



Jenne Farm by Jim Westphalen. Westphalen likes to explore the history of the places and the people who inhabit them when he photographs. Photo Provided

Jim Westphalen’s ‘Voices from the Land’ photo exhibit at Billings Farm & Museum

By Wanzhen Jun
Standard Correspondent

Jim Westphalen spent his childhood in Long Island. He would wait eagerly for the summer visits to his grandmother to explore the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania. The rural landscape soon became Westphalen’s passion, and he began documenting the hills and mountains with a camera around his neck.

Westphalen’s exhibition at Billings Farm & Museum, titled “Voice from the Land,” is a culmination of the images and stories that he has collected. When Westphalen first moved to Vermont, he shot commercially but used all of his free time to discover the rural landscape. He was particularly interested in landscapes that featured buildings, such as abandoned farms and old



Red Barn by Jim Westphalen. Westphalen’s exhibit “Voices from the Land” is on display now at Billings Farm & Museum. Photo Provided

schools. “At first, I wasn’t exactly sure what I could do with these images,” he said, “but I soon realized that a lot of these beautiful structures are falling into such disrepair. I would drive down a particular country road for months and months, where there used to be a barn stand, and I passed by it and suddenly realized that it was just a pile of rubble.”

And so Westphalen found a direction in his art. He wanted to capture the buildings and visually preserve them. He began digging

dairy barn. Westphalen drove down to a nearby house. He knocked on the door, and a woman’s head popped out of the upstairs window. “What do you want?” she asked. Westphalen explained his work to her, and through a series of “Go ask that farmer” and “Oh, that’s old man Myrick,” Westphalen learned about Bob Myrick, who used to own the farm. Myrick was in his 90s and lived in an assisted living facility in Middlebury. When Westphalen finally made it there, he was fortunate that Myrick agreed to speak to him. “But they told me that he had to finish watching Wheel of Fortune first,” Westphalen said. So Westphalen waited until

Pat Sajak and Vanna White had wrapped up to speak to the old man, whose initial guarded answers soon became a flood of memories. He talked at length about building the farm with his nine children. Westphalen

IF YOU GO

Voices from the Land
Billings Farm & Museum, Woodstock
Now through October 20
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Included with admission to the museum.

‘Local Color’ on display at Artistree starting this weekend

By Wanzhen Jun
Standard Correspondent

When she was nine, Elizabeth Ricketson sent cartoons she drew to her brother-in-law in Vietnam. She made up characters and plots about the military, “mostly about him staying safe,” Ricketson said. Since then, she has won many art awards and taught a painting class at Artistree. Two of her paintings will appear in the upcoming “Local Color” exhibition at Artistree in South Pomfret.

“Local Color” is a fall favorite among returning tourists and residents, show-

casing local artists’ interpretations of Vermont’s iconic fall season. Illustrating the many pleasures and colors of Autumn, “Local Color” is interpreted through different

media, including painting, photography, mixed-media, sculpture and ceramics. The opening reception will be held Friday, Sept. 24 at

5:30 p.m. and will continue through Nov. 4.

Born right outside of Boston, Ricketson was fascinated with art from a young age. Her mother, an artist, influenced her and taught her to paint and make pottery. She had always preferred to express herself through artistic means, so she pursued an English B.A. at Providence College. “Writing and literature are just as important; I still write today,” Ricketson said. To support her artistic pursuits, Ricketson took a job as an insurance underwriter with Amica. She became the first woman in the male-domi-



Elizabeth Ricketson in her Pomfret studio with her rescue dog. Ricketson’s work will be on display at Artistree’s “Local Color” exhibit from Sept. 24 to Nov. 4.

Photo Provided

nated company to achieve a management position.

Though very successful at her job, Ricketson could not forget her true passion. It was her husband who encouraged her to dive into

the world of art. “Go like mad,” he told her. And she did. In the early 90s, when Ricketson had her children, she decided to become a full-time artist. She studied figure drawing with Robin Wiseman at the Rhode Island School of Design. She spent countless weekends studying the human form, movement, and anatomy to capture a dancing body on the paper. She later incorporated this knowledge in her artwork in depicting the movement of wildlife.

Ricketson met her husband when they were kids, and they made a vow to one day live in Vermont. Because of her husband’s work, they lived in different cities, even in London at one point. “It was a silly promise, but still our dream,” she said. “The way of living here agrees with both of us.” They finally transitioned to full-time residents of South Pomfret three years ago. They both

IF YOU GO

Local Color
Artistree, South Pomfret
Sept. 24 to Nov. 4 (closed Mondays),
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Opening reception
Friday, Sept. 24 at 5:30 p.m.
Email gallery@artistreevt.org
for more information.

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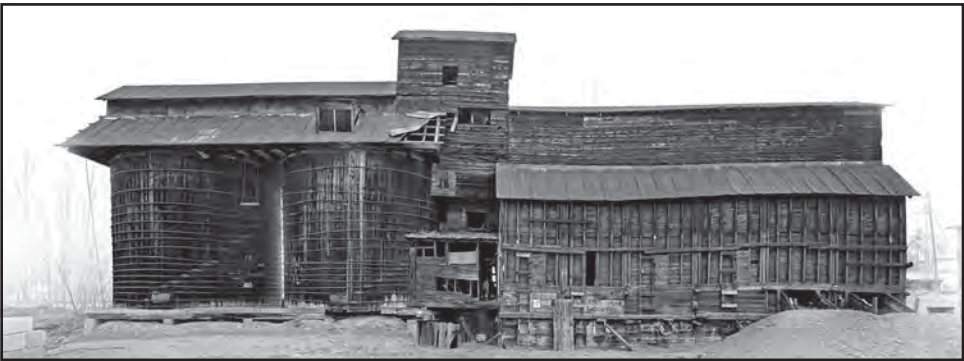
VOICES FROM THE LAND

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said, “he was transported to another time. He was lit up and so happy to be able to relive some of these old stories.”

It was experiences like these that made Westphalen talk to more people and document their stories through photography. “To understand the history and where we come from, we need to be talking to this older generation because they won’t be here much longer. And when they are gone, they will take their stories with them.” Westphalen plans to travel the entire country and go west to find similar stories to expand on his collections of images and characters. But Vermont will always hold a special place in Westphalen’s heart, as the place where he started his career and first began exploring the land on which he lived.

In 1996, Westphalen moved to Shelburne to start his family. “It’s like heaven to me here,” he said. Westphalen built his photography studio and began as an architectural photographer. Westphalen’s path to his dream career wasn’t all smooth. He studied Marine Biology at the University of Delaware because he was fascinated with the sea and marine life. But Westphalen couldn’t forget his passion for photography. He had gotten his first real camera in high school, an RF-1, and he was shooting film through college. “I



Coal Shed by Jim Westphalen.

Photo Provided

didn’t go anywhere without my camera,” he said. After a taste of personal photography, Westphalen soon decided to switch gears and focus on making a career from his lens. In the beginning, his primary work included commercial photography, such as shooting buildings and resorts. He also worked with a lot of interior designers and magazines. Though there wasn’t much artistic expression in this part of Westphalen’s career, he honed his skills and learned everything about the hardware and software related to taking photos.

Westphalen’s extensive

training allowed him to build a system unique to his art. After transitioning to fine art photography, he started taking photographs with a four-by-five view camera adapted for digital capture. He said, “Back in the day, twenty years ago, the four-by-five film format was the standard for the industry.” Westphalen wanted a system that could incorporate the advantages of

analog film and digital photography, so he put together a unique camera with parts from different suppliers. He said, “I like the vintage-type view camera. It gives you unlimited ways to shape

or focus an image. And I wanted to marry that hardware with the technologies of a digital back.” That process proved to be difficult. “When I first started, it was kind of like the wild west. At the time, the technology of large format cameras with a digital back was still in its infancy.” Westphalen experimented, and the end result was his mastery of dynamic and large-scale prints.

Westphalen hides a narrative behind each of his photos in the new show. He wants everyone to explore those stories. “If you look carefully, you can find little clues on how the building was used, what kind of cattle were kept, and how these people lived. These signs will speak to the viewer,” he said.

LOCAL COLOR

From Page 1C

loved nature, but Ricketson was particularly captivated by Vermont’s landscape and wildlife. She could go out to observe, take pictures with her camera, and work from there. She liked to work mainly with Acrylic. Ricketson said, “I like the flexibility of Acrylic. I can mix colors, and it dries quickly. I am kind of high energy, and I work quickly; it’s just how I am.”

Drawing barns and moose wasn’t as simple as one might expect. “Everything has an inspiration and challenge to it. The common denominator is shapes and abstraction. It is fun to go from floral to figure,” Ricketson

said. “Creating these organic forms is the challenge when I paint.” Through her work, Ricketson focused on form and movement. She was drawn towards the strength and power of animals while they move, and her many years of figure drawing training came in handy.

The painting class that Ricketson taught at Artistree was all about painting outside the box. She wanted her students to look at mundane objects and see them differently in their art. “We are trying to explore shapes using different colors to explain the everyday,” she said.

Two of Ricketson’s pic-

es will appear in the Local Color exhibition at Artistree. One of them is a landscape piece. The landscape is “a whimsical portrayal of South Pomfret village,” according to Ricketson. Viewers can find a mom and son, Suicide Six, and Artistree in the painting. The second work is still-life, but there is nothing still about the painting. “The work is bold in color. You travel from object to object in the painting; there is some fabric in there too,” Ricketson said. She enjoyed mixing surprising elements in her work and illustrating a new perspective of the village. Ricketson teased, “Local color, right?”

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What’s Woodstock Reading?

From the Norman Williams Public Library

Top 5 New YA Books

1. The Daughters of Ys by M. T. Anderson

An Atlantis-like city from Celtic legend is the setting of “The Daughters of Ys,” a mythical graphic novel fantasy from National Book Award winner M. T. Anderson and artist Jo Rioux. Ys, city of wealth and wonder, has a history of dark secrets. Queen Malgven used magic to raise the great walls that keep Ys safe from the tumultuous sea. But after the queen’s inexplicable death, her daughters drift apart. Rozenn, the heir to the throne, spends her time on the moors communing with wild animals, while Dahut, the youngest, enjoys the splendors of royal life and is eager to take part in palace intrigue. When Rozenn and Dahut’s bond is irrevocably changed, the fate of Ys is sealed, exposing the monsters that lurk in plain view. M. T. Anderson and illustrator Jo Rioux reimagine this classic Breton folktale of love, loss, and rebirth, revealing the secrets that lie beneath the surface. The Daughters of Ys is based on an ancient Breton folktale.



2. The Seventh Raven by David Elliott; illustrations by Rovina Cai

When Robyn and his brothers are turned into ravens through the work of an unlucky curse, a sister is their only hope to become human again. Though she’s never met her brothers, April will stop at nothing to restore their humanity. But what about Robyn, who always felt a greater affinity to the air than to the earth-bound lives of his family?

3. Winterkeep by Kristin Cashore.

Queen Bitterblue of Monsea must head to the nation of Winterkeep after her envoys drown in suspicious circumstances, and somewhere there, Lovisa Cavenda waits and watches while tragedy with devastating political and personal ramifications strikes. Ages 14 and up.

4. A Complicated Love Story Set in Space by Shaun David Hutchinson

Sixteen-year-olds Noa, DJ, and Jenny awake on a spaceship, unaware of how they got there or what is coming, but soon Noa and DJ are falling in love. When Noa closes his eyes on Earth and wakes up on a spaceship called Qriosity just as it is about to explode, he’s pretty sure things can’t get much weirder. Boy, is he wrong. Also trapped aboard Qriosity are DJ and Jenny, neither of whom remember how they got onboard the ship. Together, the three face all the dangers of space: murder, aliens, a school dance, and one really, really bad day. Ages 14 and up.

5. Nubia. Real One by L.L. McKinney; illustrated by Robyn Smith.

Can you be a hero...if society doesn’t see you as a person? Nubia has always been a little bit ... different. As a baby she showcased Amazonian-like strength by pushing over a tree to rescue her neighbor’s cat. But despite her having similar abilities, the world has no problem telling her that she’s no Wonder Woman. When Nubia’s best friend, Quisha, is threatened by a boy who thinks he owns the town, Nubia will risk it all—her safety, her home, and her crush on that cute kid in English class—to become the hero society tells her she isn’t. From the witty and powerful voice behind *A Blade So Black*, L.L. McKinney, and with endearing and expressive art by Robyn Smith, comes a vital story for today about equality, identity, and kicking it with your squad. Ages 13-17.

Rankings are based on the number of times a title was checked out within the last month at the Norman Williams Public Library

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Weekly Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

1. One of the four Vedas

5. Part of (abbr.)

8. At the peak

12. African antelope

14. Expression of satisfaction

15. Yankees’ ace

16. Belittled

18. A baglike structure

19. Utah Jazz coach Snyder

20. Actress Tomei

21. Explosive

22. Formal for “on”

23. Cruelties

26. Country singer Brad

30. Make very happy

31. Binary compound of hydrogen with a metal

32. Albanian currency

33. Subatomic particle

34. Type of salt

39. 007’s creator

42. Emerging

44. Railroad flare

46. Observed

47. Capable of reproduction

49. Indicates adjacent to

50. Legendary Notre Dame coach

51. Not wide

56. An embarrassing mistake

57. Pearl Jam’s debut album

58. Denotes passerine birds

59. Stumble

60. Midway between east and southeast

61. W. Indian trees

62. You

63. Pigpen

64. Be aware of

CLUES DOWN

1. Crease

2. “Honey” actress Jessica

3. Broad volcanic crater

4. Product safety watchdog

5. Southern Colombian city

6. Part of a church

7. Perceptible by touch

8. Pronounce not guilty of criminal charges

9. Hairpiece

10. Variety acts

11. “Mystic River” actor Sean

13. Remove salt

17. Went out with

24. Type of bread

25. Popular Eagles song

26. Philosophy degree

27. Yes vote

28. Passports and licenses are two

29. No seats available

35. Pounds per square inch

36. A way to launch an attack on

37. The lowest cardinal number

38. Popular Miller beer

40. Pokes holes in

41. Closest to

42. Folk singer DiFranco

43. Rivne’s former name

44. Flat ruler

45. Lacking the means to do something

47. Cockatoo

48. Dred Scott decision deliverer

49. Explosion exclamation

52. Canadian flyers

53. Houston university

54. At some prior time

55. Red, swollen mark

For solutions to this week’s puzzle, see the classified section.

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