

peter kalill

PLEIN-AIR PAINTER



A trip to San Miguel de Allende changed Peter Kalill's life and career.

Visits to the city 170 miles northwest of Mexico's capital have been a fixture of Kalill's winter schedule for a decade, but he'd never even heard of it until acquaintances on a scuba-diving trip to the Caribbean coast in 1997 told him about the city's art-centric ethos. When he met landscape painter Frank Gardner there two years later, the former Providence College art student put down his pencils, propped up his easel, and began painting landscapes.

Until then, Kalill says it was difficult to find inspiration for art in the absence of school assignments. Landscape painting opened up a new realm of inspiration.

"It's as simple as finding the subject matter in your day-to-day life," he says.

Based in Eastham, Kalill is best known for his plein-air oil paintings of meadows, marshes, and nautical scenery. He's been a part of the Addison Art Gallery in Orleans, Outer Cape Art Auctions in Provincetown, and the Cape Cod Museum of Art in Dennis, and in 2006 he was accepted to display with the Copley Society of Boston.

Kalill's art career began with drawing. Originally from Springfield, Mass., he didn't have any formal experience with art beyond doodling, but the pull of his hometown art museums held a continual attraction. He went to Providence College undecided on a major. After just a few

drawing classes, however, he found a calling. He picked up painting after traveling to Florence, Italy, in his junior year of college.

Upon graduation in 1995, Kalill moved to Cape Cod. Still influenced by his experience in San Miguel de Allende, he sought out New England's homegrown landscape artists, meeting and learning from his peers and studying deceased icons. He set up shop in Eastham in 2001.

Drawing is still at the foundation of Kalill's work process today. He says he carries around a sketchbook "not only for ideas for composition, but also just practicing studying form and training the eye and hand to coordinate with one another."

After picking a location, Kalill starts with a few sketches



Lily Chandler



Provincetown's Motif #1

and sorts out composition ideas. Next, he paints a small version of the scene, which sometimes turns into the final version that he gives a gallery, but he often uses them as studies to feed larger paintings. Kalill kept his paints within arm's reach on tours of Nova Scotia, Arizona, Mexico's Pacific coast, and even on his honeymoon in Italy.

Whether it's several months spent abroad or discovering a new location down the road, Kalill considers changes of scenery invaluable, a renewable source of inspiration.

"It's great to just experience new and exciting views," he says. "That includes finding a new spot, whether it's here on Cape Cod, or in the mountains of Vermont, or on the rocky coast of Maine." —Jeff Harder

See Peter Kalill's work at Addison Art Gallery in Orleans. 508-255-6200; www.addisonart.com



The Clammer