



Photographs by Henry Krauzyk and Tom Willusz were featured in the recent exhibit *A Coastal & A Distant Lens* at the Cherry and Webb Gallery in Fall River.

Pick Cherry and Webb

by Paul E. Kandarian

Editor's Note: The following is another in our ongoing series of articles on area artists, or about cool art galleries or other artistic entities. To pitch an idea for a story, contact Paul Kandarian at pkandarian@aol.com

VICTORIA MATHIESEN is an accomplished artist in her own right. But she steadfastly does not want to talk about that, instead pointing to her surroundings—the Cherry & Webb Gallery on South Main Street in Fall River, of which she is director—and insists on talking about that instead, like a proud mother touting her brood.

And for good reason. In three years, the gallery under the auspices of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's Department of Professional and Continuing Education, has been showcasing a wide range of impressive art of all stripes in the wide-open exhibition hall that was once a department store in the city's long-gone pre-mall era.

"We showcase local and regional emerging and established artists," says Mathiesen in her gentle English accent.

The building also houses classes for Boston University, Bristol Community College and Bridgewater State College in various offices and floors. The massive street-level space is adorned with artwork on the walls and giant folding panels across the sweeping floor.

Recently, a magnificent photographic exhibit, "A Coastal & A Distant Lens," photographs by Henry Krauzyk and Tom Willusz, graced the exhibition room.

"We have photographs, paintings and sculptures, you name it," Mathiesen says. "We have an exhibit coming up curated by Dr. Stephen Cabral, called 'Luso-American Visions,' tied into the many cultural festivals held in Fall River."

Exhibits change monthly and space is much sought after by local artists: the hall is booked through March 2008 already, she says.

"Over the next year or so, we have many fine exhibits scheduled, including sculpture by University of Mass. Students, and we have a wonderful collaborative exhibit coming up soon with a photographer and painter who have been documenting change right here on South Main Street" she says.

The very popular "Fall River Children's Film Festival" is scheduled at the gallery from April 30 to May 4, and again from May 7-11, with a free family day on tap May 5. The festival features a series of special events for school children including feature films from scholastic/Weston Woods Studios for children based on classic children's books. Cherry & Webb Gallery exhibits the original art work of published illustrators from the region; and children add their own drawings to a film festival mural to be shown in the gallery.

"The children's festival is a very popular event," Mathiesen says.

In addition, a new public art program has begun at the gallery. Mathiesen says the gallery has received a \$50,000 Adams Grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to start a public art project. Outside art will hang on the building walls, including "Expressioniti," running from May 31 to June 30. That features the graffiti art of Rene Gagnon. Another commissioned work will be a huge stainless steel sculpture to be installed outside, Mathiesen says.

From the beginning, the gallery has housed an eclectic mix of art and expression in a decidedly cultural space. In the same building and accessible from the gallery are a Baker Books on one side and Café Arpeggio on the other; an internet café serving more than 50 flavors of homemade ice cream and a space that is equal parts gallery itself, with a handsome array of for-sale artwork on its own walls.

"There are a lot of artists in Fall River and they're getting together now, working together in a new way," says Mathiesen. "There is no shortage of creative people around here."

The Cherry & Webb Gallery is located at 139 S. Main St., Fall River. Hours: M-F 9-7, Sat 9-1, Closed Sun. For more information on the gallery, visit www.candwgallery.org