

THE BRIDGTON NEWS

Serving Bridgton and the surrounding towns of Western Maine since 1870.

Denmark artist captures realism in work

By Dawn DeBusk

Timothy Hinkle has got a captivating way of capturing plants in his landscape paintings.

His technique is very realistic, as well. He literally uses plants in his paintings.

He picks the plants, presses them, and adheres them to a painted wood panel board.

"I sometimes exaggerate color for mood or effect. They are all inspired by things I've seen or memories of things I've seen," Hinkle said.

Since about 2018 when he retired from his 30-year career as a lawyer, he has been trying to perfect his current form of mixed-media art: Using preserved plants as part of his paintings.

"When I started using live plants, there was a lot of experimentation to make that work as a piece of permanent art," Hinkle explained.

There were lots of obstacles to overcome.

"Plants die. They change color. Then, there is just figuring out how to adhere live plant material in an archival, permanent way that someone can feel good about buying it and putting it on their wall," he said.

"It was a process of experimentation. I feel I've got those techniques down so that I can make pieces that I like and that reflect my artistic vision," he said.

Hinkle majored in Studio Art at Williams College before deciding to earn a law degree and spend 30 years in that field. Now, his search for a mentally engaging form of art has taken him to fields, ditches, bogs and gardens. Do the plants that he picks dictate the background he paints and decorates? Or does he paint first and then select the flora that fits the scene?

It's a little bit of both, he said.

"There are varieties of ways to come to making an image. Sometimes, it is because of the flowers and plants I've collected and dried and pressed. I will decide that I've got these particular plants, and they have these characteristics of line and color and form and shape. And I use those elements to draw out an image," he said.

"The background might be determined by a place, which is usually what I do. The titles have a name of the place I'm trying to evoke an image of," he said, mentioning Brandy Pond and Brownfield Bog.

Hinkle's art work is available for the public to see in a show called Past Peak at Denmark Arts Center (DAC). There are opportunities to see the exhibit — even though the reception has already happened. The exhibit will be up from now through Aug. 31. Be aware that DAC is open only on Saturday and Sunday, from noon to 4 p.m. Also, DAC will be closed on Aug. 17.

Hinkle talked about the meaning behind the exhibit's title. He also discussed the relationship between the person viewing the art and how that feedback impacts him.

"Past peak — that is the whole concept of this show. When Maine is in foliage sea-sons, everyone



Artist Timothy Hinkle pictured at the opening of "Past Peak," at Denmark Arts Center.

talks about when the peak is. Everyone asks, 'Is it peak yet?' Even the TV news does a report on the peak foliage," he said.

"This [exhibit] is about plants that are past their peak, already flowered, some dead, some maybe on their way. This is about the life cycle of plants and how there is beauty in the whole life cycle, not just when it has peaked," he said.

"One can see that as a metaphor for humans," Hinkle said.

"As we all age, there is no past peak. There is beauty in every stage of life. If there is a message, it's that plants aren't only beautiful when just bloomed and 'fresh as a daisy,' but the whole process of growth is beautiful. When you see a plant in the winter, poking through the snow, that is a beautiful view of the plant — even though it is dried up."

One thing that has made his art successful in his eyes is people's reaction to it. It's important to Hinkle to create art that is relatable.

"Everyone sees plants all around them all the time. It is a universal thing that people can see. They say, 'This reminds me of a sunset, a stormy day or a little pool in the woods,'" he said.

"I am the happiest when people look at it from far way, are intrigued, go closer to see the image, go closer, then go back farther away to look at it again," Hinkle said. "I want people to do a double-take and a triple-take and spend some time with the piece."

"I want people to see this as interesting. Look at it closely. Look at it farther way. Wonder whether things were done intentionally," he said. "The art that inspires me the most is art that I see and I can't quite figure out how they did it. But I love the image, and I love the thinking about how the artist made the image," he said.

This article was originally published in The Bridgton News on July 31, 2025.



Denmark Arts Center hosted an opening reception for Hinkle's show "Past Peak" in July. (Photo: Jenny Berlin)



Hinkle's work will be on view at the Denmark Arts Center through August 31, 2025. (Photo: Jenny Berlin)