

### COVER STORY

company. More recently, she retrained as an art teacher when Covid required teaching to go remote and online.

The pandemic imposed change on our culture, and invited a time of self-reflection. By June 2020, Loomis admitted to herself that teaching full-time was not going to be a long-term fit for her. For years, she and her husband planned to move closer to their daughter in Maine and open a gallery, someday. Suddenly, someday was here for her. She resigned from her teaching position at the end of the school year and sold their house in Massachusetts – then closed their eyes and jumped. They purchased a home in Kittery that happened to have a small business space attached, and so the gallery became.

Loomis spent the winter painting, building relationships with artists and business associates and increasing the collection to exhibit for the summer season. The sequestered winter worked in her favor, allowing time to thoughtfully attend to details.

As a one-woman business, she needed that time and opportunity to focus. "Opening this small gallery," Loomis said, "felt like a natural move, allowing me to make constructive use of so many business experiences and resources gathered over the decades. I've worn so many hats – office manager, design assistant, marketer, contract administrator, HR, website builder, bookkeeper and artist. In opening this gallery, I wanted to support myself and other artists who have distinctive voices, by carving out a niche and offering work to art lovers and collectors that will make their living spaces more joyful, personal and meaningful."

And so, she began to reach out to colleagues and fellow artists. Many of them from her Fountain Street Fine Art Gallery days – Cheryl (Cherie) Clinton,

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, but

scholar, theologian and author of many books, including "The Chronicles of Narnia." We're all tired of the intro to articles, news releases, etc., that begin with, "In this unprecedented time as we cope with Covid..."

We've lived with it for a year and a half. Everyone – worldwide – has been affected. Many with tragic results. Loss of health. Loss of loved ones. Loss of relationships.

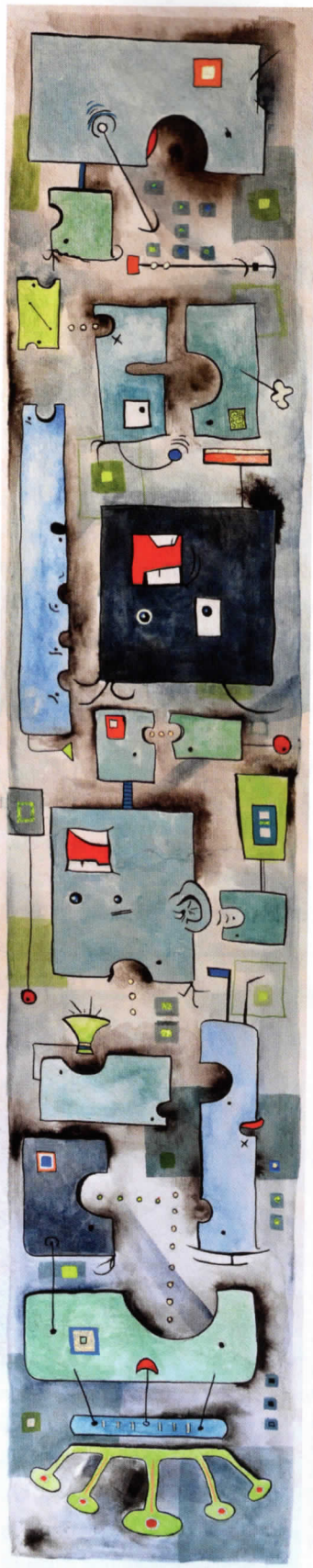
But, I'm going to bring you some good news. Artists are adaptable people. Anita Loomis, her gallery and her family are prime examples.

People are resilient. We learn to adjust. We grow. And best of all, we become better. Remember the adage, "Bitter or better?" It's a choice. And many are there among us who have excelled at taking adversity and making life better.

Change is never easy. As a human species, we resist change. Status quo is always preferable. But embracing change, growing from the hard times, learning to value the benefits of forced change is a wise life transition. And ultimately, what choice do we have?

No one escapes adversity. The quote above by C.S. Lewis epitomizes our lives – we become stagnated in the here and now. Lethargic. Content. But sometimes life's circumstances force us to change. Pain compels us to new horizons.

Anita Loomis, owner of the newly established Loomis Gallery in Kittery, Maine, which features contemporary artwork from regional emerging and mid-career artists, and one of the founders of Fountain Street Fine Art gallery (Framingham, Massachusetts and later Boston), and her husband were living in Massachusetts when Covid hit full force. She'd previously enjoyed success exhibiting oil and watercolor paintings, working on private commissions, and a long stint with an international architectural stained-glass



LEFT: Anita Loomis, *Queen of Talk*, water media on paper, 12" x 56".

FAR BOTTOM LEFT: Mary Marley, #3924, encaustic composition, 12" x 12".

FAR BOTTOM CENTER: Denise Driscoll, *Triangles I*, acrylic on panel, 8" x 8".

FAR BOTTOM RIGHT: Cheryl Clinton, *Black and White Reflection Study*, acrylic on panel, 8" x 8".

LOOMIS GALLERY  
121 DENNETT ROAD  
KITTERY, MAINE

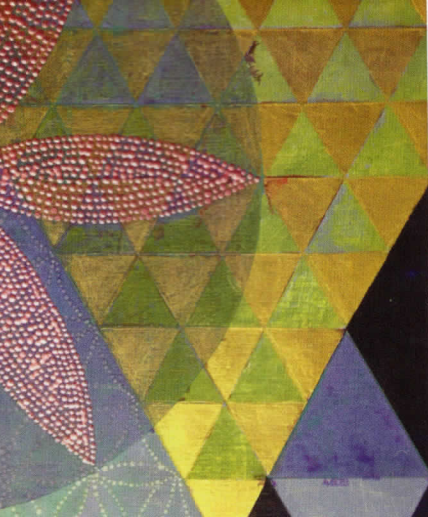


Marie Craig, Tatiana Flis, Denise Driscoll, Mary Marley, Brenda Cirioni and Alexandra Rozenman. Loomis collected works from them, as well as numerous Maine artists. The mediums span the gamut from oils, watercolors, glass, pastel and sculpture to cyanotype print, acrylic, encaustic and collage. So many extraordinary works and artists.

This gallery, all of 400 square feet, is a little jewel. The high ceilings accommodate a myriad of pieces. The natural light bathes the works perfectly – drenching them in the summer light. And the variety is extraordinary. It truly makes your heart sing.

Loomis' piece "Queen of Talk" is an almost Dr. Seuss-like take on the times. A Zoom tribute. Craig's piece, "Boston," an ink drawing on cyanotype print, etches the cityscape in your mind. Clinton's "Black and White Reflection Study" invokes the moods, colors and abstract patterns of nature. Flis' somewhat whimsical sculptures, such as "Off the Edge" of a small building sitting on a rock precipice, drives home the point that sometimes life doesn't turn out as we plan. Driscoll's "Triangles" is a study in geometry and the perfection of connection. Marley's "3924" encaustic piece screams with color and texture. Yum. Cirioni's "White Birch" drips of her love of nature

Christina Beecher, *Evening Serenity*, oil on board, 5" x 7".



and her control of a palette knife. Rozenman blends the styles of symbols of folk art from her home country of

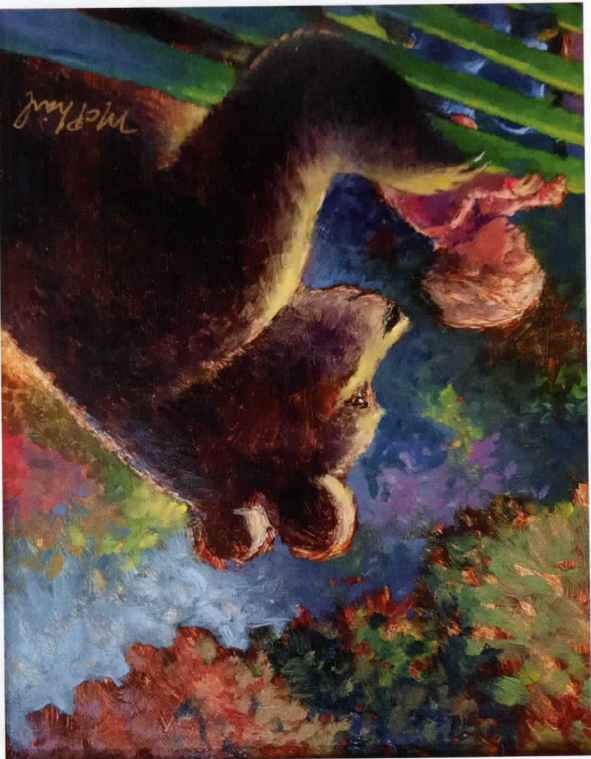
Russia in such pieces as "Finding my Colors."

Many additional noteworthy artists are shown in this gallery. David McPhail's enchanting book illustrations such as "The Boy and the Bear," And Christine Beecher's tonal landscape, "Evening Serenity." And oh so many more.

So how has adversity changed Loomis? She acknowledged that she has a greater appreciation for how wonderful people are, how valuable it is as an artist or for a businessperson to remain flexible, and how important it is to exercise creative muscles to solve challenges. "Art is about embracing life," she said, "and it feels like that has become especially precious over the past year."

P.S. When you take in this gallery, stop by When Pigs Fly for a terrific pizza, and maybe checkout Zapapa's Boutique in Wallingford Square, where they feature high-end handmade creations from Oaxaca, Mexico, and Maine artisans.

Linda Chestney



David McPhail, *The Boy and the Bear from The Race*, 2017, 9" x 12".