

WHOM YOU KNOW

"It's not who you know that counts: it's whom you know." The Best of Manhattan and Excellence Everywhere. CRITIQUING MANHATTAN'S BEST IN CLASS & MOST INTERESTING: PEOPLE, PLACES, SPORTS, STYLE, EVENTS, BOOKS, FASHION, RESTAURANTS AND THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN LIFE! HAPPY FASHION WEEK NEW YORK! By Peachy Deegan, Editor-In-Chief.

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In Honor of the Coast Guard's 220th Anniversary: Patriotic Peachy Exclusive Interview with Karen Loew, Artist, Board Member of the Salmagundi Club and Chair of the National Coast Guard Art Program

Karen Loew is a long-standing artist member of the Salmagundi Club (Center for American Art since 1871) and serves on the Board of Directors. She has also chaired the national Coast Guard Art Program (COGAP) since 2001.

As COGAP Chair, Ms. Loew is the liaison between the Salmagundi Club, which sponsors the program, and the United States Coast Guard. She is also a recipient of the COGAP George Gray Award for Artistic Excellence and a regular contributor of her paintings to the program.

As COGAP Chair, Ms. Loew is a spokesperson for the program at numerous public occasions.

Other New York area art organizations where Ms. Loew is a member are the Northern Manhattan Artist Alliance (NoMAA), Artists Unite, New York Artists Equity Association, Artists Fellowship, and Episcopal Church and Visual Artists. Inc. (ECVA).

Ms. Loew's art has been featured in numerous publications including The New York Times (regional and national), Home magazine, Women's Day magazine, Palm Beach Times, The Log of the New York Council of the Navy League, The Manhattan Times, New York Living magazine, Coast Guard magazine, ASID New Metro Chapter (newsletter), Hartford Courant, Kitchen and Bath Design News, Diversion magazine (for doctor's at leisure), Associated Press wire service. Television appearances have included CNN Tokyo affiliate TV Asahi, WABC TV Eyewitness News New York, Lifetime Television's Our Home – twice featured doing painting demonstrations.

Select 2009-2010 group exhibitions were on display at Federal Hall National Memorial, New York, NY; Women in Military Service for America Memorial, Arlington Cemetery, Arlington, VA; Zeeuws Maritiem muZEEum, Vlissingen, The Netherlands; Fraunces Tavern Museum, New York, NY; Hudson River Gallery, Yonkers, New York; Pritzger Military Library, Chicago, IL; and Salmagundi Club members' shows, New York, NY.

Galleries in Bridgehampton, NY, West Palm Beach, FL, and Sanibel Island, FL have represented the artist. Ms. Loew's work is in numerous private collections, including the Curator's Collection at Salmagundi Club.

Karen Loew was born in Wheeling, West Virginia, graduated from art school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and currently resides in Northern Manhattan, where local iconic architecture are the subjects of her recent work. Peachy Deegan interviewed Karen Loew in honor of the Coast Guard's recent anniversary.

Peachy Deegan: Please tell us about the Coast Guard Art Program and its history.

Karen Loew: The Coast Guard Art Program (COGAP) was founded in 1981 by a very talented muralist/combat artist named George Gray, along with Jim Ward of Coast Guard Community Relations. COGAP artists volunteer their time and talent to record the USCG ships, aircraft and crew in action. Once a year a Call for Entries goes out to the COGAP membership for paintings depicting the various missions of the USCG. The entries are juried by the Excellence Committee, using the criteria of accuracy of detail, appropriateness of the image for the COGAP Collection and the quality of the painting. We are the visual historians and the Coasties are our inspiration.

To learn more, visit the COGAP website at www.uscg.mil/art

How did your interest in art begin?

My love of art is a lifelong one. I was very lucky to have parents who encouraged my creativity from the grade school days of coloring books and crayons to my paintings in oils. My first public recognition of my talent came in my sophomore year in high school. My dad's company newsletter published a story about me featuring several pieces of my art work. Seeing my work in print was absolutely intoxicating. Art then became something I wanted to pursue as a vocation, not just as an avocation.

How has your interest in art evolved?

Coming from a small town of about 5,000 people to live and work in Manhattan has really given me the opportunity to see firsthand the best of art in the museums, galleries, and art studios. I have great artist friends whose work I admire and whose shows I attend. It is a life-long learning experience and what a classroom New York truly is.

What is the relationship between the arts and the military like?

Combat artists have existed all through history. We immortalize in our paintings and drawings the courageous men and women who serve our country. To be an artist for the military is a unique way of giving back with the God-given talent we have. We honor those who protect us doing what many service men and women consider all in a day's work. We give a painting, but they may ultimately give their life.

What are you proudest of?

I am proudest of the nine paintings and drawings for COGAP that I created from my deployment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in May, 2002. PSU 305 out of Ft. Eustis, VA was stationed there at that time. Prior to their GTMO mission, they had been stationed in New York to aid in our port security immediately after 9/11. I am glad I got to meet them. It seemed very appropriate to honor their service to New York by painting them on duty in Guantanamo.

What does the recent Coast Guard anniversary mean to you?

Two hundred twenty years of the USCG serving our country is a big deal. We are such a young nation compared with much of the world. To have this continuity of service is to reach back in time and touch the hands of our country's founding fathers.

What does it mean for Manhattan in particular and our country overall?

Semper Paratus - Always Ready - is the Coast Guard motto. I sleep soundly at night knowing the USCG is guarding the ports of New York and New Jersey. They were there with all our country's military when our country fought in foreign waters and on foreign shores during WWII, Gulf War and present day conflicts. Reliable and yes, ready!

How do these challenging economic times affect the Coast Guard?

Everyone has to work smarter in every position. It takes an even higher level of resolve and commitment to be a Coastie.

What should civilians understand about the Coast Guard that many might not?

The Coast Guard has eleven missions, many more than the public undoubtedly realizes. The Coast Guard Art Program exhibitions are ideal ways to educate the public through our paintings about all the work the USCG does.

What have you enjoyed the most in your career?

Chairing the Coast Guard Art Program (COGAP) Committee at Salmagundi Club has given me an amazing personal feeling of accomplishment. Doing this volunteer work in support of our courageous men and women of the USCG is a tribute and thank you for all they do for all of us. One of the highlights in my time as Chair was the invitation to speak in February of 2009 at the opening reception for a show of COGAP art at the Zeeuws Maritiem MuZEEum in Vlissingen, The Netherlands. COGAP is the USCG "Fan Club" and I am honored to be its spokesperson!

What do you think we should be covering in Peachy Ahoy that we have not yet written about?

Art exhibitions around the 5 boroughs of New York are often free. Highlighting free-to-the-public cultural events would always be a great service to your audience. Of particular note is the Salmagundi Club at 47 Fifth Avenue near 12th Street in Manhattan. Their exhibitions are free to the public and they are open 7 days a week (holidays are the exceptions). For more information, visit their website at www.salmagundi.org

[Note from Peachy: Art Exhibits on Whom You Know are found in Cultured Peachy and Gracious Galleries and Peachy Ahoy is for yachts/boats/watercraft.]

What or who has had the most influence on your pursuit of excellence?

My father impressed upon me in my grade school years to always do my best. He did not like to see poor grades if they were indicative of my working below my ability. Homework was taken seriously. I never went to school without all my homework assignments completed. Taking responsibility for meeting deadlines with quality work has proven to have been the best early training for my adult life.

What honors and awards have you received in your profession?

- George Gray Award, for "Harbor Rendezvous," a painting done for the 2001/2002 COGAP Collection
- Salmagundi Club Purchase Prize (top award) for my limited edition linocut "Must Be Heaven" in the club members' 2010 Black and White theme show
- Second Honorable Mention for my limited edition linocut "Blooming Thicket" in the Salmagundi Club members' 2007 Flower Theme Exhibition
- First Honorable Mention for my limited edition linocut "Reindeer Season" in the Salmagundi Club members' 2006 Christmas Theme Exhibition
- First Honorable Mention for my photograph "Our Forefathers Who Art in Heaven" in the Salmagundi Club members' 2006 Photography Exhibition Summer Exhibition

What is your favorite place to be in Manhattan?

The Little Red Lighthouse under the George Washington Bridge

What is your favorite shop in Manhattan?

Dick Blicks Art Supply Store

What is your favorite drink?

Mamajuana Mojito

What is your favorite restaurant in Manhattan?

BLT Fish has great seafood though it is really impossible to choose one place. I mention this one, because my boyfriend Paul took me there for my birthday this year. We had a delicious meal and great time together.

What else should Whom You Know readers know about you?

My Christian faith, my love of family and friends and the love I receive from them are at the heart of my art.

How would you like to be contacted by Whom You Know readers?

Readers can email me at: KLoew@KLoew.com