A VIRTUAL EXHIBITION

Where I Was Born and Raised

Makers of the Maine Coast

Curated by Corwin A. (Cory) Legendre

ART 1301 Art Appreciation | East Texas A&M University | Fall 2026

Richmond, Maine, from above, 2013. Photograph by Corwin A. (Cory) Legendre.
Image source: Legendre, Corwin A. Aerial view of Richmond, Maine. Photograph, 2013. Collection of the photographer.

About This Exhibition

I was born in 1992 and raised in Richmond, Maine, a small town on the banks of the Kennebec River. Growing up, I didn't have to visit a museum to see art being made. It was happening in my own house. My father, Walt Legendre, carved birds and birdhouses in his woodshop, and my mother, Lois, brought them to life with a brush. Across the street from our home on Weymouth Street was the back door of the Richmond Store Gallery, where Edward and Runa Mackenzie turned other people's castoffs into art. And in that same town lived Vern Broe, a very private man and a gifted marine painter, who let my mother and me into his life.

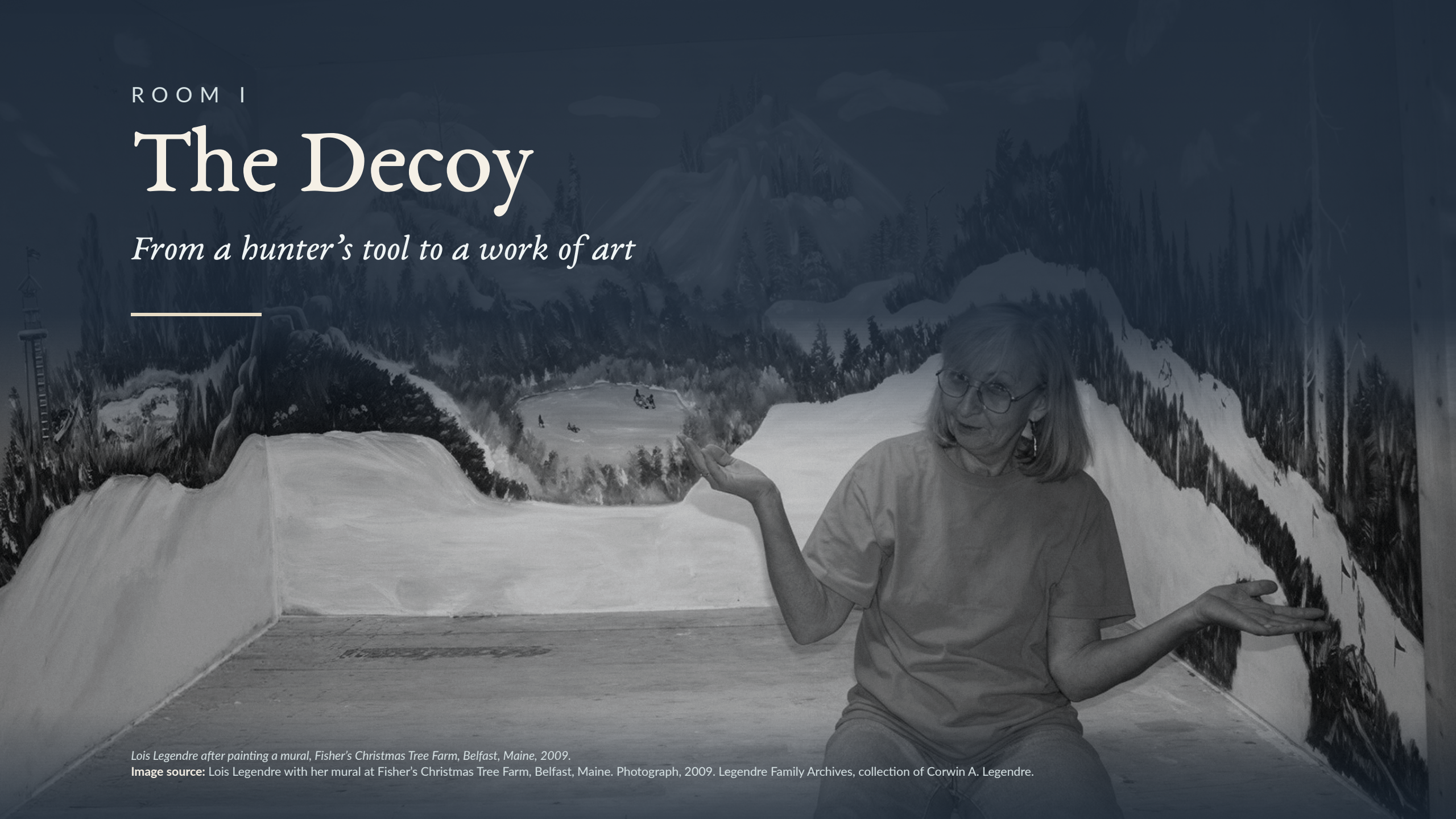
This exhibition is about those people and the artists who came before them. Each room pairs a maker I knew with a piece of art history that helps explain their work: George Soule's working decoys before my mother's painted birds, Louise Nevelson's walls of found wood before Edward's assemblages, and Winslow Homer's stormy coast before Vern's calm harbors. Every one of them is tied to Maine.

Putting this together meant a great deal to me. My father passed in 2012 and my mother in 2023, and she burned most of the work she had left long before she was gone. Every one of her decoys in this exhibition is one I tracked down, one at a time, years later. I wanted to show these artists the way they deserve to be seen, right alongside the names in the textbook, because to me that is exactly where they belong.

ROOM I

The Decoy

From a hunter's tool to a work of art



Lois Legendre after painting a mural, Fisher's Christmas Tree Farm, Belfast, Maine, 2009.
Image source: Lois Legendre with her mural at Fisher's Christmas Tree Farm, Belfast, Maine. Photograph, 2009. Legendre Family Archives, collection of Corwin A. Legendre.

HISTORY

How the Decoy Became Art

People in North America have used decoys for centuries. Native American hunters first made them from reeds, clay, and stuffed skins to bring migrating birds within range, and European settlers adapted the idea, carving them from wood. By the late 1800s, commercial market hunting along the Atlantic coast kept carvers busy turning out working birds by the thousands.

Everything changed with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which shut down market hunting. Decoys slowly shifted from equipment to objects people wanted to keep, and by the 1960s and 1970s museums and collectors were treating them as American folk sculpture.

In Maine, the turning point had a name. In 1941, L.L.Bean began selling cork decoys carved by George Soule of Freeport, and the business he built kept Maine decoys in hunters' hands, and later on collectors' shelves, for decades. In the mid-1970s Soule sold The Decoy Shop to Hargreaves "Hargy" Heap III, who had run his family's paint business, Hancock Paint, and the shop carried on under his hands.

That shift is the door my mother walked through. She never made a decoy to hunt with. She made them to be looked at, the second chapter of a very old story.

Context source: Burpee, Aimee. "Not Just Sitting Ducks: Diving into the Story of Decoys." The Henry Ford. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.thehenryford.org/collections/explore/articles/not-just-sitting-ducks-diving-into-the-story-of-decoys.

Context source: Wisconsin Waterfowl Association. "L.L. Bean Decoys." Accessed November 22, 2026. https://wisducks.org/l-l-bean-decoys/.

Context source: "Obituary: Hargreaves 'Hargy' Heap III." Portland Press Herald, September 5, 2021. https://www.pressherald.com/2021/09/05/obituary-hargreaves-hargy-heap-iii/.



George Soule (1912–1996)

Oversize Black Duck Decoy, n.d.

Carved and painted wood with relief-carved wings and hollowed body; later in-use repaint
18 1/4 in. long
Sold through Decoys for Sale (decoysforsale.com); present location unknown

In 1940, George Soule, who worked for Leon Bean in Freeport, went duck hunting with his boss and didn't think much of the decoys Bean was using. He carved him a better rig of black ducks, and Bean put the birds in his next catalog in 1941. Soule is "credited with being the first commercial maker of oversized cork decoys," and his shop went on to make hundreds of thousands of birds for L.L.Bean. This black duck shows his thinking. It is oversized, more than eighteen inches long, so it could be seen from far across the water. The body is a long, low, smooth shape, the wings are carved in shallow relief along the back, and the head is a separate carved piece set onto the body. The dark body and the speckled buff head are simple and practical, made to work on cold water. Decades later, the shop Soule started would send its carved birds to my mother to be painted.

Image source: Decoys for Sale. "Early, Oversize Black Duck, George Soule, Freeport, Maine." Listing 2432068. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://decoysforsale.com/Listing/Details/2432068/Early-oversize-black-duck-George-Soule-Freeport-Maine.

Context source: Wisconsin Waterfowl Association. "L.L. Bean Decoys." Accessed November 22, 2026. https://wisducks.org/l-l-bean-decoys/.

THE ARTIST

Lois Legendre

1948–2023



Lois Legendre painting decoys in her Richmond shop, 1997

My mother, Lois "Loie" Legendre, had no formal art training. "I guess it runs in the family," she told the Morning Sentinel in 1997. She and my father, Walt, ran a restaurant in California before moving to Maine, his home state, and later built a woodworking business, Heirlooms, Etc., in Richmond, the town where I was born and raised. Walt carved; she painted.

She wanted to work with Hargy Heap at The Decoy Shop so badly that she applied for a secretarial job just to get in the door. Partway through her interview he took a phone call and stepped out. She waited more than two hours. When he came back, he asked what job she actually wanted: "Well, do you paint?" She told him she loved to create but had no training, and he gave her the shot, working with him directly. "I love doing it," she said years later. "It's challenging and very relaxing." In time she was carrying on every piece of the shop's work, including its decoys for L.L.Bean, and raising it to a new level. Tom Selleck and the Hepburn family, who collected her loons, owned her birds.

Very little of her work survives. She closed each chapter of her life by burning the pieces she considered unfinished or not her best. Every decoy in this room is one I found years later, one at a time, for sale online.

Context and portrait source: Lange, Mike. "Painter, Handcrafter Gives Life to Decoys." Morning Sentinel (Waterville, ME), June 19, 1997, 22. Staff photo by Mike Lange.

Context source: Kaiser, Ann. "Ann Coasts into the Holidays: Crafting Decorative Santa Sleds for Decking the Halls!" Country Woman, Holiday 1999, 8–10.

Context source: William H. Bunch Auctions. "(4) Carved Wood Duck Decoys, Including … LL Bean Hand Finished by Lois M Legendre 1986." Marks4Antiques. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://marks4antiques.com/apa/4-Carved-wood-duck-decoys-i-2e1aed.

Context source: Legendre, Corwin A. Recollections of the artist, his mother, including the story of her hiring as she often told it. November 2026.



THE DECOY

Lois Legendre (1948–2023)

Wood Duck Drake, 1992

Carved and painted wood with glass eyes; base stamped “Drake Woodduck” and “Down East Collection, Limited Edition,” signed “Lois Legendre 11-15-92”
Approx. 12 1/2 in. long x 7 in. high x 5 in. wide
Collection of the artist’s son

The wood duck is the showiest bird on any Maine pond, and my mother didn't try to tone it down. She painted this drake in bold, flat shapes: a glossy black head and back, a deep red breast and bill, and a golden tan side. Then she drew over all of it with crisp cream lines that mark the face, the wing feathers, and the edges of the tail, almost like an illustration in a field guide. The red glass eye pulls you right to the face. Nothing is blended; every color sits in its own clear space, and that clarity is what makes the bird read from across a room. She signed and dated it on the base on November 15, 1992, eight days before I was born.

Image source: Legendre, Corwin A. Photograph of Wood Duck Drake by Lois Legendre. November 23, 2026. Collection of the photographer.

Context source: “Painted Duck Glass Eye Limited Edition Lois Legendre 1992 Signed Down East Folk.” eBay listing 116260393333. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.ebay.com/itm/116260393333.

Context source: Legendre, Corwin A. Recollections of the artist, his mother. November 2026.



THE DECOY

Lois Legendre (1948–2023), painter; The Decoy Shop, Brunswick, Maine

Canada Goose, 1996

Carved and painted wood; base branded “the decoy shop / Brunswick, Maine” and inscribed “Hand Painted By Lois Legendre Aug 1996”
Approx. 9 x 4 x 3 in.
Collection of the artist’s son

This goose shows my mother's place in The Decoy Shop's story. The shop's brand is burned into the base, and right beside it, in her own handwriting, she signed it: “Hand Painted By Lois Legendre Aug 1996.” The carving is simple and smooth, so the paint has to do the work. A black head and neck curve up from a white breast, with the bright white cheek patch every Canada goose is known for. The brown back is outlined in thin pale strokes that mark each feather, and the sides are covered in rows of small cream dashes that give the flat wood the feel of soft, layered plumage. Even at nine inches long, it looks like it could turn its head and swim off.

Image source: Legendre, Corwin A. Photograph of Canada Goose by Lois Legendre. November 23, 2026. Collection of the photographer.

Context source: “Vintage Canada Goose Artist Signed Lois Legendre 1996 In Brunswick Me USA.” eBay listing 377411666074. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.ebay.com/itm/377411666074.



THE DECOY

Lois Legendre (1948–2023)

Canvasback Duck Decoy, 1999

Hand-carved and hand-painted wood
9 in. long
Collection of the artist's son

By 1999 my mother had been painting decoys for years, and this canvasback drake shows how much she could say with very little. The whole bird is built from four big shapes: a glossy reddish-brown head, a black breast and tail, a pale gray back, and a creamy white side. On the back she drew loose, wavy gray lines that suggest the fine pattern of real feathers without copying every one. The paint on the head is thick and glossy, and you can still see the texture of her brush in it. Next to the busy wood duck from 1992, this one is calm and almost modern in its simplicity, proof that she knew when to stop.

Image source: Legendre, Corwin A. Photograph of Canvasback Duck Decoy by Lois Legendre. November 23, 2026. Collection of the photographer.

Context source: "Duck Decoy-Hand Carved-Hand Painted-Lois Legendre-9″-1999-Famous In New England." eBay listing 127227189601. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.ebay.com/itm/127227189601.

ROOM II

Found Things

Art built from what others threw away



Inside the Richmond Store Gallery, Richmond, Maine, 2010. Photograph by Jim Farrell.
Image source: Farrell, Jim. Interior of the Richmond Store Gallery, Richmond, Maine. Photograph, 2010. Collection of Corwin A. Legendre.

HISTORY

A Short History of Assemblage

Around 1912, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque began gluing real materials into their Cubist works: printed wallpaper, newspaper, and other scraps that were not painted at all. A few years later, the German Dada artist Kurt Schwitters built collages and constructions from tickets, spools, string, and street litter, and called the practice “Merz.”

The French artist Jean Dubuffet gave the practice its name, assemblage, in 1953, and in 1961 the Museum of Modern Art made it official with a landmark exhibition, The Art of Assemblage. By then, Joseph Cornell had spent decades building his small glass-fronted boxes, and Louise Nevelson, who grew up in Rockland, Maine, was stacking scrap wood into towering black walls.

Edward Mackenzie belongs to that family tree. His tools are the same as theirs: a sharp eye, a pile of things other people discarded, and the patience to let each object speak.

Context source: Tate. “Assemblage.” Art Terms. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/assemblage.

Context source: Tate. “Papier Collé.” Art Terms. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/papier-colle.

Context source: Tate. “Merz.” Art Terms. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/m/merz.

Context source: The Museum of Modern Art. “The Art of Assemblage.” Press release, 1961. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.moma.org/docs/press_archives/2897/releases/MOMA_1961_0112_110.pdf.



FOUND THINGS

Louise Nevelson (1899–1988)

Black Wall, 1959

Painted wood
103 5/8 x 85 1/4 x 25 1/2 in.
Tate, London

Louise Nevelson came to Rockland, Maine, from Ukraine as a little girl and grew up to become the great pioneer of wood assemblage. In the late 1950s she gathered crates, boxes, and scraps of lumber and furniture from the streets around her New York studio, and *Black Wall* is the result: dozens of boxes stacked into a grid taller than a person, each one packed with offcuts, spindles, and broken parts. Flat black paint turns all that junk into one surface. Up close you can still name the pieces; from across the room they become pure rhythm, shadow, and pattern. Nevelson showed the world that a box of discarded wood could be serious sculpture. Half a century later, Edward Mackenzie, who also made his home in Maine, would build his own boxes from salvaged timber.

Image and context source: Tate. "'Black Wall,' Louise Nevelson, 1959." Accession T00514. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/nevelson-black-wall-t00514.

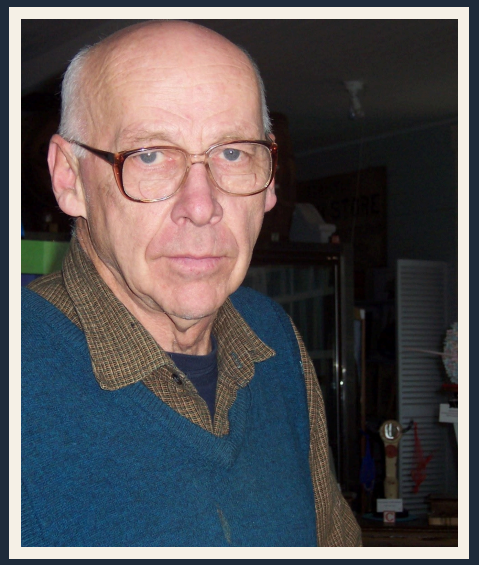
Context source: Tate. "Black Wall 1959 by Louise Nevelson: Introduction." In Focus. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.tate.org.uk/research/in-focus/black-wall-louise-nevelson/introduction.

Context source: "From Ukraine to Maine: How Louise Nevelson's Roots Shaped Her into One of the Most Important Artists of the 20th Century." Boston Globe, April 6, 2022. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/04/06/arts/ukraine-maine-how-louise-nevelsons-roots-shaped-her-into-one-most-important-artists-20th-century/.

THE ARTIST

Edward Mackenzie

born 1937



Edward Mackenzie at the Richmond Store Gallery, 2013

Edward Mackenzie was born in Los Angeles in 1937 and raised in Connecticut. He graduated from Cooper Union in New York, worked as an assistant to the designer Alexei Brodovitch, and came to London on a Fulbright to study at the Royal College of Art, and he married his wife, Runa, in Devon in 1970. The couple spent twenty years in New Zealand, where his work entered public collections, before settling in Richmond, Maine, in 2002.

In Richmond, Edward and Runa turned an 1897 store building into the Richmond Store Gallery and Studio. Its back entrance sat right across the street from my family's home on Weymouth Street. We got to know them over many dinners together, I worked for Edward at the gallery, and we helped create special foods for the catering at their events. In 2014 they returned to England to be closer to their children and grandchildren, and he still works today in Stoke-on-Trent. As he puts it, he gets to know an object so well that he can "speak its language and dance its dance."

Context source: Falkow, Franki. "Edward Mackenzie: The Art of Speaking an Object's Language." Leighton Hall Auctions, April 7, 2026. https://www.leightonhallauctions.com/news/2026/4/edward-mackenzie-the-art-of-speaking-an-objects-language/DC8651574CE99D41108FF176DC0999BA/.

Context source: Mackenzie, Edward. "Meet Edward." Edward Mackenzie. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.edwardmackenzie.com/bibliography/.

Context source: Legendre, Corwin A. Recollections of the artist. November 2026.

Portrait source: Edward Mackenzie at the Richmond Store Gallery, Richmond, Maine, 2013. Photograph attributed to Runa Mackenzie. Shared by the Mackenzie family on social media.



FOUND THINGS

Edward Mackenzie (b. 1937)
Shore Leave, 1983

Mixed media assemblage
15 1/4 x 11 1/4 x 2 in. (387 x 285 x 52 mm)
Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland, New Zealand

Edward Mackenzie calls himself an assemblagist, someone who learns the "language" of an ordinary object before he builds with it. In *Shore Leave*, a British sailor on leave trades the open sea for a crowded seaside resort. A photograph of seaside buildings forms the skyline, sticks of candy rock stand in for the pilings of a pier, and the fabric frame is cut from the back flap of a Royal Navy uniform. The humor is gentle, but the craft is careful: every found object is doing double duty as both material and meaning. Years later, Edward and his wife Runa ran the Richmond Store Gallery in my hometown, and I worked for him there. Watching him turn a junk drawer into a story taught me that art can be made from anything if you pay attention.

Image and context source: Chartwell Collection. "Shore Leave." Edward Mackenzie, 1983. Accession C1994/1/114. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://chartwell.org.nz/seeing/collection/shore-leave/.

Context source: Falkow, Franki. "Edward Mackenzie: The Art of Speaking an Object's Language." Leighton Hall Auctions, April 7, 2026. https://www.leightonhallauctions.com/news/2026/4/edward-mackenzie-the-art-of-speaking-an-objects-language/DC8651574CE99D41108FF176DC0999BA/.



FOUND THINGS

Edward Mackenzie (b. 1937)
Blue Water Boats, n.d.

Textiles, card, and salvaged timber
11 1/2 x 11 x 4 in.
Collection of the artist, Stoke-on-Trent, England

A thick frame of rough, salvaged timber surrounds a small window onto the water. Inside, two sails made of folded card, one pale orange and one green, lean into the wind above a band of blue cloth waves, while frayed white threads at the bottom suggest foam breaking on the shore. The frame is almost as important as the scene. Its dark, weathered grain and worn edges look like wood that has already lived a life at sea, so the boats seem to sail out of an old hull. Next to Nevelson's towering black wall, this piece shows the same idea at a much more personal scale: discarded materials, carefully chosen and arranged, can hold the memory of a place. For anyone who grew up on the Maine coast, it feels like looking out a boathouse window.

Image and context source: Mackenzie, Edward. "Marine Art." Edward Mackenzie. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.edwardmackenzie.com/series/marine-art/.

ROOM III

The Painted Sea

The Maine coast, painted from the shore



Vern Broe outside his studio on Main Street, Richmond, Maine, 2006. Photograph by Jim Farrell.
Image source: Farrell, Jim. Vern Broe outside his studio, Main Street, Richmond, Maine. Photograph, 2006. Collection of Corwin A. Legendre.

HISTORY

Painting the Maine Coast

In 1883 Winslow Homer moved his studio from New York City to Prouts Neck, a rocky point in Scarborough, Maine. Living there year-round, he made the rocks and surf outside his window his main subject, and in the 1890s his seascapes grew bolder, often leaving out people entirely to focus on the force of the water.

Homer set the standard for how the Maine coast would be painted for the next century: close, direct observation of real weather and real water. Generations of painters came to the coast after him, working outdoors and in small studios, selling through local galleries and summer shows.

Vern Broe was one of them. Where Homer painted the storm, Vern usually painted the calm after it: boats at rest in a harbor, a dory pulled up on the shore, light on the water.

Context source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. “Winslow Homer: Crosscurrents. Visiting Guide.” Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/winslow-homer/visiting-guide.

Context source: Portland Museum of Art. “Weatherbeaten.” Accession 1988.55.1. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://collections.portlandmuseum.org/.



THE PAINTED SEA

Winslow Homer (1836–1910)
Weatherbeaten, 1894

Oil on canvas
28 1/2 x 48 3/8 in.
Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine

In 1883 Winslow Homer left New York and moved to Prouts Neck, a rocky point on the Maine coast, where he painted the ocean outside his studio for the rest of his life. *Weatherbeaten* shows a single moment of a storm: a wave smashing into dark, flat ledges and exploding into white spray. There are no people and no boats, only rock, water, and weather. Homer builds the drama with contrast, setting the heavy browns and grays of the rocks against the glowing green inside the wave and the thick, brushy white of the foam. A diagonal line of ledge leads the eye straight into the crash. He is the painter every Maine marine artist after him has had to answer to, including Vern Broe, whose quieter harbor scenes come next.

Image source: Homer, Winslow. Weatherbeaten. 1894. Oil on canvas. Wikimedia Commons. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Winslow_Homer_-_Weatherbeaten.jpg.

Context source: Portland Museum of Art. "Weatherbeaten." Accession 1988.55.1. Bequest of Charles Shipman Payson. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://collections.portlandmuseum.org/.

Context source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Winslow Homer: Crosscurrents. Visiting Guide." Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/winslow-homer/visiting-guide.

THE ARTIST

Vernon “Vern” Broe

1930–2011



Vernon Broe’s senior portrait, Lyons Township High School, 1948

Vern Broe was born in Western Springs, Illinois, and trained at the American Academy of Art, the University of Illinois, Chicago’s Institute of Design, and the San Francisco Art Institute before settling in Maine, where he became known for his marine paintings and still lifes. His 1948 high school yearbook wondered whether he would become “a cartoonist or a musician.” He became a painter, and at least a couple hundred of his paintings have passed through auction houses since.

He was also a very private man who let only a few people into his life. My mother kept house for him, I taught him how to use his computer, and in his last years we both helped care for him. He lived with almost nothing: a sink, a refrigerator, and a hotplate. When we brought him a microwave, he was amazed that he could heat his coffee without boiling water, and microwave popcorn delighted him. I got to sit and watch him paint. He died in Richmond in 2011.

Context source: “Vernon George Broe.” Obituary. Portland Press Herald / Maine Sunday Telegram, September 11, 2011. Legacy.com. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/mainetoday-pressherald/name/vernon-broe-obituary?id=22236102.

Context source: MutualArt. “Vern Broe.” Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.mutualart.com/Artist/Vern-Broe/D610B89DC54DD84A.

Context and portrait source: Lyons Township High School. Tabulae 1948. La Grange, IL, 1948, 13.

Context source: Legendre, Corwin A. Recollections of the artist. November 2026.



Vern Broe (1930–2011)

Sailboats and a Dinghy in a Warm Sunlit Harbor, n.d.

Oil on board
17 x 21 in.
Sold at Burchard Galleries, St. Petersburg, Florida, April 19, 2026; present location unknown

Where Winslow Homer painted the storm, Vern painted the calm after it. Two sailboats sit moored in a still harbor at the end of the day, their sails up and glowing gold in the low sun. A small yellow dinghy waits beside them, and far off, more sails dot the horizon between two strips of shore. The sky takes up about three quarters of the painting, pale blue with clouds lit warm from below, and the water underneath repeats every color in long, shimmering reflections. Nothing is moving and nothing is in danger. The whole painting is about light. I got to sit and watch Vern paint, and that makes a finished harbor like this one feel personal to me.

Image source: Burchard Galleries. “Vernon Broe Sunlit Harbor Painting.” Lot 1030, April 19, 2026. Invaluable. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/vernon-broe-sunlit-harbor-painting-1030-c-dc8da47e21.

Context source: Legendre, Corwin A. Recollections of the artist. November 2026.



Vern Broe (1930–2011)
Bowl of Plenty, n.d.

Oil on canvas panel
11 x 14 in.
Bayview Gallery, Brunswick, Maine

Vern was known for the sea, but he was just as good indoors. In *Bowl of Plenty*, two plums sit at the front on their long stems, with green leaves spilling over the edge of the wooden ledge below them. Their violet skins are patched with warm orange where they catch the light. Beside them are a pear, a bright orange, a scalloped white bowl with a gold rim heaped with small round red fruit, and one small golden fruit at the far right. The light comes from the left, so each piece has a bright side and a soft shadow, and the dark brown background makes the colors glow. He signed it in the lower left corner, “Vern Broe.” It is a small, quiet painting with the same patience as his harbors. I chose it to close the exhibition because it reminds me of Vern himself. He lived with almost nothing, and he could still find abundance in a bowl of fruit.

Image source: Bayview Gallery. “Vern Broe: Still Life and Landscape Paintings.” Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.bayviewgallery.com/artist_82.html.

Context source: Legendre, Corwin A. Recollections of the artist. November 2026.



Thank You for Visiting

For Mom, for Dad, and for the makers of Richmond

Cory Legendre

Cory and Lois Legendre at Cellardoor Winery, Maine, 2016.
Image source: Cory and Lois Legendre at Cellardoor Winery. Photograph, 2016. Legendre Family Archives, collection of Corwin A. Legendre.