

Review of Kevin Paulsen and David Halliday at Nantucket House A Fresh Look: Sepia and Fresco at the Nantucket House Studios

by Sharon Lorenzo

Nantucket House Design Studios is featuring the work of two artists this summer, painter Kevin Paulsen and photographer David Halliday, as a compliment to its European furniture and American decorative art works. Paulsen was trained in Kansas City, Missouri and is now working with painting on fresco panels, a Renaissance technique made modern with stencil and floral designs that are highly unusual for American contemporary painting. Fanciful and eclectic, his work is delightful and works well in Nantucket interiors, which combine the best of old architectural design with modern living. Fresco is a process where the paint literally dries into the surface of the plaster and makes for very deep and rich reliefs. Some of the works are reminiscent of the old Quaker portraits in silhouette style, which was popular in an age when oil portraits were considered too vain for the strict religious protocols on island in the seventeenth century.

By contrast, the work of David Halliday is a triumvirate of photographs with still- lifes, portraits and landscapes all in archival sepia tones. Using a large 2 x 3 inch negative, Halliday prints his own works, which are also reflective of earlier artistic styles. His shadow box constructions of still- life materials look like the work of Joseph Cornell as Halliday has used natural light to enhance the interior reflection. His human portraits are almost voyeuristic in intensity as the sitters are caught in intimate moments of deep reflection. His landscapes, which show woodlands wanders from Tuscany to Louisiana, capture light and shade in contrast of mood and intensity. The largescale format makes the work soothing to the eye and a wonderful addition to a living space where people want to enjoy something restful and spiritual at the same time. Paulsen and Halliday are the kind of artists who are full time devotees of their work. Similarly Sandi Holland of Nantucket House always seems to capture the best of the best with her discerning eye for tasteful work, which is both elegant and understated for the Nantucketmarket which embraces these values.