

# THE EAST HAMPTON STAR

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2005

## *Opinion*

BY ROBERT LONG



Alyson Denny took a very close look, through a macro lens, at beached jellyfish she spotted in Amagansett one day; the results are on view at the Pamela Williams Gallery in Amagansett.

*Alyson Denny*

### **At Pamela Williams**

Things are picking up on Main Street in Amagansett in the evening, with music at the Stephen Talkhouse and Estia Cantina and people wandering along the paths of the partially rejuvenated Amagansett Square. More than a few pedestrians can be found nightly peering through a big storefront window into the Pamela Williams Gallery, which is ending its first summer season with a strong show of work by four artists.

Alyson Denny was at the ocean in Amagansett one morning when she noticed hundreds of jellyfish washed up on the shore; she returned with a 35-mm. camera, dug out and lay in a shallow spot in the sand, and photographed the creatures with a macro lens.

The resulting color photos are rich and strange. The jellyfish refract light in

mercurylike blobs and crystalline shards, and read as pure abstraction. These are not digital images but prints made from film, which might help to explain their warmth.

Elwood Howell and Cynthia Knott reduce land, sky, and sea to textured fields divided by a horizon line, which, in Ms. Knott's case, is often laid down as a stripe of silver or gold metallic paint. Her series of lunette-shaped "Pieces of Eight" shows various conditions of light at the ocean (or perhaps Gardiner's Bay, or even an imagined seascape); they are in oil and encaustic on wood.

Mr. Howell's horizon lines are inscribed very high on the canvases, so attention is drawn less to the sky than to the earth. The artist strikes a compromise between representation and abstraction. He uses earth tones but avoids painting details, and the webbed, crackly surfaces of the pictures underline their artifice.

Ralph Carpentier's seascapes and

landscapes might include boats, tractors, people, and birds, but they seem to me to be about qualities of light. In the 6-by-12-inch "Tick Island," there is filtered light in a sky composed equally of gray smudges and a tinge of sunset, while the marsh in the foreground is made of luminous, wet greens. Mr. Carpentier keeps the picture simple and emphatic.

In "Fishing for Blueclaws, Acabonac," a night scene, a brilliant white moon half-hidden in clouds sends a brilliant beam along the harbor's surface; that light is echoed by the lamps that several fishermen shine into the gloom of the water. The sky is the color of blue fountain pen ink.

There are a few large landscapes, one of them showing a pond, a field, and a farmhouse in late afternoon light that has a convincing yellow cast to it; perhaps a storm is coming.

The show runs through Sept. 11.