

## Visit the vibrant art scene in Oak Bluffs

By Gwyn McAllister - May 31, 2022



*From left: Holly Alaimo, Zita Cousens, Renee Balter, Alison Shaw, Sue Dawson, Ann Smith, Paula Catanese, Valerie Francis, and Michael Blanchard. — Michael Blanchard*

The Oak Bluffs art scene is flourishing. With multiple galleries, artists' studios, and gift shops featuring work by local artists and artisans now open for the season, there are plenty of opportunities to search for something unique to grace your home or to gift to a friend. To help raise awareness and consolidate the efforts of a number of the Oak Bluffs arts-related businesses, a handful of galleries recently launched an initiative called Arts in OB ([artsinob.com](https://artsinob.com)).

As described on the website, “Arts in OB is an exciting, vibrant collaborative of art galleries located in the town of Oak Bluffs.” The participants include businesses on Circuit Ave. (Cousen Rose Gallery, Center of Knowhere, and Craftworks), in the Arts District on Dukes County Ave. (Galaxy Gallery, Alison Shaw, Knowhere Art Gallery, and Michael Blanchard Photography/Crossroads Gallery), and Featherstone Center for Arts, located just over two miles outside downtown Oak Bluffs.

“We started this last year,” says Holly Alaimo, executive director of the Galaxy Gallery. “We decided that it was a really great way to promote the arts in Oak Bluffs. We’re trying to raise awareness — to let people know that our town has a really vibrant arts scene.”

The website promises that the cooperative plans “to collaborate, inform, and have events to highlight and showcase the locations, and art offered by each gallery, in the coming weeks and months.”

Here’s a look of what’s happening around town. All of the eight galleries involved with the Arts in OB collaborative (listed in alphabetical order) are now open for business. Dates and hours of operation are included in the following listings.

### **Alison Shaw**

Long known as the pre-eminent Island fine art photographer, Alison Shaw and her partner Sue Dawson own and operate a gallery located in a former one-engine firehouse on the very edge of the Oak Bluffs Campground. Here you can find Shaw’s signature images, including classic black-and-white and color seascapes that span more than 40 years. This year the gallery is introducing lots of new images, including large-scale photos from Shaw’s Boat Hull series and new panoramics. While there, check out the wonderful award-winning flower garden that provides a wonderful welcome to the Campgrounds.

88 Dukes County Ave. June hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 11 am to 4 pm, Sundays, 1 to 4 pm, and Mondays by appointment.



Tender for "Owl" Rockport Harbor" 2021- Alison Shaw

## **Cousen Rose Gallery**

The longest-running gallery in Oak Bluffs, the Cousen Rose Gallery has earned a reputation both for the quality and range of the work, as well as for the weekly openings where folks gather to sip wine, enjoy live music, and meet artists and writers from the Island and beyond. The gallery and adjoining courtyard provide a hot spot every Saturday evening in the summer, with old friends mixing with new for a predinner celebration. The four-decade-old gallery features a multicultural array of artists whose media range from painting and photography to jewelry and clothing, and a hand-picked selection of books by authors with a connection to the Vineyard, many of whom are on hand for book signings at the receptions. Zita Cousens is a well-loved figure in town who is always very welcoming to regular visitors and newcomers alike.

71 Circuit Ave. June hours: Saturdays, 11 am to 5 pm, Sundays, 11 am to 3 pm.



*"Keyed In" — Rayhart*



*"Off the Beaten Path" — Rayhart*

## Craftworks

Everything you'll find at this delightful Circuit Ave. gift shop/gallery is made by American craftspeople and artists, including many who hail from the Vineyard. It would be impossible to effectively catalog the inventory of this fun, aesthetically pleasing shop. Suffice it to say that a trip to Craftworks offers a visual feast, with loads of items at many price points. Perusing the shop's collection of jewelry, pottery, metal sculpture, wood, handblown glass, floorcloths, fine art, fiber art, and lots and lots of jewelry, you're sure to find the perfect gift for anyone on your list. Vineyard artists represented include numerous painters, jewelers, ceramicists, and more.

42 Circuit Ave. Open every day.

### **Crossroads**

Photographer Michael Blanchard's work represents more than just beautiful shots of Vineyard scenes. Describing his work as "inspirational photography," Blanchard aims to provide images that reflect the sense of calm and serenity he experiences when shooting at beautiful spots around the Island. Blanchard has made a name for himself internationally through his social media posts and his two books, "Fighting for My Life" and "Through a Sober Lens," which capture, through words and images, his struggles with alcoholism and how he used photography as a means of achieving sobriety. Members of his extensive following often stop by to share their own personal stories and connect with a man whose work has made an impact on their lives.

93 Dukes County Ave. Open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm, and Sunday, 11 am to 4 pm.

### **Featherstone Center for the Arts**

This beautiful six-acre arts campus incorporates six distinct buildings housing galleries, studios, and classrooms. The Francine Kelly Gallery, situated in the

large, modern Art Barn, hosts a revolving series of shows featuring work by local artists. Education is a large component of Featherstone, with classes for children and adults, as well as summer camp programs, offered year-round. The arts campus also hosts multiple indoor and outdoor events during the summer months, including live music, movies, poetry readings, and more. The current show “Emerge! Davin A. Tackabury Scholarship Art Show” features work by artists from the M.V. Regional High School and the M.V. Public Charter School, as well as artistic expression of the Island’s more seasoned artists. The show will hang through June 26.

30 Featherstone Lane (off Barnes Road), the Francine Kelly Gallery is open every day from 12 to 4 pm.

### **Galaxy Gallery**

Operated and supported by the Martha’s Vineyard Center for the Visual Arts, the nonprofit Galaxy Gallery aims to foster and support local artists working in a variety of media. Every two weeks the gallery (whose entrance and parking lot are set back a bit from Dukes County Ave.) will hang a new themed group show, opening with a Saturday reception. Currently the work of dozens of local photographers is on display, featuring a range of styles and subjects including traditional photography, abstract work, collage, and highly experimental images. Next up, starting on June 24, the Galaxy Gallery will bring the outdoors inside with the Garden Show, featuring work celebrating Mother Nature in all her glory.

99 Dukes County Ave. Current hours are Friday to Sunday, 11 am to 5 pm. Beginning June 24, the gallery will be open every day.

**Knowhere Art Gallery (Dukes County Ave.) and Center of Knowhere (Circuit Ave.)**

With her two galleries, owner Val Francis has made it her mission to promote emerging and mid-career artists from all over the country, including some from the Island. The gallery's focus is as much on raising awareness and engendering thoughtful conversation as it is on providing a space for up-and-coming artists to show their work. Past shows have featured work by a multicultural array of artists — those who have shown at famed institutions around the world as well as rising young stars. According to their website, the gallery seeks “to sow the seeds of a movement that will change the world. We want seekers ... of truth; seekers of passion; seekers of purpose, and most of all, seekers of knowledge.”

Knowhere Gallery, 91 Dukes County Ave., and Center of Knowhere, 73 Circuit Ave.