

New Bedford's 2020 Seaport Art Walk is "Lighting the Way"

Special online opening presentation with the artists takes place Thursday, Aug. 13 at 6:00pm as part of virtual AHA!

Written by Steven Froias, contributing writer

The 2020 Seaport Art Walk officially opens in New Bedford this year with a special online video premiere of the project, which in real life is presented along the city's waterfront in the Seaport Cultural District.

Viewers are invited to meet the artists and get a behind-scenes look into the creation and installation of their artwork on Thursday, Aug. 13 at 6:00 p.m. during AHA! New Bedford. You can watch the video on New Bedford Creative's Facebook page [Facebook.com/NewBedfordCreative](https://www.facebook.com/NewBedfordCreative). Thereafter, the public art will remain on exhibit through October and patrons are invited to visit the waterfront and view the work at their leisure abiding by social distancing and mask wearing guidance.

The theme of this year's annual Seaport Art Walk is "Lighting the Way: Historic Women of the SouthCoast." It is adapted from, and in collaboration with, the New Bedford Whaling Museum's "Lighting the Way" project. Launched in 2018, "Lighting the Way: Historic Women of SouthCoast" explores the historical impact of women from the region.

Other partners are New Bedford Creative, the City of New Bedford, Destination New Bedford, New Bedford Harbor Development Commission, UMass Dartmouth College of Visual and Performing Arts, and Bristol Community College.

The Seaport Art Walk is a large format outdoor public art installation consisting of sculptures and murals. It was founded in 2013 by artist Jessica Bregoli – who this year is one of the participating artists. All the artists were selected by an esteemed panel of jurors. The program is supported in part by a grant from the New Bedford Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, as well as the City of New Bedford's Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund.

The work in this year's Seaport Art Walk was evaluated on the values embodied by the "Lighting the Way" project. The Whaling Museum states that "as educators and philanthropists, abolitionists and crusaders for social justice, investors and confectioners, sister sailors and millworkers, women from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds have shaped their SouthCoast communities, the nation, and the world.

"Lighting the Way is unearthing remarkable stories of women's callings that required grit, tenacity, and enduring commitment to their families, careers and communities."

The four artists who have created the specially commissioned artwork for the 2020 Seaport Art Walk are as follows:

BRUCE BAILEY is a retired software engineer residing on New England's South Coast with his wife of 50 years, Susan. He attended Boston University College of Fine Arts in the 1970s and obtained a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering at Drexel University in the 1980s. After decades in the steel, shipbuilding, construction and aerospace industries, he has returned to his first passions of painting, printmaking and sculpture. He is currently engaged in ongoing study at the College for Visual and Performing Arts at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. His work may be seen at www.brucece.com.

His work in the Seaport Art Walk is "Homage to Florence

Eastman, Army Nurse.” The only woman to enlist in World War I from Mattapoisett, Florence Eastman (1894-1918) became the Head Army Nurse of the Isolation Hospital at Camp Mills, Mineola, Long Island, with 20 nurses and over 100 orderlies under her supervision. In 1918, she died at age 24 of the Spanish Influenza, contracted while devotedly treating infected soldiers.

GRACE LANG is a mixed media artist who creates two and three-dimensional work to tell stories of triumph. Continually preoccupied with the concept of personal “demons,” her work reflects the internal struggles that plague us all, creating visual expressions of those dark little thoughts that are at once frightening and sort of funny. Much of her work stems from the belief that these personal demons are not necessarily enemies but, rather, aspects of ourselves that can be utilized for good. Understanding this link between creative expression and identity development has led Grace to facilitate art-making workshops for children. She has spent the past decade creating illustrations for teen development company, Your Self Series. Most recently, this work has focused on educational presentations about neuroplasticity aimed at fostering positive mental health atmospheres in schools. Her work may be seen at www.grooseling.com.

Grace’s work in the Seaport Art Walk is an illustrated mural entitled “Votes for Women” which celebrates the centennial of Women’s Suffrage in the United States and features artwork from her recently published children’s book, March On!. It highlights the 1915 Women’s March and encourages young children to band together and stand up against injustice.

RAMIRO DAVARO-COMAS is an Argentine/American artist and entrepreneur living and working in Valatie, New York. He is the creator and director of ‘Dripped on the Road,’ a traveling artist residency program, and an artist on the road himself, at times. His dedication to painting, traveling and community work have allowed him to travel throughout his career and

collaborate with other artists. After many years, the combination of all three passions led him to launch 'Dripped on the Road' and pursue an artistic career. His work can be seen at www.ramirostudios.com.

In the Seaport Art Walk, Ramiro created a mural called "Lighting the Way." It is a selection of 22 portraits of women illustrated all together as a community of leaders. In between some of the groups are phrases like "Lighting the Way," "South Coast" and "Vote."

Finally, **JESSICA BREGOLI** is the founder and curator of Seaport Art Walk. As curator, Bregoli works with various city departments and jury-selected artists to bring the Seaport Cultural District to life with murals and sculptures of all shapes and sizes. Each year's theme is inspired by New Bedford's unique culture and history. Originally from Oregon, she moved to this area with her mother as a child. Growing up, she worked with her mentor, Emily Johns, taking care of the gardens along the waterfront in downtown New Bedford. In 2012 Bregoli got involved with the sculpture program at UMass CVPA and upon graduation has been committed to building the arts and culture of the city. She participates on numerous local committees, including the Seaport Cultural District, New Bedford Creative, and is the Chair of the New Bedford Cultural Council. She is the Executive Director of The Steeple Playhouse (the future home of Your Theater Inc.), the Gallery Director at Groundwork, and owner of Owl Eye property management. For more on Bregoli's work as an artist visit Facebook.com/jessbregolisculpture.

Her work is entitled "Maria Mitchell's Waves." Maria Mitchell was a pioneer for both ocean navigation and feminism. She became the first woman elected Fellow of the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences in 1848. She grew up in Nantucket and was navigating by the stars on whaling ships by the age of 14. She discovered a comet in 1857, which was named after her. She was hired as a full-time teacher at Vassar College and during

this time she promoted equal pay for equal work when she realized her male counterparts were getting paid more for the same work.