



Clockwise from left: Fairfield Porter, "Beach" (oil on canvas), 13 3/4 inches by 13 1/2 inches; James Brooks, "Mardon" (1973, acrylic on canvas), 76 inches by 76 inches; both at the Parrish Art Museum; historical photograph of Ashawagh Hall, photographer and year unknown.



ART SPRINGS ETERNAL

A historic haven for creativity, one Hamptons hamlet leaves a lasting legacy of creativity.

by SAHAR KHAN

The East End hamlet of Springs has attracted artists for more than a century. Today, the neighborhood is home to international art stars Cindy Sherman, Ross Bleckner and Laurie Anderson as well as local stalwarts like trompe l'oeil master Randall Rosenthal and painter Connie Fox, widow of sculptor Bill King, who've held the creative fort for decades. "The neighborhood is still relatively affordable (or less expensive than other parts of the Hamptons), and the fact that there's a large and active creative community is a powerful attraction," says Helen Harrison, director of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center in the Springs and author of

Hamptons Bohemia: Two Centuries of Writers and Artists on the Beach. "And it's still a beautiful place to live."

The hamlet's beauty is one reason creative types flock here. Lush greenery, coves that abut Gardiners Bay and the famous Hamptons light that dances across the flat landscape have attracted artists for hundreds of years. Hudson River School painter Thomas Moran and his wife and fellow artist Mary Nimmo Moran moved into a Queen Anne-style home in

East Hampton in 1884. They were the first artist studios built in East Hampton. During the 20th century, the East End was a magnet for dozens of boldface names in art: Childe Hassam, Fairfield Porter, Max Ernst, Fernand Léger, Costantino Nivola, Roy Lichtenstein, Saul Steinberg and Robert Motherwell all lived in the Hamptons at some point.

In 1945, Jackson Pollock and wife Lee Krasner became the first artists to make Springs their year-round home. The duo bought a 19th

century farmhouse, and Pollock converted the barn into a studio where he created his famous drip paintings. Today, the property is a museum and research center. "Their presence was crucial," Harrison says. "They attracted many colleagues to buy property in the area or to visit seasonally, and the momentum continues." That rotating cast of visitors included Willem de Kooning and his wife, Elaine, who came up for weekends. In 1961, de Kooning established his own Springs studio in a self-designed home, where he continued painting his *Woman* series.

It seems counterintuitive that the placid location of the Springs would inspire the pulsating drama of abstract expressionism, but Harrison says that Pollock, Krasner and seasonal visitor Mark Rothko "created abstract imagery that reflects their experience of the natural environment." (Rothko's 1948 multiform abstractions were painted in a cottage on Louse Point, while de Kooning's "Rosy-Fingered Dawn

at Louse Point" directly references a Springs morning.) As Pollock, Krasner and de Kooning were perfecting their madcap styles, other abstract expressionists, like John Ferren and Franz Kline, were also busy concocting their own creative language amid the Arcadian landscape.

Another Springs draw is its strong sense of community. "Our house was like a stopping-off place," says Springs resident Elena Prohaska Glinn, an art advisor and appraiser. Her parents, artists Ray Prohaska and Carolyn Pierson, moved to Amagansett from Manhattan a year after Pollock. They lived across from the post office, and their artist friends would drop by throughout the day after mailing letters or illustrations to Manhattan publications. Pollock would come around with his pet crow, Caw-Caw.

Ashawagh Hall, the hamlet's popular arts center, has exhibited both renowned and up-and-coming local artists for more than 50 years. Last summer, its annual Springs Invitational celebrated

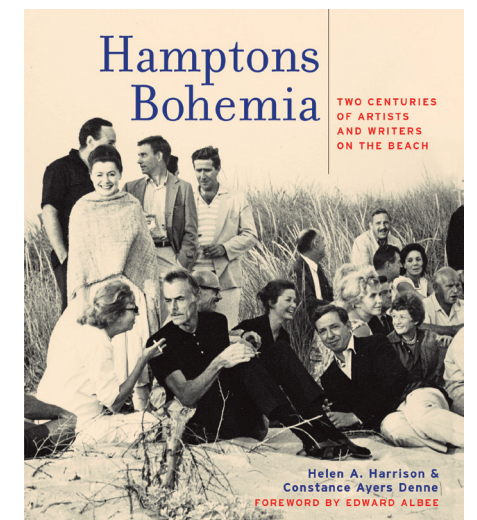
the center's golden jubilee with a show focused on artists working today within East Hampton Town, which encompasses Springs. The 110 names had plenty of Springs locals, including sculptor Phyllis Hammond and painter Athos Zacharias, former assistant to de Kooning.

Many of the artists, like their predecessors, take inspiration directly from the hamlet itself. "The more recent high-profile arrivals—Ross Bleckner, Cindy Sherman and Laurie Anderson—have yet to show any direct influence in their work," Harrison says. "But who knows how Springs may affect their art in the future?" ■



"BEACH" BY FAIRFIELD PORTER AND "MARDON" BY JAMES BROOKS PHOTOS COURTESY OF PARRISH ART MUSEUM; ASHAWAGH HALL PHOTO COURTESY OF THE VICTOR D'AMICO INSTITUTE OF ART/BARGE

"LUCILLE BALL" PHOTO BY CINDY SHERMAN © 2018 CINDY SHERMAN/HAMPTON BOHEMIA COVER COURTESY OF CHRONICLE BOOKS; "ROY WITH WATER LILIES" PHOTO BY LAURIE LAMBRECHT © 1991 LAURIE LAMBRECHT



Clockwise from top: Cindy Sherman, "Lucille Ball" (1975, printed in 2001 FujiColor Crystal Archive print), 14 inches by 11 inches, Parrish Art Museum; *Hamptons Bohemia* by Helen A. Harrison and Constance Ayers Denne, 2002, Chronicle Books; Laurie Lambrecht, "Roy with Water Lilies" (1990, gelatin silver print), 20 inches by 16 inches, Parrish Art Museum.