

RJ KATZ
TRANSFORMING ART: AS TIME GOES BY
ARTIST'S STATEMENT

BACKGROUND.

When curator Michael Giaquinto approached me with this project, I was very excited and inspired. The goal was to return to the exact locations where well-known Cape Cod artists painted, and to capture my perspective of their visions. When Mr. Giaquinto provided me with color photocopies of the 15 paintings for this exhibition, late in the afternoon of December 8, 2005, my world changed. For the past year, my life has revolved around this project. I have spent over 800 hours on this task. Throughout the entire process, I have been working full-time in New York City, traveling to Cape Cod three to five times a month to capture perfect images.

PROCESS

I have taken over 10,000 photographs to achieve the 15 images you see here today. Although I have used a digital camera, the images have not been digitally enhanced or altered in any way. The color and scenes in the photographs are exactly how I saw them. I wanted the images to be authentic comparisons with the paintings. In order to do this I implemented a three stage process as follows:

Discovery Stage

The first task was to find the exact locations of the sites in the paintings. Due to changes in the landscape, topography, and lifestyle of the Cape, only a few sites were immediately identifiable to me. I spoke with many people including historians, librarians, artists, park rangers, and store owners to help pinpoint each area. I drove and walked around the same streets dozens of times, searching for the scenes in the paintings. Once I discovered a location, I explored it historically and physically.

Exploratory Stage

Historically

- I wanted to know all about the area. I read books and articles and spoke to many people about the history of Cape Cod and, in particular, about the sites in the paintings. This gave me a new awareness and appreciation of the area, and a different way of looking at the paintings.

Physically

- In exploring the sites, I examined and compared them to the corresponding paintings. I was seeking the artists' points of view. I took hundreds of photos of each location, standing in different spots, observing the relationships of the elements (e.g. buildings, boats), and of the lines, angles, space, form, and color. Next I downloaded the images and studied the details in each one, comparing it to the matching painting. Based on what I learned, I returned to the area, and took additional photos. The process continued until I had captured the elements and angles that most closely matched the paintings.

The Final Stage

Once I determined where I needed to stand to obtain the elements and angles, I revisited the areas once again under the same conditions as depicted in the paintings taking into account such as weather, time of year, time of day, high tide, low tide, and

color of the sky. I took over 100 photos again to create an image equivalent to each painting.

THE VIEWER

It has been a great experience for me to retrace the footsteps of prominent Cape Cod artists. I want to take you through my journey. Along with each image is the location where I stood to take the photographs you see here today. As you move around the room, comparing my images with the paintings, please note that although things change, there are many aspects of the area that still remain the same. I hope that viewing this show gives you a new awareness and appreciation of Cape Cod.

THANK YOU.

I thank Mr. Giaquinto for giving me the opportunity to work on this challenging project. I feel honored to be part of this museum. I would like to thank the following people who have helped me make this project possible: Nancy Sirkis and Doug Duggar for processing, enlarging, and mounting the photos, Monica Barnes for editing the text, Dick Caouette, Napi Van Dereck, Provincetown Library Director Debbie De Jonker-Berry, Park Ranger Samantha Mirabella, Terry Wells, and many others for helping me find the artists' locations.

I also like to thank my partner, Bunny Singer, who accompanied me on this journey.

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