

Sandy Sherman

ARTIST AS CONSERVATIONIST

How does one begin on any given path that, in time, grows larger than the person? In Sandy Sherman's case, I first met her in a watercolor class I was teaching. She was an oil painter eager to learn the art of watercolor for quick studies of the forest floor. She began painting at the age of 32, starting with still life and continuing in that genre while also taking a class in landscape painting with Richard Whitney and later with Deb Crowder. Sherman also studied drawing with Peter Granucci. Her graphite self-portrait won two national awards. ▶

Sandy enjoys the outdoors on Crescent Pond.

NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBORS



Clockwise from top left: Sandy's painting entitled *Our Grape Arbor*. Sandy captures *Violets* in this work. Sandy's *Tree Moss*. Photos courtesy of the artist. *Sandy's Studio in the Moonlight* by Richard Whitney. Courtesy of the artist.





Richard and Sandy at home.

Over the years, as an artist working in the same studio space as her internationally recognized husband, Richard Whitney, she studied aside from him, and then studied under the master, which resulted in a similar style. To distinguish her work, where Whitney would paint the broader landscapes, Sherman focused in on a detail in a landscape, such as fiddleheads or violets, calling them “intimate landscapes.”

A FOCUS IN NATURE

She and Whitney searched for property for over a year before deciding to move to Stoddard, where they have access to their land with a pond adjacent to 6,000 acres of conservation land belonging to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. They made an educated decision to buy the land, while the house wasn't the major deciding factor in their purchase. They have never regretted the decision.

Sherman also paints figures, which she calls Grottoons™, but the focus of her work and her life lies in nature. Both she and Whitney love the natural world, so together they spend many enjoyable hours outside clearing trails, hiking, and being around the pond and watching the abundance of life situated just outside their door.

An aside from her usual work, the book *The Opium Wars* bears her illustration on the cover. She has also served as the town representative to the Monadnock Conservancy. Sherman shows at the Copley Society in Boston and formerly had her paintings in a gallery in Atlanta, Georgia. ▶



DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDIOS

Take Route 9 west from Concord to Route 123 north to Stoddard. Take a right onto Shedd Hill Road at the fire station. The road bears quickly to the left. Stay on Shedd Hill Road for two miles. You will see the sign for the Studios at Crescent Pond on your right. Go down the dirt road, Chalet

Drive, to the end. The studios are to the right in the barn's upper level and to the left in Sherman's studio overlooking the pond.

SHOW

Sherman and Whitney will be having a joint show at the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene, which will run from December 1 to February 28.

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Above: *Interrupted Fern*. Right: Sandy enjoying a walk.

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Her painting of Dooley's Market hung in the governor's office for a time. Currently, her work is showing at their studios and at various shows. She recently had a joint show with her husband at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) in Concord.

Jane Difley, president of SPNHF, stated, "Sandy deeply appreciates both the beauty and wildness of nature, and this is clear in her art. While she receives inspiration from the natural world, she also helps sustain it. She and her husband live on 81 acres that they have protected with a conservation easement; they felt that protecting their own land was the greatest gift they could give. Nature inspires art, which inspires conservation, which protects wildness that inspires art. It's a great feedback loop!"

Sherman and Whitney walk daily along the paths. She says of their walks, "The land feeds our psyches; the ever-changing beauty of it has enticed us to hike on any given day. It keeps us grounded. People have asked us, 'How can you get any work done around here? It is so beautiful!'"

She adds, "Every year I see something I haven't seen before, and I have to look it up. A Cortinarius mushroom looks like



a mushroom right out of *Fantasia* because it is purple with yellow specks on it. I had never seen bottled gentian either, so I looked it up. I was out there one day, and there was a bee hovering around it, so I painted it. To me, it's a lot like shopping because you never know what you will find. One day I found the rare rattlesnake plantain. It was in sunlight and was absolutely gorgeous. We have a lot of large- and medium-sized boulders, one containing garnet. Anytime you go outdoors here and you are walking around, you will find something of interest. It's a given.

"All the nature subjects I have painted have all been from right here on our property. There is a multitude of subject matter. Every year we watch scenes here develop as birds fledge, geese fly, and beavers mature, and as one beaver has to leave, the others push him out of the pond. It's the life cycles. It works with the plants, too."

The next time you are out walking, take time to look down and see nature's delicate world, as Sherman has along the many miles of paths she has walked. You will connect to her world and her art. When her work is hung next to her husband's, it stands on its own in skill and emotional response. Sherman has done her homework over the years and can stand proudly on her own as an accomplished artist and active conservationist. 🐾



More online

See more images of Sandra Sherman's work and studio at www.aroundconcordnh.com.

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