

Donna Straw Harvesting the Light

Local artist Donna Straw started painting while she was in the sixth grade with encouragement from her teacher who acknowledged a handful of students in the class with artistic interest. Her art education didn't end there, as she later earned a bachelor's in Art Education and master's degree in Fine Art.



Following in the footsteps of her sixth grade teacher, Donna began teaching art in New York State. More than 30 years of teaching art reignited her own passion for painting and her long time affection for Martha's Vineyard compelled her and her husband to move to the Island full-time. "There is a creative energy on the Island that I have never experienced anywhere else. I am surrounded by many gifted and talented people, and living here helps me to be more centered and focused," she says. Another aspect of the Island that is essential to her painting is the inspiration that it provides for her work. "My campground, landscape, and seascape series are a testament to the beauty that surrounds



me. I am compelled to paint and capture the magic that I feel. "I incorporate a masking technique in order to create hard-edge paintings, representing architectural themes," she says. "My paintings are very



large, and my subject matter is focused on dramatic composition, color, and design."

Donna works with acrylics in order to create sophisticated "geometric" paintings of birdhouses, Martha's Vineyard campground scenes, landscapes and seascapes. Whatever the subject matter, Donna uses her knowledge of color and light to capture



it's essential beauty. One technique that she incorporates is the use of metallic paint to capture and reflect light.

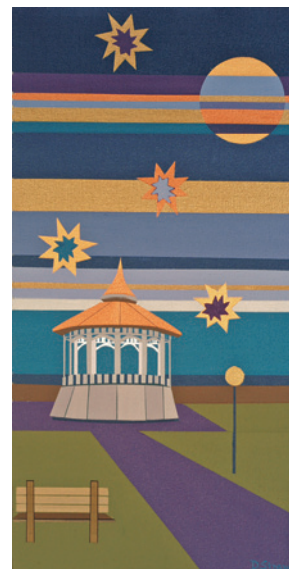
Donna produces paintings for both public and private spaces. She enjoys working on commissions—custom paintings that buyers request and will truly love. "After they become familiar with my style, they generally have an idea of what they want me to design," she explains. She is also able to take previous work and modify it to fit a customer's desire. "They might like a piece that I have already done, they might want me to create a triptych or a painting on a different scale or theme."

A homeowner's needs may range from size, to style, to a specific color palette. Donna offers an example of one client who wanted a particular room to appear larger, "so I designed a large greenhouse painting in order to create the illusion of more depth." Donna is also very thorough, making sure a client's needs are met. "I do preliminary studies making sure we are both moving in an agreed direction before beginning to actually paint." She describes the process as "always



rewarding and challenging."

During the summer season Donna's work is exhibited at Cousen Rose Gallery in Oak



Bluffs. Donna continues to keep her teaching flare alive by offering private lessons and workshops on acrylic painting at Featherstone Center for the Arts in Oak Bluffs. In the off-season you can view her work by visiting her website, www.donnastraw.com, or by appointment (to view her work personally contact Donna at 508-696-5793). **vs**



Donna Straw (above left) is inspired by the Island's architecture and natural world. Her campground scenes and up-Island landscapes and seascapes are a testament to the beauty that surrounds her.