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Opening reception for artists Vincent Amicosante and Traci Harmon-Hay

**Harmon Gallery, 95 Commercial Street, Wellfleet
Saturday, July 22, from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

Watercolorist Traci Harmon-Hay, owner of the Harmon Gallery, and magic realist painter Vincent Amicosante have teamed up this year to present a show entitled "Tea by Two." An opening reception for the artists will be held at the Harmon Gallery, 95 Commercial Street in Wellfleet on Saturday, July 22 from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

The inspiration for the show was born over the winter, when Amicosante was commissioned to paint a piece for a tea connoisseur. After amassing a collection of tea pots and tea cups he had gathered from antique shops and thrift stores, he was inspired to continue past the commission. He proceeded to paint the various porcelain objects with his signature magical realism flair: one pot is surrounded in a garden of lilies, another a backdrop to a larger figurative painting, another a garden gate with a shattered tea cup perched mysteriously on the sidewalk.

Traci Harmon-Hay hit upon a similar theme while having a tea party with her daughters. "I looked down at a tea bag and started to paint. It was such a nice surface and enjoyable to hold while painting." She began folding the bags herself out of watercolor paper, attaching a blank tag and using the surfaces as her canvas.

"Traci came into my studio," Amicosante says. "She was all excited about the idea of painting on tea bags. We had been looking for a theme for our show, which, by then, was perfectly clear: Tea by Two." This year is the first in several that Harmon-Hay will have a show. As the mother of two young children, she considers the past years to be a transitional period – seeking balance between caring for her daughters and satisfying her artistic and professional desires to paint. She says that because of the flux that her life was in, she had found painting on a flat piece of paper unsatisfying. "I wanted something

that I could hold, something with more substance, both physically and conceptually." Inspired by a postcard she had received a number of years ago, a flattened soda can with a beautiful painting on it, she was fascinated that someone used an everyday object as the canvas for a beautiful piece of art.

"The fact that it had two purposes that, when combined, had a deeper meaning, impressed me. I wanted to explore that, to move on."

Amicosante's work evolved as he met the challenge of painting the unique gleam and reflection of porcelain. He chose to paint a series, with each teapot depicted on the store shelf where he originally bought it, and then again in a separate painting of his own design.

"As my obsession to find the ultimate subject -- tea pot or cup -- grew so did my collection. Surrounded by these beautiful objects in my studio, the ideas began to flow. A large painting developed from an antique photo from an estate sale, which generated smaller paintings taken from the larger piece," he says.

The reception featuring their work will also have the original pots and cups on display that were the source of inspiration. And naturally, tea and cookies will be served.

For more information, please call the Harmon Gallery at 508-349-0530