

OGUNQUIT ART ASSOCIATION

The Ogunquit Art Association has played a central role in the vibrant cultural life of the southern Maine/New Hampshire seacoast since 1928. Founded to bring together professional artists to exhibit their work to the public and to provide an educational forum, the OAA continues to afford artists the opportunity to display their finest work.

On September 16, 1928, a group of artists and friends met at the Perkins Cove Studio of painter Charles Woodbury to organize an art group that would exhibit fine art and provide educational programs in Ogunquit. Woodbury, a Charter/Board of Directors member of the Guild of Boston Artists, advised the new group to follow the format that had made the Guild a success. He suggested limiting the membership to painters and sculptors who worked in a limited geographic area. These members were to be selected by their peers on the basis of high professional standards. The group's income would come from sales and annual dues from the artists and associate members. The latter were non-artists who were interested in fostering the fine arts. Woodbury, the first President, served for eleven years.

The first exhibition was held in 1929 at the Ogunquit Beach Pavilion in a room that had equal wall space for each artist. In 1936, the OAA moved its annual show to Edwin C. Perkins' big yellow barn on Shore Road. The OAA exhibited at this "Barn Gallery of the Ogunquit Art Association" for twenty-two years. The artists also held lively auctions of their work as fund-raisers and provided programs for associate members.

By 1958, rising rent and the general maturation of the organization prompted OAA artists and associate members to investigate building a gallery. OAA President J. "Jack" Scott Smart was the leading force in forming a non-profit organization, Barn Gallery Associates, to furnish a place for the public to see the work of local artists. John Lane and the Ogunquit Playhouse donated land at Shore Road and Bourne Lane. Artist Chris Ritter designed the structure and donated the plans. The Building Committee, chaired by painter Elyot Henderson, included OAA artists Winifred B. Baldwin, Chris Ritter, Jack Smart and David von Schlegell. The Ogunquit Art Association began to exhibit in this new Barn Gallery in 1959 and held its exhibitions and art auctions here for thirty years. BGA offered an extensive summer art education program at Barn Gallery for thirty-five years.

In 1988 the OAA, in addition to one summer exhibition at Barn Gallery, held exhibitions in a variety of locations in southern Maine and New Hampshire. In 1993 the organization started a new Ogunquit Art Association Gallery for exhibitions and educational programs on Route 1 in the old PS Gallery space. In 1995 the OAA returned

to the Barn Gallery building for the entire summer season. In 1997 the gallery became the Ogunquit Arts Collaborative Gallery. The non-profit Ogunquit Arts Collaborative has owned the building and administered the gallery since 2003, thanks to the generous gift of Barn Gallery Associates. The OAA continues to organize and present exhibitions, programs and its famous OAA Art Auction at Barn Gallery on the corner of Shore Road & Bourne Lane.