

## FINE ART

# Ceramics and paintings tell story of their lives

## Constance Bracci-McIndoe and Ken McIndoe, Retrospective Exhibition

**Where:** New Hope Arts Center, 2 Stockton Ave., New Hope, Pennsylvania

**When:** Through Sept. 24. Hours are daily, from noon to 5 p.m.; opening reception is Saturday, from 5 to 8 p.m.

**Contact:** 215-862-9606 or newhopearts.org

**Janet Purcell** *For Times of Trenton*

It's a good thing the gallery at New Hope Arts Center is so large — Constance (Connie) Bracci-McIndoe and Ken McIndoe have filled it with much of their work for a joint retrospective exhibition.

When I met with the long-married artists recently, they were choosing and packing what Ken estimated would be almost 100 of his paintings and drawings for the show. Connie was planning to exhibit 60 or more ceramics and a few monotypes. Now, all of the works are on display, salon style, on walls and pedestals in the arts center. It's a feast of art that is colorful and lively, intuitive and humorous — all clearly done by two people who know what they're doing and who do it well.

The McIndoes were already established artists when they met in 1971 in New York. "We were both working at our art and we knew, from the beginning, we liked doing art together," Connie says.

She was teaching, working in her Spring Street studio and selling her work to the original Pottery Barn on 10th Avenue, between 18th and 19th streets. Ken, who had been studying painting and drawing at the Art Students League, was painting on the streets of Manhattan and exhibiting at Gallery 100 in Princeton.

The oldest piece that Connie McIndoe has in this show is a classic white stoneware vase fired in 1971. The earliest by Ken McIndoe is a self-portrait he did in 1960, when he was a student at the League.

The exhibit also includes works that are the result of the couple's travels.

"Silly Alligator" came about, Connie says, after she spied alligator heads in a New Orleans shop. She told Ken she just had to have one — it's now attached to a body of pit-fired clay.

There's also a tall wood-and clay-piece on display, about which Connie says: "Ken was teaching a painting workshop on a beach in 1990 and this log came up on shore. I got it and mailed it to myself back here." Standing approximately 4 feet tall, it's impossible to miss since it now bears painted discs and is studded with beads.

Ken's work also reflects various places in which he held workshops. Examples in



Ken McIndoe's "Beach With Two Crows" is among the paintings on view in a dual retrospective of McIndoe's works and the works of his wife, Constance Bracci-McIndoe, at the New Hope Arts Center in New Hope, Pennsylvania. Courtesy of the artist

this exhibit are a few of his first watercolors, which were done in Puerto Rico. There are also drawings from a time he conducted a workshop in Alaska and paintings from the Jersey Shore done in 1994. He's included drawings he made of commuters on the bus he rode into New York for a teaching gig and a piece that Ken describes as a memoir about a former convent he visited on a hill in Tuscany.

An image of a place much closer to home is the stunning painting called "Paterson Falls," done in 1980, which captures the afternoon sun lighting up one side of the rocks while the other is in shadow.

He is also exhibiting what he says are "explorings" on canvas over wood, for which he cuts abstract shapes from wood and attaches painted canvases. Titled "Trans-

parent Forms," it appears as if the forms can be seen through one another.

In addition to her clay works, Connie is exhibiting a monotype — that she created while teaching at Georgian Court College in Lakewood. "I would teach and then go into the studio and work for a couple of hours, doing monotypes," she says.

This one, titled "Ken's Autumn Garden," is a dynamic profusion of colorful shapes that take on lives of their own — as do the dozens of small, finger-like shapes that stand, bend and beckon on her stoneware clay pit-fired, wall-hung works. "Each piece is centered and cut into fours, and then played with," Connie says.

She is also exhibiting four pieces from her "Shark Fin" series, done while she taught at Queensborough Community College in Bay-

side, New York. One is a clay vessel on which three-dimensional shapes, suggesting shark fins, lie in relief on the top.

Connie spent seven years at Georgian Court and 25 years at Queensborough Community College. She's also taught at her home studio, Hopewell Pottery, since 1974. Ken recently retired from the Art Students League, where he was an educator for 36 years. He also has conducted workshops in places that include Ireland, South Korea, Alaska, New York and New Jersey.

The couple are members of the Hopewell Valley Arts Council and painted oxen for the 2014 "Stampede." Connie's "Cool, Collected, Collaged" was purchased by a local veterinarian and Ken's "Ox For All Seasons" is located at the Hopewell Borough municipal building.