



Crabshack Restaurant, Woodcleft Avenue, Freeport, NY

Outdoor murals are truly an art of the people and for the people. They are a visible commitment to the development of an urban or suburban aesthetic. In areas of decay they can be a small oasis. Over the last 45 years Northport resident Hans Gabali has been transforming the sides of buildings from brick and stucco into oceans,

Alps on a Brentwood pizzeria, a desert landscape in Freeport, a view from Montauk Point near the Bellmore Railroad Station, a Hawaiian scene at Pool Doctor, a fishing village gracing the walls of a marine supply store in Freeport, and Antarctic penguins eating Italian ices in Bellmore. For the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum he painted a stormtossed background to the museum's ship's wheel and characteristically he painted the wheel right into the picture.

In addition to painting murals, Gabali exhibits his landscapes and marine-scapes at art shows around the Island. He is also a former member of the Long Island Ship Model Society and was very involved with the construc-

tion of wooden models of sailing vessels. He also exhibits his landscape and marinescapes at art shows around

the Island. His latest paintings are done on bottlecaps. Unfortunately, as is often the fate of folk art, his outdoor work is at once durable, but potentially temporary in nature. The murals are affected by weather conditions and changes in ownership. Several of his murals have been painted over or demolished when the buildings' management changed. Some have large trucks parked up next to them, hiding them from view. In an effort to preserve the images of his work, I have begun creating an electronic archive of his collection of hundreds of aging photographs of his murals. The Long Island Studies Institute has expressed an interest in being the repository of such an archive. By placing the images of his murals on CD-ROM, they will be accessible to more people for many years to come.

The Long Island Murals of Hans Gabali

fishing shanties, deserts and swimming pools. Originally from Hamburg, Germany, where his father was a marine artist, Hans Gabali learned to paint before immigrating to Brooklyn in 1952. Prior to discovering the joy of painting murals, he made his living as a house painter. Not only do his murals offer whimsy and joy, they can create confusion. Many passers-by have tried to open his painted doors, often overlooking the real architectural structures that have been incorporated into his murals.

Folk art is an important part of the culture of the community, and Gabali's murals are an important part of Long Island. Hans Gabali has painted more than 4,500 murals in private homes and on business walls all over Long Island. From Baldwin to Northport, on restaurant walls and marine equipment stores or the sides of delicatessens and Italian ice shops, you can tour much of Long Island and find his work. Most of the subjects of the murals reflect the businesses they adorn as evidenced by the scene of an Italian village on the parking lot walls of Borrelli's Restaurant on Hempstead Turnpike. There are

Martha Kreisel
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In the meantime, Long Islanders and tourists can continue to enjoy Gabali's works and look forward to his new commissions as he continues climbing ladders, and painting from scaffolds and forklifts.

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Freeport Marine Supply, Church Street & Merrick Road, Freeport, NY



Hans Gabali in his studio.

In the accompanying article, Martha Kreisel shares a glimpse of Hans Gabali's artwork. She provides us insight on the various murals painted by Gabali in neighboring Long Island communities and how she intends to "preserve" this unique folk art.

Professor Kreisel earned a B.A. in history and art history from Alfred University, an M.A. in library science from the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School, and an M.A. in the humanities from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Professor Kreisel joined the Hofstra faculty in 1989. She serves as the Humanities Reference Librarian at Joan and Donald E. Axinn Library.

Prior to joining the Hofstra faculty, Professor Kreisel served in various librarian positions, including art librarian at Memphis Public Library and Information Center, reference librarian at E.H. Butler Library of the State University College at Buffalo, and bibliographic and reference librarian at the Westchester Library System. She is a member of the American Library Association, Association of College and Research Libraries, and Guild of American Papercutters.

Professor Kreisel has authored several publications, including *American Women Photographers: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography* (Greenwood Press, 1999), *Papercutting: An International Bibliography and Selected Guide to U.S. Collections* (Scarecrow Press, 1994), and *Photography Books Index: Subject Guide to Photo Anthologies* (Scarecrow Press, 1980). She has also co-authored *Guide to Civil War Books: An Annotated Selection of Modern Works on the War Between the States* (American Library Association, 1995).

As mentioned in her article, Professor Kreisel is currently establishing an electronic archive in an attempt to preserve the images of Gabali's murals. She is grateful for receiving an award through the University's Presidential Research Award Program, which has enabled her to pursue this very important project. - SK



Portion of large mural, Freeport, NY