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A NARROW VIEW OF WIDE SCENES

[THIRD Edition]

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GLOBE WEST 2 ARTS

When it comes to expansive landscapes like the beach, many photographers are tempted to squeeze the whole scene into one shot. But Nahid Khaki takes the narrow view. In her show, "Beach Blues," close-up images of a thin waterline in the sand or a small rock capture the monumental not with size but with striking detail.

An Iranian-born artist formerly from California, Khaki has exhibited this series at numerous galleries on both coasts. Last year, she moved to this area and in September opened Khaki Gallery in Wellesley. She considers "Beach Blues" her most important show so far. "It's my coming-out show. With it, I am introducing myself and the gallery to Boston."

It is a milestone she never imagined as a child. "I grew up in Tehran, Iran, and then came here to go to college in Utah, and it wasn't until I started to study that I had my first exposure to painting and drawing," she said. "I never knew that I knew how to draw and paint and all of that."

Art was not part of her school's curriculum in Tehran. "This was during the shah and it was pretty strict academically," said Khaki, who is 48. "Schools emphasized [core subjects] like language and math. If you wanted to study art, you had to go to private school."

Her architectural studies, however, changed that with its required art classes. "Once I realized I could draw and paint, I just went explosive," she said. "I started painting so many things."

A professor noticed her work. "He was shocked to see me drawing all this creative, imaginative stuff," she said. "So he suggested I might want to switch to fine art."

She did and received master's degrees in both fine art and archeology, but it was a difficult decision. "I was a math major in high school," she said. "My parents thought I was destined to be an engineer or an architect. It created a tension."

She saw her talent as a gift she should honor. "You feel like it's your duty. And once you take on the responsibility to create art, it also becomes your duty to show it," she said.

So, for two decades she focused on abstract painting. Then, about 10 years ago, she picked up a camera and has been mainly photographing ever since. In a way, though, she is still painting.

"I paint with my eyes. I use my camera as a tool to paint with," she said. "It all happens very instinctively and intuitively, but because of my experience as an abstract artist, I think some of it comes through in the photography."

It does. Hers is a form-driven approach. Her landscape, "Opening," renders scraggy hills into stark almost clean-feeling design elements against a cloud-streaked sky. Her beachscapes forgo sentimentalism to focus on the bold patterns crafted by water and sand.

The works, which are shot on both color and black-and-white, 35mm film and developed by Khaki in her lab, are just a sampling of what's to come at her gallery and frame shop. Now that she's an East Coast resident, she's exploring foggy Vermont dells, New England barns, cemeteries, and old stone walls.

"I have my camera with me all the time. So even when I'm driving, if I see something I may stop and shoot," she said. "You get addicted to it in your blood and keep going back."

"Beach Blues" and an accompanying series, "Inscapes," run this month at Khaki Gallery at 9 Crest Road in Wellesley. Hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Call 781-237-1095 or visit www.nahidkhaki.com.

ON THE LAUGH TRACK How funny is Harrison Stebbins? "You almost

need Depends," said Annette Pollack in a bone-dry deadpan.

A comedian herself who performs nationally, Pollack has taken to corralling her favorite Boston comics for local comedy night fund-raisers. Her service does double duty. Folks in the suburbs get a chance to see professional stand-up comedians close to home and the nonprofit groups that hire them raise funds for worthy causes.

Last year, the comedy night Pollack booked for the Milford Humane Society packed the house. This year the society invited her back. She's also booking a show this weekend for Milford's branch of the Masons, the Montgomery Lodge.

The lodge used to raise money with ghosts, not gags. "For years, our big fund-raiser was our infamous haunted house, but the real estate situation changed that about five years ago and we no longer had a house to haunt," said lodge master Patrick Dreier of Franklin. "But we heard other groups had had success with comedy nights, so we're hoping to make this an annual event."

Stebbins will serve as MC for the Montgomery Lodge show on Saturday. The proceeds will benefit the lodge's many charitable activities, including a child identification program.

Joining Stebbins will be P.J. Walsh, a frequent headliner at Giggles Comedy Club in Saugus. Also on the bill is Dan Boulger, whom Pollack calls "an absolutely brilliant" newcomer who "is going places," and area favorite Jim Lauletta, who says he wound up a comedian because he was never hugged as a child. (Parents take note!)

The Humane Society show, to be held the following Saturday, will feature Pollack as well as Bob Niles , Tony Moschetto , and Mark Sheldon, with the proceeds to benefit its no-kill cat shelter.

Both events include auctions for sports tickets and other goods, including the lodge's very timely auction item 100 gallons of heating oil.

The Montgomery Lodge Comedy Night is at 8 p.m. (doors will open at 7 p.m.) Saturday in The Portuguese Club at 119 Prospect Heights in Milford. Tickets are \$15 at the door and at Nathan's Jeweler's at 157 Main St. in Milford. Cash bar. Call 508-212-4547 or visit <http://montgomerylodge.org>. The Milford Humane Society Comedy Night is at 8 p.m. Feb. 18 (doors will open at 7 p.m.) in the Medway VFW at 123 Holliston St. in Medway. Tickets are \$15 at the door and at in-town locations listed at www.milfordhumane.org. Snacks and cash bar. Call 508-473-7008.

ONE NIGHT, TWO ACTS Of all the hyphenated play genres, "horror- comedy" takes the prize for piquing curiosity. You never know if you will get a charming Bat Boy who gnaws on the local livestock or an evening of chopper chicks wandering about Zombietown.

Or the entertainment could be a suspenseful, joke-propelled play- within-a-play, such as Nick Stoller's "The Butleress," one of two single-act works on the bill for the Washington Street Players in Holliston for the next two weekends.

While spoofing both the who-done-it and the theater, this 50- minute piece begins with four actresses arriving to rehearse an obscure British mystery.

None has read it, and, if all goes according to the murderous script, none will live to read it to the end.

"I'm hoping the audience gets a lot of laughs and that they'll also get chilled to the bone," said director Julie Murphy of Holliston. Directing the four characters turned out to be a hoot. "It's fun to bring out the worst in people."

The evening's other one-act is Woody Allen's "Central Park West," which goes beyond the comedian's usual neuroses and jokes.

"It's provocative," said director Jacqui Jursek of Medway.

"Most people think if it's Woody Allen it's just funny, but the unexpected part is that it draws you in as you discover this hidden secret they have, and it's compelling and even a little sad," Jursek said.

"It builds up tension and then it breaks it with comic relief."

"A Night of One Acts" will run Feb. 10, 11, 17, and 18; all shows at 8 p.m. at Holliston Town Hall at 703 Washington St. Tickets are \$15. Call 508-429-5444 or visit www.washingtonstreetplayers.org.

SWAMP BOOGIE Call him the reigning king of Zydeco, the Bayou's Bandleader, or simply an accordion player extraordinaire. Regardless of title, Stanley Dural Jr. best known as Buckwheat Zydeco always puts on a foot-stomping, tail-shaking party of a show.

On Saturday, the Lafayette, La.-born maestro will bring his Creole-meets-contemporary sound to Natick, courtesy of the Amazing Things Arts Center.

The four-time Grammy nominee is too big a draw for the center's Framingham storefront, so the show will be held at the Dr. Joseph A. Keefe Performing Arts Center in Wilson Middle School. But don't worry, no one will be required to ask for a hall pass.

Buckwheat Zydeco will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday in the Wilson Middle School at 22 Rutledge Road in Natick. Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 on the day of the show, \$2 discount for students- seniors, \$15 for children under 12. Call 508-405-2787 or visit www.amazingthings.org.

News of arts-related events may be sent to westarts@globe.com.

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