

July 21

Sit, look & listen

Painters, musicians and furniture makers collaborate on a unique traveling show.

By [Bob Keyesbkeyes@mainetoday.com](mailto:Bob.Keyesbkeyes@mainetoday.com)
Staff Writer

Many years ago, Con Fullam baby-sat for his painter friend DeWitt Hardy. During the long nights, Fullam, a songwriter, would gaze longingly at Hardy's paintings and imagine writing a song about them.

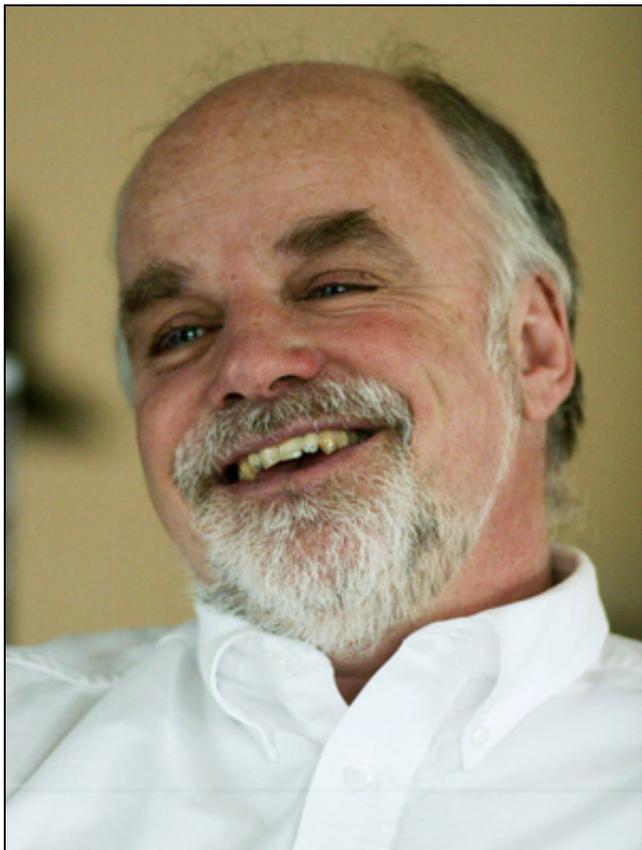


[click image to enlarge](#)

This painting by Dahlov Ipcar inspired a collaboration.

Press Herald file photos

click image to enlarge



Pianist Paul Sullivan

[Additional Photos Below](#)

[Select images available for purchase in the
Maine Today Photo Store](#)

"PAINTERS, PLAYERS & POETS"

WHEN: Through Aug. 10

WHERE: Opera House at Boothbay Harbor

HOW MUCH: Free

INFO: paintersplayersandpoets.com

UP NEXT: Lewis Gallery, Portland Public Library, opening Sept. 2

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS:

- Players and poets -- Noel Paul Stookey, Brad Terry, Paul Sullivan, Con Fullam, Martin Steingesser, Peter Harris, Cindy Bullens, Beth Wiemann, David Mallett, Betsy Sholl, Andrew Happel, Jonathan Edwards, Jeffrey Thompson, Bayou Swamp Swamis, Mekeel McBride and Elizabeth Tibbetts

- Painters -- Betsy McCall, Dahlov Ipcar, DeWitt Hardy, Monica Kelly, Barbara Sullivan, Kate Cheney Chappell, Frederick Lynch, Robert Shetterly, Susan Webster, Sean Beavers, Janice Lynch, Juliet Karelson, Daniel Minter, Bradford Sherman, Cynthia Stroud and Kathryn McKay
- Chair makers -- Allan Breed, Bruce Cahill, Charles and Jennifer Durfree, Aaron Fedarko, Wayne Hall, Bill Huston, Gregg Lipton, Austin Matheson, John McAlevey, Thomas Moser, Kevin Rodel, David Talley, Ross Timberlake, Peter Turner and Geoff Warner

"I started a few tunes about his paintings, but never finished them," said Fullam, who is now 63 and deep into a successful career as a professional musician. "And then about two years ago, I remembered about it and decided to revisit the idea."

The result is an ambitious project that merges Maine's community of musicians, visual artists, writers and fine-furniture makers. "Painters, Players & Poets" brings together 48 of the state's most creative people in a collaborative multimedia effort.

In most instances, Fullam recruited musicians to write and record a piece of music inspired by a painting. Sometimes, it worked the other way -- the painter made a painting inspired by a song. In some instances, instead of a musician, Fullam recruited a poet to write something based on a painting.

Fullam then took it one step further, and received hand-crafted chairs by Maine's community of furniture makers. Now, people who attend a traveling exhibition can sit comfortably when they listen to the music or poetry and view the work.

The inaugural exhibition is on view at the Opera House at Boothbay Harbor through Aug. 10. It moves to the Lewis Gallery at the Portland Public Library in September. The Portland opening will be on Sept. 2 as part of the First Friday Art Walk.

On Sept. 7, all of the musicians will gather in Portland for a live concert, but that event will be open only to invited guests. The caliber of the musicians is such that the library likely would be overrun with folks seeking tickets if it were open to the general public, Fullam said.

Among the musicians who have contributed to the project are Noel Paul Stookey of Peter, Paul and Mary; jazz musician Brad Terry (Dizzy Gillespie, Doc Cheatham); folk veteran David Mallett; bass player and guitarist Paul Sullivan (B.B. King, The Pogues); and singer-songwriters Cindy Bullens and Jonathan Edwards.

The visual arts community is represented by elite Maine artists, including Hardy, Dahlov Ipcar, Monica Kelly, Barbara Sullivan, Robert Shetterly, Frederick Lynch, Kate Cheney Chappell, Daniel Minter and others. The furniture makers are represented by the likes of Thomas Moser, Kevin Rodel and Peter Turner.

"Painters, Players & Poets" promises to be an exhibition unlike any other in recent Maine history. It will include a display of the original artwork, a chair and an iPod with the corresponding song or poem. People who visit the exhibition are encouraged to sit and listen to music or words while contemplating the art.

The idea behind the chairs is to help people absorb the work instead of just browsing through. Fullam hopes people will take the time to consider the relationship between the songs and the paintings.

"We hope the chairs will cause people to spend 3 1/2 minutes in front of a painting and actually see it and hear the music," he said. "We want them to be comfortable."

The goal of the show is pretty simple in Fullam's mind.

"I want people who visit the exhibition to take away the amazing brilliance and diversity in the arts that exists in the state of Maine," he said. "This show has it all in one place -- traditional and contemporary art, abstract and realistic. And in terms of music, we've got jazz, gospel, folk, new age and contemporary."

It wasn't easy to pull all the disparate pieces together, but it was a lot of fun. Fullam likes to tell the story about the collaboration between the musicians Sullivan and Terry and the painter Ipcar. Sullivan, a Grammy Award-winning pianist, lives up around Blue Hill. Terry, a clarinetist, lives in Bath. Ipcar is from Georgetown.

"Brad and Paul had never met each other," Fullam said. "I brought them together, introduced them and put the image of Dahlov's in front of them and said, 'Play.' They came up with something that was completely improvisational, but when you hear it, you will swear it was all worked out. It is truly inspired."

Fullam plans to tour the project for the next year. Following the September show in Portland, "Painters, Players & Poets" will travel to Gould Academy in Bethel in October. He has it lined up for shows in Fryeburg, Belfast, Waterville and Farmington, and across the border in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada.

Many other venues are pending, including one in Nova Scotia and another in Ireland.

Staff Writer Bob Keyes can be contacted at 791-6457 or at:

bkeyes@pressherald.com

Follow him on Twitter at:

twitter.com/pphbkeyes

Were you interviewed for this story? If so, please fill out our [accuracy form](#)

[Send Question/Comment to the Publisher](#)

Recommend

Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

[Tweet](#)<

Find this article at:

http://www.pressherald.com/life/sit-look-and-listen_2011-07-21.html

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.