

Girl with a Bun, 1970
pastel on paper, 6 x 8"

Inlet, 2003
oil on canvas, 40 x 52"

Late Afternoon, 1956
oil on canvas, 50 x 42"

Letizia in Provincetown, ca. 1950s
pastel on paper, 14 x 17"

Light of my Race Point Cabin, 1954
oil on paper, 9 x 12"

On the Bay Beach, Provincetown, 1956
pastel on paper, 11 x 15"

On the Deck (Provincetown), Summer 1956
oil on canvas, 29 x 24"

On the Way to Race Point, 1954
oil on canvas, 12 x 16"

Portrait of Sid Glazman, 1954
oil on canvas, 42 x 36"

Provincetown - Pointillist Study, 1956
pastel on paper, 14 x 17"

Race Point Cabin, 1954
oil on canvas, 26 x 38"

Rounding Long Point, 2005
oil on canvas, 9 x 10"

Self Portrait in Provincetown, 1953
oil on canvas, 50 x 30"

Self Portrait in Sombrero, 1955
oil on canvas, 22 x 17"



Altria



Provincetown
Art Association
and Museum

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WOLF KAHN

in Provincetown



May 12 through July 2, 2006

All works courtesy of the artist unless indicated otherwise. PAAM gratefully acknowledges Altria, the Provincetown Visitor's Service Board, and the Provincetown Tourism Fund for their generous support of this exhibition.

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My Past is Intimately Connected with Provincetown.

Wolf Kahn

A Sandy Threshold

Wolf Kahn first arrived in Provincetown in the summer of 1947. Just nineteen, Kahn had joined the abstract expressionist Hans Hofmann at his school in New York City the previous winter, and had traveled to Provincetown to continue his studies with Hofmann.

Kahn returned to Provincetown throughout the 1950s. During his time here the young artist took full creative advantage of the brilliant light and primary pleasures of the seaside village, evident in compositions that feature a bowl of mussels, a summer cottage shot with light, or the curvilinear form of a fleshy skate. The artist's passionate engagement with representation and the natural world has remained constant over sixty years of artistic output.

Portrait of the Artist in Love

This exhibition spans half a century, from the vigorously painted figurative work and delicate pastels of the '50s, to the enigmatic land and seascapes for which the artist has become celebrated. Much of the work was created during the summer of 1956, a pivotal year for Kahn, both creatively and personally. "I was in the midst of changing painting styles, involved that summer in rediscovering pointillism." Pointillism, developed by the 19th century French painter Georges Seurat, following the first wave of impressionism, explored the construction of chromatic relationships through the application of small dots of color. Kahn described this approach as a kind of visual alchemy: the ability to "transform space and atmosphere into color."

Kahn also remembers the summer as his "happiest one," spent courting the artist Emily Mason, whom he married the following year. The vibrant palette combined with the intimate domesticity found in works such as *Late Afternoon* and *Emily Reading in Studio* convey the pure optimism of that time.

Beginnings

Kahn was born in Stuttgart in 1927 and his early years were informed by loss and upheaval: raised between his third and eleventh years by his paternal grandmother—who later perished in the concentration camp of Theresienstadt—then separated from family and home at the onset of the war. He was transported to England in 1939 with a group of child refugees and lived for a time in Cambridge, before being reunited with his father and siblings in the United States in 1940. While Kahn has stated that his life has since left him "little to complain about," the critic and author Martica Sawin has identified this "early uprooting, with its residue of anxiety," as a source of his later work, "that threatens to turn the landscape into mirage."

After two years at the High School of Music and Art in New York City, Kahn enlisted in the US Navy in 1945, then returned to NY, where he studied with the artists Stuart Davis and Hans Jelinek. As Kahn went on to immerse himself in Hofmann's teachings, his talent, enthusiasm, and knowledge of the German language made him a logical choice as Hofmann's studio assistant—a relationship that continued for over two years.

The Art of Influence

Kahn is not reticent in acknowledging his many and various artistic influences. In his book *Wolf Kahn Pastels*, he lists the work of Vincent Van Gogh as instrumental to his development, as well as that of Chaim Soutine, Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard, and a host of contemporary artists, including Lester Johnson, Wayne Thiebaud and Richard Diebenkorn.

Kahn's early involvement with Hofmann has anchored him firmly in a celebrated moment in American art history, and his body of work places him foremost among a roster of distinguished students. Rather than the defining moment in Kahn's artistic evolution, however, Hofmann's influence must be seen as part of a rich continuum. Kahn's determination to embrace and revisit earlier influences, such as Soutine and Van Gogh—visible in the heavy impasto and muscular brushstrokes of paintings such as *Race Point Cabin* and *A Student*—evidences the inclinations of a maturing artist able to integrate and employ a spectrum of approaches. This combination of generous curiosity and creative risk-taking continues to distinguish the artist today.

The Provincetown Art Association and Museum is pleased to welcome back Wolf Kahn and present this important body of work, much of which is being exhibited in public for the first time.



Artworks in the Exhibition

A Student, ca. 1950s
oil on canvas, 30 x 22"

Arnold's Place, 1953
oil on canvas, 28 x 36"

Casual Bouquet, 1991
pastel on paper, 17 x 14"

Early Pastel in Pointillist Style, 1956
pastel on paper, 13.5 x 16"

Emily in 1956, 1956
oil on canvas, 42 x 33"

Emily in 1958, 1958
oil on canvas, 30 x 25"
Collection of Dr. Clifford and Cynthia Tepper

Emily Reading in Studio, 1956
oil on canvas, 40 x 50"

Emily Washing Her Hair (Provincetown), 1953
graphite on paper, 12 x 18"

Fresh Seafood with Knife, 1953
oil on board, 11.5 x 43"

From Shankpainter's Pond, Provincetown, 1954
pastel on paper, 12 x 18"

Skate, 1953-54
oil on canvas, 30 x 28"

Seafood Platter, 1953
oil on paper, 9 x 12"

