printed on fragile handmade paper. Color and texture combine to create a lady slipper bursting into bloom, an ethereal woman in the woods, a branch of birds.



"Wood Nymph" wood block print, 1958,
Rachel Ellis Kaufman

Kaufman uses the same fine hand and attention to design with her drawings, lithos, and scratchboard prints. Her eye is ever on the surroundings, examining the natural life around her and interpreting the beauty of it in intricate detail.

Like her mother, Blume looks to nature for inspiration. She credits her mother with giving her the freedom to spend much of her childhood exploring the woods and playing on the beach, where she lost herself in drawing on and building sculptures with the sand.

The temporal nature of such artwork led to her attraction to installation work, which is temporary, as she explained to Joyce Johnson in their radio interview, "The fact that we have this continuous change of tides requires flexibility and acceptance and at the same time strength of character, that seems innate to this area and is what unifies my mother Rachel's artwork and mine to each other and to Cape Cod."

Being part of this generational exhibit allowed Blume to see her my mother's art "as the art of Rachel Ellis Kaufman, a fellow artist who also happens to be my mother. Revisiting the images I see that her spirit lives in them," she says.

"I remember the way she shared her vision and experience of Cape Cod and then think of the way I see it now as another woman experiencing the land, the ocean, and the history here. How the place seeps through our very pores and into our art. I think that is what is best about living here and coming to realize that it is passed from one person to another, one generation to another."



Rachel and Heather at Grandfather's in Cotuit,
summer 1953 Photograph courtesy of Heather Blume

In the last years of her life, Rachel Kaufman Ellis lived with her daughter. Of her mother's work, Blume said, "The soul of the Cape really comes through, and her lifetime connection to the Cape and this land can be felt."

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Cape Women Online collaborated with co-curators Susan Kurtzman and PAAM Executive Director Christine McCarthy and artist Heather Blume for this article. Excerpts from Joyce Johnson's WOMR interview were reproduced with permission from the artist.





**THROUGH TIME AND PLACE: RACHEL ELLIS
KAUFMAN AND HEATHER BLUME**

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Provincetown Art Association and Museum
(PAAM)

460 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA

508 487 1750

www.paam.org

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