

# CHANNELS

www.LUMINANEWS.com

Week of June 2, 2005 - June 8, 2005

## Beach Artists To Be Showcased This Month

By Abby Cavanaugh  
Staff Writer

Residents of Wrightsville Beach may grow accustomed to its beauty after a while, not even realizing that they're living in what many consider a work of art. In fact, the blue-green waters of the beach strand, its beachgoers and surfers in brightly colored swimsuits and even its outdoor dining establishments have served as muses for several well-known artists.

The results can be seen this month as part of two local exhibits focusing on beach-related paintings.

An exhibition entitled "Water Works Coastal Imagery" opened Friday night at New Elements Gallery in downtown Wilmington. The exhibit features Nicole White Kennedy, who's known to some as "the secret beach artist," and Bob Rankin, known for his abstract work.

Kennedy got her nickname for paintings that she refers to as "the beach people," which came about almost by accident. After she and her husband, who live in Raleigh, purchased an antique boat and decided to store it at Seapath Marina, Kennedy ventured onto the beach one day and found herself sketching people who were on the sand and in the water.



"Cutting Edge" - 12 x 36 acrylic on board

Eight years later, it's become perhaps what she's best known for. After sketching or photographing her oblivious subjects, she heads to her studio in Raleigh to transform them into paintings.

"People on the beach have no pretenses," Kennedy explained. Although, she added, she has been "busted" on several occasions. In all cases so far, the subjects have been very positive and wanted copies of the finished work, she said.

"I think part of [the appeal] for me is, I identify with the feelings of what it is to be in the water and on the beach; it has sort of this universal appeal," Kennedy explained. "Everyone is just living in the moment. It's kind of fun to capture that."

Of her 21 pieces being shown in the "Water Works" exhibit, Kennedy said one of her favorites is an 8-inch by 36-inch acrylic piece called "Cutting Edge,"

which features a Wrightsville Beach surfer cutting through a wave.

"It's explosive and fun, with the water swirling all around," she said. "Artistically, it's a very strong graphic."

Strong graphics—albeit not the images you might normally think of—also define the work of abstract artist Bob Rankin.

Rankin is known for taking a traditional depiction of a landscape and converting it into an abstraction with vibrant colors. For instance, his depiction of Wrightsville Beach, called "Wrightsville Beach Abstraction," features several different shades of greens, yellows, pinks and reds.

A retired high school art teacher, Rankin has traveled all over the world, painting locales such as Italy, Paris and London, in addition to his works focused on the N.C. coastline. While he does paint some traditional landscapes, much of his work is abstract.