

**Talent: Connie Hayes**

**Published in ACCENT Home& Garden (July/August 2007)**

**Photo and text: Janet Mendelsohn**

In a region where coastal light, craggy shoreline and deep woods draw an abundance of talented landscape artists, Connie Hayes has achieved a certain stature among Maine's contemporary painters. Her work appears in numerous corporate, nonprofit and private collections, in Maine and New York galleries, and has been shown at Manhattan's prestigious Armory Show. Perhaps it is because she captures what the rest of us see all the time but maybe don't see at all. Her paintings in rich colors transport us to places that are familiar yet brand new, authentic yet abstract. They are "Borrowed Views" of other peoples' favorite rooms, fields and quiet roads in coastal Maine, urban landscapes of Portland and New York, a country farm in Normandy, France.



In her own twist on the itinerant artist, Hayes is invited by homeowners to stay in their houses while they are away. For an undisturbed week or more, she explores the places they love. She takes her time, sketching and making notes. "When my hands begin to twitch and I see something as if it's already in paint, that's when I know this is my subject," says Hayes, who painted on location for decades but now brings the sketchbook to her studio to develop additional paintings. "I forget I'm really painting a pickup truck. I let go of the edges. I am engrossed in the light beneath the truck and the light beneath the tires. I forget about the names of objects. What I'm really saying to myself is 'dusty purple bumps into vibrant blue; tips over red dot; spills onto yellow plane which bumps into murky, white vertical and then up and over large, slanty blue.' But I've stopped naming the objects and started to think in the language of paint."

Three years ago, a French woman vacationing in Cushing, Maine, visited the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland during an exhibit of Hayes' paintings. Captivated, she contacted the artist, ultimately inviting her to paint her family's farm in the French countryside. For three weeks, Connie Hayes "borrowed" the farm, relishing the rustic improvements made by the couple and their children who had restored their home by hand. She wandered its apple orchards, barnyard and gardens of peonies, poppies and heavily scented roses. On exhibit at the Ogunquit Museum of American Art this summer, Hayes' Normandy landscapes and interiors depict the playfulness and passions of her hosts' lives. Six women's hats rest on a windowsill for summer afternoons outdoors. Twenty pairs of children's rubber boots, in many sizes, are lined up for visitors in mud season. The family is whimsical but also practical, and honors tradition.

"Every place has a different flavor, a different culture," says Hayes. "The way they arrange buildings and the plantings around them creates shapes that I translate by

repetition of forms. I don't need a charming place as subject matter, although people often think I do, because my interest lies in putting color together in ways I haven't seen or done before. Where previously I painted a sampling of subjects in one place, that's now changing. I'm moving in the direction of playing with one subject many ways, reducing and filtering the details until I can translate its essence onto the canvas."

**Connie Hayes**

Rockland, Maine

[www.conniehayes.com](http://www.conniehayes.com)

**PRICING:**

\$3,000 to more than \$50,000 for oil paintings

\$800 to \$2,000 for giclée prints

Paintings available in Southern Maine:

George Marshall Store Gallery

York Harbor, ME

207-351-1083

[www.georgemarshallstoregallery.org](http://www.georgemarshallstoregallery.org)

**2007 Exhibits:**

Ogunquit Museum of American Art

Ogunquit, ME

207-646-4909

"A Borrowed View in Normandy: Paintings by Connie Hayes"

July 1 to August 21

Members and Artist Reception: Saturday, August 4, 4-7 p.m.

Talk by the artist: July 10 at 6 p.m.

George Marshall Store Gallery

York Harbor, ME

July 21 to September 9

Group show: "One Hundred and Forty"

Opening and Artist Reception: Saturday, July 21, 5-7 p.m.

New Era Gallery

Vinalhaven, ME

"New Paintings by Connie Hayes"

August 4 – 29

Opening and Artist Reception: Saturday, August 4, 4-7 p.m.

Thos. Moser, Freeport, ME, and Boston, MA

DFN Gallery, NY, NY

**Book:**

*Painting Maine: The Borrowed Views of Connie Hayes*

Hard cover, 120 pages, \$45 (currently out-of-print, but a limited quantity is available at the Ogunquit Museum of American Art in conjunction with Hayes' exhibit).