

VOICEOVERS

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FIELDS WORK: Charles and Gail Fields have been building a small, high-quality publishing company.

In search of the perfect ARTBOOK

By Ellen LeBow
Photos by Shareen Davis

Their book is a solid, 200-page heavy-weight that takes two hands to heft and will not fit in any bookcase. Even the paper is thick between the fingers, satiny and slow to turn.

The edition is limited to 2000, signed, at \$150 each – and selling well.

Titled simply “Anne Packard,” the book is a broad retrospective of Provincetown artist Anne Packard’s paintings, and every artist’s dream:

Bound so it opens on the horizontal, there is very little writing after the first page or two.

The left page is often blank so the painting on the right can be allowed its own power, without competition.

Packard’s broad, moody, mostly Cape vistas and lush brushstrokes are reproduced with uncommon attention and accuracy.

“Anne Packard” is the artist’s collaboration with Fields Publishing, a small North Truro business begun in 2004 by Charles and Gail Fields, who fit into a publishing niche that most people don’t even imagine exists.

of fine art and photography we can publish,” he says, “the best quality in the world because we control all the pre-press and design right here ... We stay on top of the whole process to get the quality we want – we see each sheet coming off the press, we oversee the binding process.”

Getting it right at a reasonable price means a trip to South Korea.

“Asia seems to be doing the best four-color work, using the best papers,” Fields points out. “And their prices are less than

stock, binding and above all, color reproduction is their creative goal, then Packard’s work challenged them to an even more opulent level.

“It isn’t just another gorgeous coffee table book,” Fields says. “We took it a step farther. We wanted it bigger and better. I admire Anne’s work and I admire her as a person. I like the composition and simplicity in her paintings ... She paints big, she thinks big.” So Fields went big.

Other art books the Fields have published measure around 11 by 12 inches. This one is 13 by 18 inches, printed with a 175-line screen, using extra heavy paper.

“We weren’t able to go to Korea,” he says, “they couldn’t handle the size of that book.” So they found a printer in Hong Kong.

Packard, he remembers, “brought boxes and boxes of photographs of her work ... It took a month looking through them. She’d come over and we’d discuss composition. We’d select how the flow of the book would go; it’s very important what’s on the next page. We wanted simplicity, lots of white space.”

Putting out such a big, pricey book has its risk. Fields says only, “Anne has a big following. Her dealers around the country are buying

ART BOOK, continued on next page



“BLACK BOAT”: 22 by 30 inches, painted by Anne Packard in 2003.

Fields, who has published two book of his own photographs, “Provincetown and the National Seashore” and later, “Cape Cod and the National Seashore,” first met Packard during a “cold call,” asking her to sit for a portrait.

“Meeting her and learning more about her work captivated us,” writes Fields. “She’s feisty, direct, dedicated and uncompromising. Perhaps she chose us to publish her first book ... partly because we too are sensitive artists.”

The couple had Fields gallery on Shankpainter Road in Provincetown before moving to North Truro and starting their company. Having his work presented in book form got Fields interested in taking control of the process.

“We formed to publish the highest quality reproductions

the Canadians and Americans” who, he feels, haven’t been competitive.

If respectful attention to layout, language, paper



“PROVINCELANDS”: 36 by 48 inches, painted by Anne Packard in 2002.

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Art Book

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them up." According to Fields, local places like Paperback Booksmith in Orleans have re-ordered twice. A show at the Cape Cod Museum of Art where Packard gave a talk and book signing "gets people going."

The sheer size of the publication, if alarming, works with Packard's paintings. No book can replace the eye of a four-foot by six-foot image, but what a quality book can do that a gallery graze cannot is give viewers a deeper entry into the emotional climate of the work.

The effect is cumulative. Having access to so much of it allows you to fall under its spell. Without any distraction but a few terse personal phrases ("The Provincetown harbor, I never get tired of it"), surrounded by so much pooling white space, you



"MAN ON A BICYCLE IN HIROSHIMA": Black and white by Charles Niewenhou, at the end of World War II.

are free to grasp what Packard's been after all these years; the romantic yet impersonal austerity of soundless, fog-choked water, glowering horizons, and human-less boats builds up page after page until you look up, dazed.

That her shimmering light source comes from the way she lays down paint emerges in the clarity of the reproductions.

Last year, Fields published

three calendars and three books; one on Provincetown's carnival, one called "Dog in the Dunes" by local photographer Barbara Cohen, and a book of photographs by Charles Niewenhou, covering 60 years of his work.

"He [Niewenhou] came in and met my wife at Fields gallery in Provincetown," Fields recalls. Intrigued by the span of his collection, once again the

Fields found themselves going through boxes and boxes of negatives:

"We restored his photographs, going through his whole life, and helped him put it together."

Niewenhou had photographed during World War II in Japan and the Philippines, and continued documenting his way through the world. But he made money as a builder, not a



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Advanced Projects: Pastel Drawing with Doug Ritter
Tuesday, 1:30-5:00PM (ART 250-97)

Drawing 1 & 2 with Anne Flash
Thursday, 12:30-4:30PM (ART 100-95 & ART 200-95)

Advanced Projects: Drawing with Anne Flash
Monday, 1:30-5:00PM (ART 250-96)

History of Art 1 with Franny Golden
Monday, 9:30AM-12:30PM (ART 125-95)

Painting 1 & Advanced Painting with Franny Golden
Monday, 1:00-4:30PM (ART 103-96 & ART 228-95)

Painting 1 with Meg Shields
Tuesday, 1:00-5:00PM (ART 103-95)

Watercolor 1 & 2 with Vicky Tomayko
Monday, 9:30AM-1:30PM (ART 104-95 & ART 204-95)

Advanced Projects: Aqueous Media with Doug Ritter
Thursday, 9:30AM-1:00PM (ART 250-99)

Printmaking Techniques: Monotype & Advanced Projects: Printmaking with Vicky Tomayko
Wednesday, 10:00AM-2:00PM (ART 209-95 & ART 250-95)

Sculpture 1 with Bob Bailey
Monday, 9:30AM-1:00PM (ART 106-95)

Advanced Projects: Flexible Structures with Susan Lyman
Wednesday, 9:30AM-1:00PM (ART 250-98)

Painting Workshop with Jim Peters
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To register for a credited class call Cape Cod Community College at 508-375-4012 or 877-846-3672 or register online at www.capecod.mass.edu. Tuition for a 3-credit or qualified course is \$368. For info or to register for workshops call PAAM 508-487-1750.

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photographer. The book not only rescues his work but also allows the viewer time to dwell on his rich subject matter and strong, harmonious compositions.

Though much of his work focused on his travels, the early black-and-white wartime prints provided a marketing strategy. Fields is targeting veterans, and he points out, "Children buy it for their fathers."

"We have quite a few people come in and show us their work so I get to see some great art," says Fields. "It comes to you. That's a nice way to see new work."

When Don McLaughlin from South Orleans saw the Niewenhou book he

contacted the Fields about his own body of work.

McLaughlin is a photographer and geologist who worked in Bolivia for Standard Oil in the 1950s and '60s, carrying two cameras, one black-and-white, one color. "He traveled in the outback, in camps, with government officials," Fields explains. "In those days you had to send your film off to Paris to develop Kodachrome."

The Fields contracted with McLaughlin for a book due out in June, 2007.

Also on the horizon is a book of photography by Ken Hanson, whom Fields describes as "the Ansel Adams of the Himalayas," covering dramatic countryside around Mt. Everest.

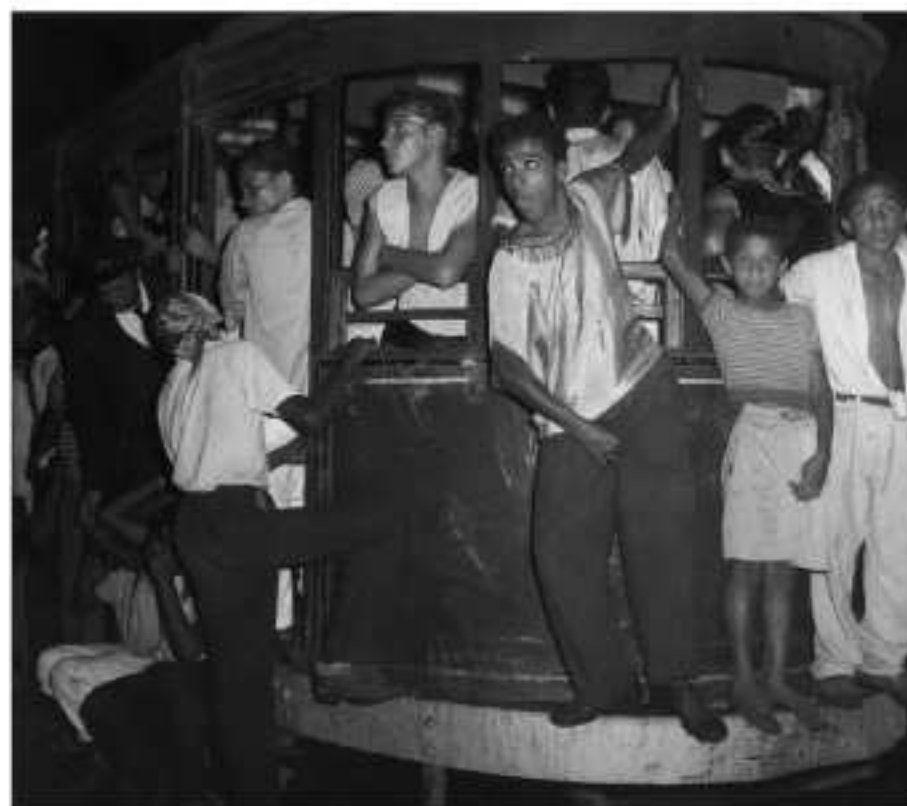
"We hope to hit the national and the international market with that book."

Due out in 2008, in conjunction with a show at the Cape Cod Museum of Art, is a retrospective of work by influential Cape painter Sam Feinstein, who died in 2003.

Commissioned by his wife Pat, the book will document Feinstein's young,



"ENGINE ROOM OILER": Black and white by Charles Niewenhou, during World War II.



"CARNIVAL TROLLEY RIDE, RIO DE JANEIRO": Black and white by Charles Niewenhou, in Brazil after World War II.

realist style, maturing to abstraction.

Fields says he can't really pinpoint what it costs to put out a single book. A lot depends on the production side, including "color separation, restoration of images, color corrections, proofing." But he also admits, "A big part of this

business is promotion, working with marketing people, getting the word out."

Even though theirs is a small, custom company, working with artists and sharing costs, Fields claims, "Producing the best of the best takes the gamble out of it." ▼

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