

KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

Connie Black began her formal art education at the age of eleven when enrolled in a children's class given by Mrs George Plimpton in Walpole, MA. Through high school, Connie studied her art fundamentals under this tutelage. Drawing from models, still life, landscape, portraits, basic color theory and sculpture were covered through these youthful years. From high school and Mrs Plimpton's classes, Connie attended the Vesper George Art School in Boston and completed the three year course with the emphasis on Fine Arts.

During her final year at Vesper George, Connie applied for and received a scholarship to the Cape School of Art. Henry Hensche was then director, following in the tradition started by Charles Hawthorne, the local teacher of American Impressionism, drawing and painting in the open air. Connie's acute sense of color was developed during this stage of her education. The dark old-fashioned palette of Vesper George gained color and light.

Connie married at the end of that summer, continuing her art career, mainly in oils and charcoals at that time. The next change in Connie's career came in that seven-year cycle that permeates all lives. Jim & Joan Forsberg joined the Blacks' social life and artistic realm. The Forsbergs' work was heavily influenced by the Hans Hoffman School of Art which was part of the emerging abstract expressionism movement. Connie studied privately with Jim Forsberg for four years, learning the basic theories of abstraction, especially the energies within the picture plane and the effects of color forms upon one another. Though Connie still does draw and paint from life, especially when traveling, her work was so plunged into abstraction during this period

that it is structured by the principles learned at that time.

In the ensuing years, Connie Black has taken many courses in other skills: paper making, art books, print making, etching, bookbinding and photo silkscreening. She also took an intense course at the Fine Arts Work Center with Andrew Mochler and Michael Mazur, studying etching in copper and monoprint from the etched plate. This study continued with a photo etching workshop with Peik Larsen and etching with Bill Behnken at the Art Association. Collages made from hand made paper and paper sculpture, oil painting and print making rounded out this period. During the print making process, monotype, monoprint, lithosketch, collagraph and etching were all pursued and achieved. Sketching in ink and water color are also part of Connie's skills.

Connie Black started exhibiting her art in 1954. She started at the Art Association and through the years has exhibited in many members' shows, both juried and open. In the late 50s the Front Street Gallery and the Sun Gallery exhibited Black's work and through the years, the Provincetown Group Gallery, Cobb Gallery in Barnstable, Wellfleet Art Gallery, Tamsin Gallery and Gallery North, both of New York, featured Black in two solo shows and nine duo shows.

A twelve year hiatus in Washington, DC, did not slow Connie down; she joined and founded galleries to show her work. Her Provincetown ties were continued long distance while the family homestead on Priscilla Alden Way waited for her. Connie continued to show her work on two fronts and found new outlets. Upon returning, the forming of the Visual Arts Cooperative opened





areas and opportunities for many fellow artists. The winter space gallery at the Art Association was created and coordinated for three years by Connie Black.

The concept of year-round galleries is, of course, important to year-round artists. Practicing and testing work beyond a short summer season is valuable to the artist.

Connie Black is also an art teacher, teaching school children and adults. She was also a founding member of the Provincetown Theatre Workshop, now the Provincetown Theatre Company. Connie wrote original plays for the young theatre workshop, "The Futuristic Forest" and "Circles In The Snow." She also designed the sets and costumes.

Besides being a painter, sculptor, playwright, etc., Connie is also a poet and has published three volumes of poetry: "Three Women," "Fire & Light" and "Litany of Days." She has

been the director of the Schoolhouse Gallery in North Truro, is a member of the Board of Trustees at the Art Association and a member of the Pen & Brush Inc, of New York City. She has also served as a curator of The Ten Year Retrospective of the Provincetown Group Gallery at the Art Association, "The Aquarium," which Black also conceived and supervised and "The Artist and The Environment," part of an art lottery grant.

Connie Black's latest award and achievement in this long successful career celebrates first prize in the annual graphics exhibition at the Pen & Brush, Inc in New York. She has been awarded a solo show which will open Friday, October 9, from 5 to 7 pm and will run through October 20. The prize winning print, "Commedia Del Arte" will be the centerpiece of the show. This print, along with others, is based on Carnival masked figures inspired by a trip to Venice. Should you be in the City, The Pen & Brush, Inc is located at 16 E 10th Street.

Connie's view of it all?

"I feel very fortunate to have been an artist all these years. Life is never dull. There is always a

new road to explore, a new revelation around every corner. My happiest moments are by myself in the studio. My deepest hope as an artist is to be good enough to convey some of this delight to those who look at my work."

And I say: So when you read the letters to the editor signed "Connie Black" and when you hear or read reports of selectmen's meetings with comments or quotes by Connie Black, when you see Connie Black carrying a placard for an environmental cause, know that behind that guise of Pilgrim and Soldier, beyond the role of wife in one long successful marriage—mother of three, grandmother of four—there lives a dedicated, achieving artist. And how gracious of Connie Black to give up her private artistic time to care about the fate of all of us. Thank you, Connie.