

Arts Foundation Gallery Director Finds Place for Ideas to Flourish

By ERIN LEONARD

The Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts and Sciences in Loveladies is fortunate to have the fresh creativity of Kristin Myers as their newest gallery manager. Myers has brought with her a refreshing new look at the evolving aspects of the art culture. Her innovative ideas and personal passions are attracting a new crowd in addition to the established members and visitors of the Foundation. She has brought awareness to a new genre with her recent surfing/art events and the showing of surfing movies.

Myers is not a stranger to the Long Beach Island area. Born and raised in Riverton, N.J., her summers were spent at the local beaches of Surf City. As a result, she grew up with a close connection to the ocean, the beaches, the shore and the local atmosphere of LBI.

As far back as Myers can remember, art was an integral part of her life. Even as a young child, she recalls doodling in her notebooks during school as an outlet for creativity. She was interested in exploring the various ways to make something beautiful out of nothing.

Surfing has also been an extremely important aspect of her life. Myers began to surf at age 12 and she immediately made a soulful connection with the sport. As a result, the ocean and surfing have always influenced her art. Many of her paintings depict surfers, waves and imagery that is reflective of the ocean.

Myers decided to pursue her artistic dreams and acquired a bachelor of fine arts degree from Savannah College of Art & Design, with a major in painting and minor in drawing. Like most artists, she had to discover an important part of the process is to learn how to develop a tough skin.

"Painting is an extremely personal thing. You have to be confident and

take criticism" she remarked.

After graduating from college in 2006, she made LBI her permanent residence, allowing her to spend more time doing the things she loved most. She initially worked at Blue, a restaurant known for its trendy atmosphere and décor comprised of local artwork. A number of her paintings were hung in the restaurant, along with those of LBI surfer and artist Julie Goldstein. When the restaurant closed down, Myers became an apprentice at Goldstein's gallery, the Pine Surf Shop and Gallery in Ship Bottom.

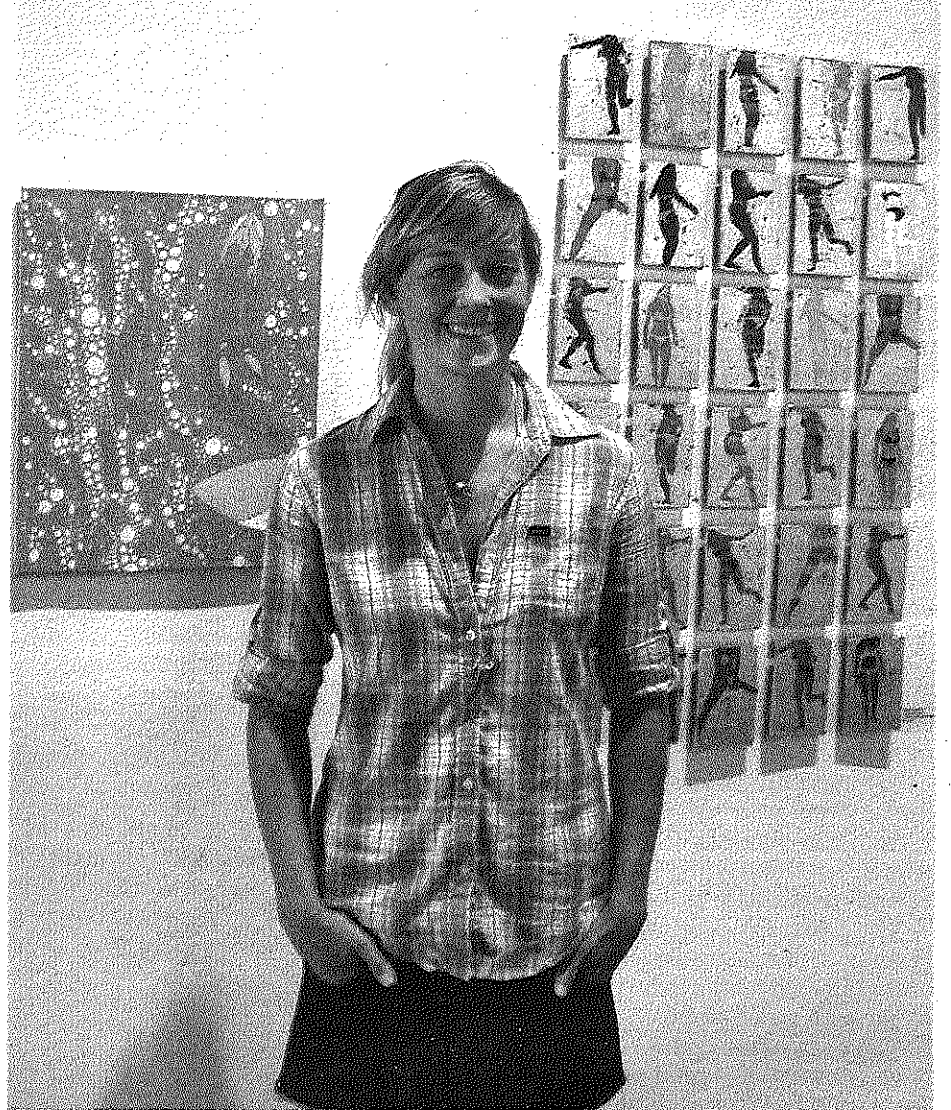
Additionally, she often works with Matt Burton at the m.t. burton gallery on 19th Street in Surf City. She has assisted him in the installation of exhibitions and the rearranging of the gallery. Some of Myers' own paintings are there, adding a new artistic perspective to the local scenery.

In October 2008, she took on the position of gallery manager at the Arts Foundation. Until then, she had never foreseen herself working outside of her own painting pursuits, but she quickly found herself passionate about a new aspect of the art world. Myers now finds a special joy as art arrives for gallery exhibits and she opens each piece for the first time. She equated the unpacking to the excitement of opening a brand new present.

"My ultimate goal is to have my own gallery. I love hanging a show. There is nothing cooler than unpacking the artwork and hanging the artwork."

Her personal recreational passions and interests helped her mastermind the recent exceptional exhibition hosted by the LBIF, "Where Oceans Converge," which closed Aug. 17. Included were remarkable works by internationally recognized surfer artists from both the East and West coasts.

Myers recalled that members of the Foundation generously allowed her



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HOME GALLERY: Kristin Myers, who grew up spending summers on LBI, fulfills her passion for art and surfing (below) with her Island position at the Arts Foundation.

idea for this exhibit to flourish, and they greatly supported her along the way. She felt strongly about allowing the local community to experience this very legitimate and rising genre of art. With patience and perseverance, she acquired the work of some of the nation's top artists and surfers.

One of the memorable aspects of "Where Oceans Converge" for Myers was working with Blakeney Sanford, a California artist who pieced together and hung her immense installation, "Building Swell" in the Foundation gallery only days before "Where Oceans Converge" opened Aug. 1. Myers and Chris Seiz, executive director of the Foundation, felt a close bond to Sanford after the three worked into the late hours to assist Sanford in see-

ing her artistic vision come to life in the gallery.

Myers' goals and efforts for this event were greatly rewarded. The final result was an amazing collection of unique work that created a greatly successful exhibition. More visitors attended the opening reception of the exhibition than for any other opening in the Foundation's six-decade history.

"Surfing is much like painting," observed Myers. "You paddle into the wave, the wave is like a canvas and the board is like a brush."

Myers felt a strong connection to this group of artists because she understood their inspiration and subject matter. She described that as a surfer and artist herself, painting allows her the ability to put into visual imagery what words cannot convey.

A variety of Myers' paintings are available locally at m.t. burton gallery in Surf City, Swell Colors in Haven Beach and Black-Eyed Susan's in Harvey Cedars.

Upcoming Art Events

Enjoy the Member, Student, Faculty Exhibition at the Foundation Aug. 19-Sept. 6. Meet participating artists at the opening reception 6-8:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 20. The Foundation (lbifoundation.org, 609-494-1241) is at 120 Long Beach Boulevard, Loveladies.

On Sunday, Aug. 22, the Jewish Community Center, 24th Street and the Boulevard in Spray Beach, hosts its annual juried art show, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. About 60 artists will demonstrate and sell their variety of works. For more details on participating artists, call 609-492-4090 or visit jccoflbi.org. ■

