

# Katherine Bradford featured as Hall Art Foundation plans to open May 15

**By Tom Ayres**  
Standard Staff

**R**EADING — The internationally acclaimed Hall Art Foundation in Reading will kick off its 2021 season on Saturday, May 15, rebounding from a pandemic impacted year in which its facilities were shuttered and all of its programming cancelled in 2020.

The Hall site, which will be open to the public every weekend through Sunday, Nov. 28, will feature two season-long exhibitions: “Philosopher’s Clambake” by American painter Katherine Bradford and “Deep Blue,” a group show curated by Bradford, featuring more than 70 paintings, sculptures, photographs, works on paper, and videos by 70 artists from the Hall and Hall Art Foundation collections. In addition, a smaller exhibition space on the expansive, 400-acre grounds will showcase

hibitions accessible via self-guided rather than group tours, limiting capacity, and staggering the arrival of our visitors via timed entry, as well as requiring our visitors to wear masks and follow social distancing, among other things. We will continue to monitor developments and make adjustments as appropriate.”

The exhibition by Bradford, a celebrated artist based in Brooklyn, N.Y., and Brunswick, Maine, called “Philosopher’s Clambake” will include more than a dozen works created by the 78-year-old painter over the past 12 years. Bradford is a Guggenheim Fellow whose work can be found in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Portland Museum of Art in Maine, and the Dallas Museum of Art.

Describing Bradford’s work in a recent announcement about the



Painter Katherine Bradford’s whimsical, enigmatic *Fear of Shoes* (2018), acrylic on canvas, is one of more than a dozen works by the artist to be featured in an upcoming exhibition titled *Philosophers’ Clambake* at the Hall Art Foundation in Reading. Bradford’s solo show, featuring works created from 2019 to 2020, opens May 15 and runs through Nov. 28.

Photo Courtesy of Hall Art Foundation

Andy Warhol are among the more than 70 renowned contemporary artists featured in “Deep Blue,” which will spotlight works in a diverse array of media in both indoor and outdoor exhibit spaces at Hall’s Reading site.

One of the signature pieces in the 70-work-plus exhibition, Barbara Kruger’s *Face It (Blue)* from 2007, “can be interpreted as a cynical critique of American advertising and consumer culture,” according to a Hall Art Foundation assessment of the work. But, the Hall commentary continues, the archival pigment print, with its boldly commercial look, “might also be read as a call to action — prompting us to face the challenges and disappointments of America’s problematic history and current state. Despite the difficult realities we must confront, one might also find comfort in a notion that we remain surrounded by deep blue — in our overhead sky, in the air we breathe, the water in which we swim, as vast fields of lush color, and even in our triumphant political maps.”

Demonstrating its ongoing commitment to Vermont and regional artists of note, the Hall Art Foundation announced the addition of a third show to its exhibition spaces for the coming season.

Based in her “dream studio” in West Burke, Ekasala is known for creating expressive abstract paintings and works on paper. Ekasala, the Hall website reports, “populates her compositions with vibrant and at times translucent sections of color juxtaposed or layered across each other.” The Ekasala show will open on May 15, coincident with the opening of the full Reading site, and will continue through the end of August.

Her recent solo showings have been held at Catamount Arts in St. Johnsbury, Burlington City Arts, and the Metalstone Gallery in New York City. Ekasala’s work has also been exhibited widely internationally in Paris, Berlin, and Sydney.



Describing American painter Katherine Bradford’s work in a recent announcement about the upcoming exhibition, Hall Art Foundation Director Maryse Brand wrote that the American artist “is best known for making luminous and dreamlike works that merge color field painting with figuration.”

new paintings and works on paper by Vermont artist Terry Ekasala. The Ekasala exhibit will wrap up on Aug. 28 and will be followed by a second show by another Vermont artist yet to be named.

The Hall site in Reading consists of a stone farmhouse, cow barn, horse barn, and tractor barn, grouped together along VT Route 106 at the southern end of town. The galleries and bucolic outdoor exhibit spaces will be open every Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. through Thanksgiving weekend. All visits to the exhibition spaces during the ongoing pandemic will be self-guided. Reservations are recommended but not required. The art foundation is presently accepting reservations through the end of June at hallart-foundation.org.

A Hall Art Foundation spokesperson strove to assure the public that safety will remain foremost in mind at the Reading site while COVID-19 precautions continue. “The health and safety of our staff and visitors are our top priority,” Hall Art Foundation Director Maryse Brand told the Standard in an email earlier this week. “We are closely following the [State of Vermont’s] COVID guidelines and procedures. We are making our ex-

representational space — a pool, the ocean — [applying] abstract fields of pigment, studies of color and light,” Brand continued.

Painted in bright pinks, peaches, oranges, and shimmering greens, Bradford works such as *Pool Swimmers, Green* (2015), *Distant Life Guard* (2018), and *Large Ocean Painting* (2016) all showcase Bradford’s lifelong fascination with human interactions with life-affirming, life-sustaining water.

In other paintings to be featured at the Hall’s 2021 seasonal exhibition, Bradford “depicts groups of people in a gathering, negotiating a shared space and each other.” In the upcoming show’s titular painting, 2010’s *Philosopher’s Clambake*, the artist portrays a group of scholars who hold forth with themselves and each other around a colorful, brightly lit bonfire. Bradford also draws on the sustaining force of water anew in works depicting groups of people interacting in paintings such as *Beautiful Lake* (2009) and one of her newest creations, *Shore Diptych* (2020).

In another important contribution to the upcoming Hall season, Bradford steps out of exhibition mode to curate “Deep Blue,” the expansive, multimedia show that

the art foundation is presenting in conjunction with Bradford’s solo showcase.

“In [curating] *Deep Blue*, Katherine Bradford examines ‘deep blue’ both visually as a color, but also as a phrase that can describe more abstract concepts such as mood, the natural environment, music, and even a region’s political landscape,” Brand explained via email.

Asked if Bradford’s selections for the *Deep Blue* show were influenced in any way by a year of pandemic, Brand added that, “Like all of us, Bradford has been impacted by the events of the past year and

her choice of works and their interpretation reflects that experience, among other things.”

For her part, Bradford shared some thoughts about her inspiration in curating the “*Deep Blue*” exhibition in a statement released by the Hall Art Foundation. Bradford said she “heard a newscaster use the phrase ‘deep blue’ in describing an area of the United States and, being a painter, I immediately felt the force of that phrase, both visually and politically. It was very reassuring to hear and to picture.”

Judy Chicago, Leon Golub, David Maisel, Joan Mitchell, and



The Hall Art Foundation’s indoor and outdoor exhibition spaces are located on 400 bucolic acres of farmland and woodlands situated off VT Route 106 in Reading.

Photo Courtesy of Hall Art Foundation



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