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# Glowing from Within: Kelly Carmody's art celebrates the picture-perfect stillness of Shelter Island

by [EMILY TOY](#) on JUNE 4th, 2024

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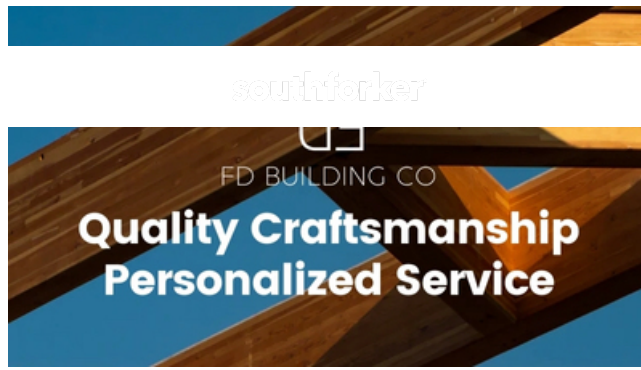
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ARTIST KELLY CARMODY'S MOST RECENT SERIES DEPICTS BAYSCAPES OF SHELTER ISLAND. (PHOTO COURTESY OF GRENNING GALLERY)

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CARMODY PAINTING ON SHELTER ISLAND. (PHOTO CREDIT: VIKTOR BUTKO)

Classical realist artist [Kelly Carmody](#) already has an impressive list of achievements.

In addition to creating and exhibiting award-winning, highly lauded paintings with subject matter ranging from large portraits to elegantly composed still-life to interiors that allow her to play with elements of light and dark — all done in the style of master painters — her works have been featured in “American Art Collector,” “Fine Art Connoisseur,” and “International Artist Magazine,” to name a few, and she was also responsible for creating the original art featured in Greta Gerwig’s film adaptation of *Little Women* about six years ago.

However, it is through her most recent series, where she’s utilized a new style of painting she’s been experimenting with, that may be her most impressive, and alluring, feat yet. And it happened here on the East End.

Last October, the Massachusetts-based Carmody took advantage of a rare opportunity from long-time friends, patrons and Shelter Island residents Janet and Donald D’Amato, to spend an entire month at their cottage on Shelter Island, by herself, so she could “escape the city and paint locally,” she says. She and her artist husband, Viktor Butko, paint and teach in and around their Waltham, MA studio, both living and working in a mostly

urban environment. “I basically live in a big, brick box in a city,” she says. “Being on Shelter Island couldn’t be more opposite.”

The result of her month-long stay was a new series of glowing bayscapes intricately depicting Shelter Island in the off season, emphasizing the stillness of familiar spots scattered throughout the Island that most native Islanders and South Forkers would recognize.

Working predominately with oil paint on canvas, linen and board, Carmody created about two works every day, including “a ton of sketches,” she says.

“I’ve been going to Shelter Island for about seven years now,” Carmody says, “for shorter trips, but this time I was able to really focus and really, albeit slowly, investigate the light and the water. More often than not I was the only person there,” she says of her plein-air painting sessions, “but this time I got to feel like I was connected to the community.”



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This time of pensive reflection, according to a press release from [Grenning Gallery](#) in Sag Harbor, where her works are currently on display until Sunday, June 9, saw Carmody concocting her own traditional gesso, made of marble dust, pigment and rabbit glue for this new series. Unlike a pre-primed canvas, this new surface produces an absorbent ground that generates a smoothing effect as the paint is layered onto the canvas, giving a rich colorist yet almost transparent quality.

“What’s exciting is these works have been incredibly popular and alluring, bringing lots of newcomers into the gallery,” says manager Megan Toy. “We’re so proud to represent a fine artist who so many people resonate with.”



*Emily Toy is a lifestyle reporter for southforker. A Sag Harbor native and enthusiast for all-things East End, she earned her journalism degree from Buffalo State College and worked as both a freelance and staff reporter for several local publications, most notably The Independent. She’s also had an extensive career as both a bartender and waitress, having survived working at a plethora of establishments across her beloved Hamptons home for over 20 years. Through these two mediums, she’s been able to connect to and serve the people of the East End, no pun intended of course.*

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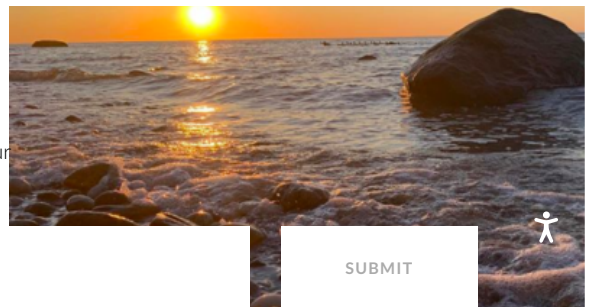


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