

# VEVERS<sup>3</sup> / OBJECT LESSON



Front cover: *Family photo, Law Street, Provincetown, MA*  
Pamela Vevers Sherin

FEATURED ARTIST EXHIBITION

# VEVERS<sup>3</sup> / OBJECT LESSON

**TABITHA VEVERS**  
**TONY VEVERS**  
**ELSPETH HALVORSEN**

*Curated by Daniel Ranalli*

**AUGUST 4 -20, 2017**  
**OPENING FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 6-8 PM**

HUDSON D. WALKER GALLERY  
Fine Arts Work Center  
24 Pearl Street | Provincetown, MA 02657

## VEVERS<sup>3</sup> / OBJECT LESSON

When I was growing up I never knew an adult artist. In the Vevers family, almost everyone in their circle was an artist. Writing about three artists from the same family is all the more challenging when they are the family you have married into and each does work that is distinctive. Tony Vevers, Elspeth Halvorsen (Vevers) and daughter Tabitha Vevers represent two generations of the Provincetown artistic legacy. Tony and Elspeth arrived in Provincetown in the 1950s. Tabitha and her sister Stephanie were also born in that decade and the family spent summers there. Tony taught at Purdue University in Indiana during the winter. Eventually Tony and Elspeth made Provincetown their year-round home when Tony retired in 1988. Over the years both have been active members of the community showing at the seminal artist-run Long Point and Rising Tide galleries and contributing their time and energy to numerous cultural organizations on the Outer Cape. It was a great loss to all when Tony passed away in 2008. Tabitha spent a number of years after college in Boston working various jobs to support her painting, but eventually came back to Provincetown where she was able to focus more effectively on her work. As with her parents, she too has been an active contributor to the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, Castle Hill and the Fine Arts Work Center where she was a fellow in 1995-96.

This show delivers a mere glimpse of their remarkable work. Most people when they think of Tony Vevers' work visualize the oil paintings with their flat areas of color and allusive narratives. I have chosen to show his sand paintings which are much underappreciated. Elspeth's box sculptures are her signature oeuvre, providing a proscenium-like space for her moonscapes and found objects. We almost always think of Tabitha's work as small jewel-like oil paintings exploring complex themes involving relationships and perceptions of self, as well as social and environmental issues. This show includes her *Lovers Eyes* series and also some of her sculptural and installation work which is less well known but visually and cerebrally formidable.

If there is a kindred aesthetic, it might be the delight each takes in exploring idiosyncratic materials. Tony's layers of multicolored sand with bits of found rope and beach detritus convey serenity with their soft tones of gray and ocher, and suede-like textures. At times they move between the micro and the macro – from snapshots of the ground at our feet to aerial maps. *Indiana Blue* and *The Fall* both divide the canvas into a quatrain of visual coherence.

Elspeth's boxes enclose vignettes with mirrors, ladders, bits of sea creatures and skies of polished aluminum layered with meaning. *Voyage of Time* and *Transit* both bathe us in tranquil moonlight and the ever-present Cape Cod sea. In *Daughters of the Moon* and *Escape* ladders lead us up to an oculus in the sky where light passes through to illuminate the interior.

Tabitha, who has no use for the texture of canvas, has painted on ivory, ivorine (a synthetic ivory), goatskin vellum, polished bone and smoothly gessoed panels. In almost all cases she works small enough to hold the painting in one hand and her brush in the other. For a number of years she has painted life-size eyes of artists and their subjects, appropriated from paintings and photographs and drawing on the Georgian tradition of eye portraits kept secretly embedded in tiny locket. The grid based on twelve self-portraits of artists (*Selfies*) draws us into a fresh and intimate exploration of what has become an over-deployed narcissistic meme of the social media world. Her metronome sculpture *Checkmate: Lee + Man* plays off of the surrealists Man Ray and Lee Miller, recasting the amorous obsession of Ray for Lee Miller into a more feminist narrative and empowering Miller. Meret Oppenheim, an important artist and muse of the Surrealists in Paris, is the inspiration for Tabitha's *Breakfast in Fur*, *Variable Tempo*, referencing her iconic fur teacup of similar title.

This is the second time I have had the opportunity to curate a show of these three and each time I learn something new. They are an important part of the past, present and future of Provincetown.

*Daniel Ranalli, August 2017*

# ELSPETH HALVORSEN

*Escape*, 1989, 48" x 12" x 4", mixed media box construction





*Voyage of Time*, 1988, 18" x 24" x 2.75", mixed media box construction



*Transit*, 1983, 21" x 21" x 4.25", mixed media box construction



*Not Waving But Drowning*, 1985, 24" x 19" x 4.25", mixed media box construction

# Tabitha Vevers

*LOVER'S EYE V: Selfies*, oil on Ivorine mounted on 12" x 12" panels, 2013-15

Francisco (Clemente)

Dana (Schutz)

Jack (Pierson)

Gregory (Gillespie)

Jeff (Koons)

Jean-Michel (Basquiat)

Phillip (Guston)

Marisol (Escobar)

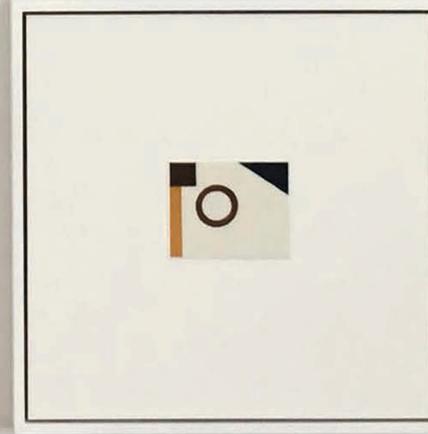
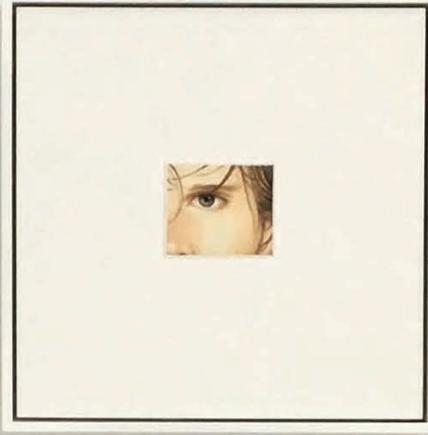
Milton (Avery)

Lucien (Freud)

Kazimir (Malevich)

Gustave (Courbet)





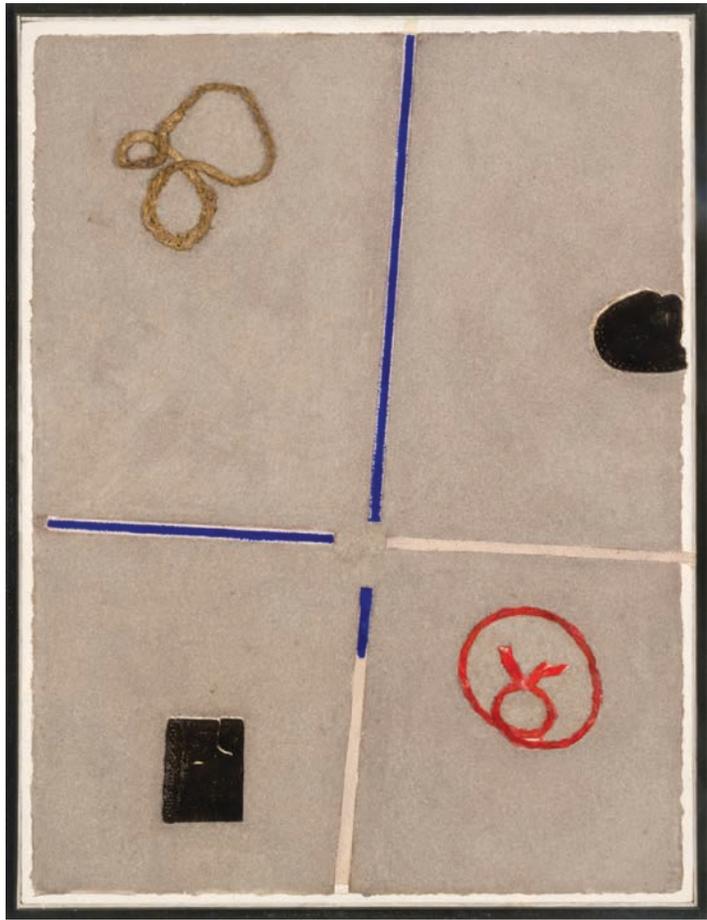


*CHECKMATE: Lee + Man II (after Man Ray + Lee Miller)*  
variable size (metronome: 9" x 4.5" x 4.5"), oil on ivorine w/ metronome + hammer, 2013



OBJECT: *Breakfast in Fur, Variable Tempo* (after Meret Oppenheim + Man Ray)  
9.5" x 4.5" x 4.5", oil on ivory w/ metronome + fur, 2015

# Tony Vevers



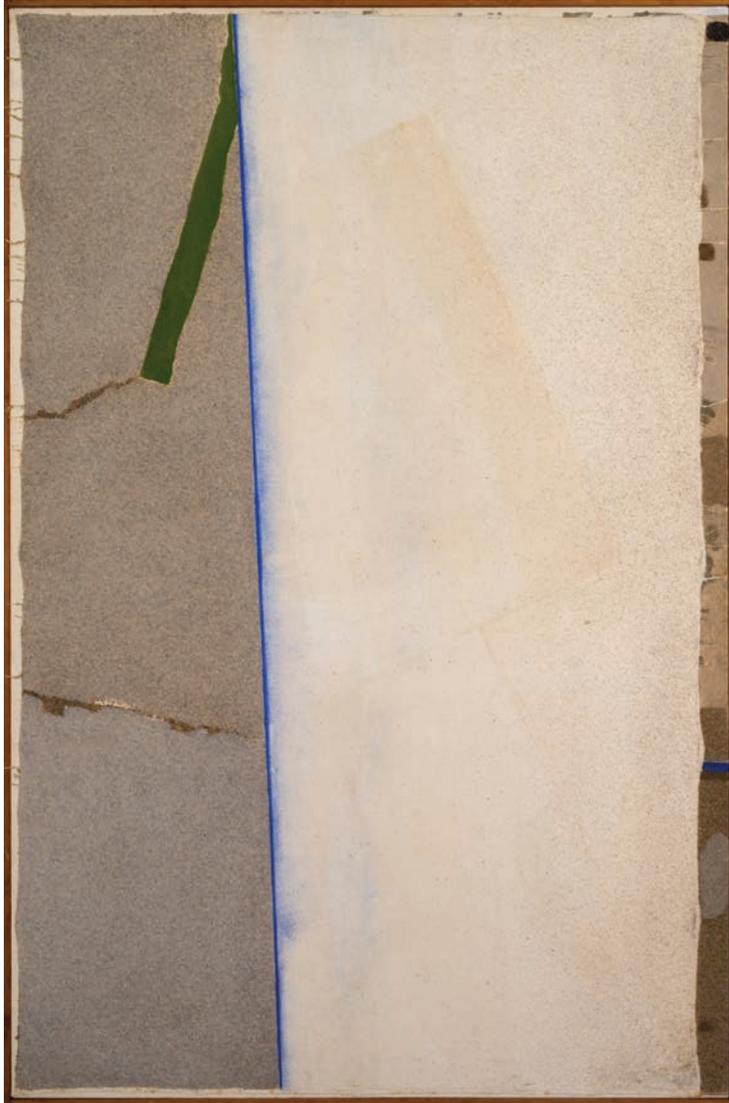
*Indiana Blue*, 1983, 32" x 25", sand + mixed media on canvas



*The Fall*, 1988, 64" x 49", sand, rope + mixed media on canvas



*Sea Change*, c1980, 44" x 40", sand, leather soles + mixed media on canvas



*Transition*, 1977, 48.5" x 33", sand, chalk + mixed media on canvas



**Elsbeth Halvorsen**

Represented by Berta Walker Gallery, Provincetown/Wellfleet MA

**Tabitha Vevers**

Represented by Albert Merola, Provincetown MA  
Clark Gallery, Lincoln MA  
Bookstein Projects, New York NY

Hudson D. Walker Gallery

FINE ARTS WORK CENTER

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