

THE EAST HAMPTON STAR

SHINES FOR ALL



Looking out toward the highway from her second-story deck, Ms. Thomas pointed out the architectural and landscape details found in a recent painting. *Durell Godfrey Photos*

Barbara Thomas: From Portraits to Potato Fields

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a back seat to practical concerns. "I once did a portrait of a house in Penzance Point, near Woods Hole, for a couple who asked me to make the painting small enough for them to carry to their house in Palm Beach," she said.

A lot of people have their houses painted for their offices, or they want a particular view immortalized. "I've even done a series of seasonal views from one window."

"It's very specific, and I take lots of photos," she continued. "I'll come to the house at the best time for the light. It's my take, but my work is very realistic and straightforward, not really

interpretive. It's traditional."

The particular tradition in which Ms. Thomas paints lies, to a certain extent, outside the mainstream of contemporary art. She cites as an influence her friend the late Sheridan Lord, who, like her, worked on commission and loved to paint Sagaponack, which he also called home.

In 1995, the year after he died, Mr. Lord got his first solo show, "Things in Place: Landscapes and Still Lifes by Sheridan Lord," at the Parrish Art Museum in Southampton. "He was an inspiration and mentor," Ms. Thomas said.

When asked what local properties she felt most drawn to paint, Ms. Thomas

offered what some might consider an offbeat choice: the Rennert house, in Sagaponack.

"I just love it — it looks like the land and the house are in the distance," she said. "I grew up on a farm in Pennsylvania and my experience was walking two miles through the fields to my house each day, so I like that Louis XIV-feeling of the structure on the horizon line."

The Gallery in Sag Harbor will have an exhibit of Ms. Thomas's landscapes on view beginning Saturday, with a reception from 5 to 8 p.m., through July 12. The artist's work will also be the subject of a solo retrospective this fall at the Century Association in New York City.

accompanying, she said, explaining that she prefers not to have the stark whiteness of canvas or board integrated into the subtle tones of the natural landscape.



Ms. Thomas paints in her living room in front of windows that face a canal leading to Sagg Pond.



Some of Ms. Thomas's small *en plein air* landscapes, which will be on view at the Gallery Sag Harbor

