

Jane Johnston, Printmaker

Being a female artist, decades ago, was not easy. Choices were limited for careers and female rights were not what they are today. Jane Johnson is a female artist who was not in the lime light. But she taught art to the future generations even if it was difficult being a young female teacher during a time of gender discrimination. She did her best to prove herself. Jane Johnson is a printmaker from Quincy MA and member of the Coastal Print Makers.

Jane grew up in Massachusetts. She was born in New York in 1939 but moved to Massachusetts shortly after her birth because her father was sent off to war. Her mother and grandparents were strong figures in her life. Later her father did return from war safely. In middle school, Jane's art teacher told her parents that Jane has the ability to make it as an artist. Her parents were supportive of her choices in life. Art was not one of the main career choices for women back in the 1950s. The main choices for women were Nursing, Teaching, or Office work.

Jane made the choice to be an artist. She attended Mass Art in Boston to get her art degree, and then decided to go to Boston University to get her masters in teaching. She taught for a number of years as an art teacher. She started teaching at the young age of 23. It was tough because she was young and she did not have much teaching experience. The young boys at the school tried to give her a hard time.

Later Jane left teaching and became a fulltime artist focusing on printmaking. She learned printmaking from one of her former student's mother, Esther Machio, and she still takes lessons with Esther to this day. Esther taught her to love printmaking. Jane has been coming to the South Shore Art center for years and taking print classes.

Jane loves doing art so much because she is a visual learner. She learns best by doing the crafts herself. The enjoyment of drawing the leaves and flowers in her garden and turning them into prints brings her great joy. Most of her print work is nature based with vines and flowers she draws from her point of view. She says printmaking gives her a way to express herself in many different ways in every piece she makes.

Jane teaches many things to younger generations. She taught many children when she was a teacher. She works as a Docent at South Shore Art Center and works with hundreds of students every year. She even taught me about her experiences in print making. Her stories just made me want to learn more about the art world and printmaking itself. She made me want to learn a variety of new techniques in print making that I never knew about. It was a great experience getting to her life story.

Artist Quote

“To future artists, educate yourself as much as you can. Have confidence. Don't let other people's criticisms bother you and have a positive attitude.” Jane Johnson

Interview Written by Maggie Paul

I'm Maggie Paul, Intern at South Shore Art Center, and an art student at Westfield State University. I grew up in Scituate since I was nine. I have always been surrounded by my grandmother's paintings growing up inspiring me to be an artist in my own right.