

to breathe, thereby lending an even deeper appreciation of it.

Former IIS Vice President and Victoria-based commercial digital artist Greg Glover was the man entrusted with the task of piecing *Coastal Moments* together, and he has done a spectacular job of it. As Glover explains, while the rationale behind the project did not reflect Tallerino and Randall's aesthetics, there was an aim to present something representative, with durability and the opportunity for personal expression.

"We'd done calendars in the past, but with them there's a best-before date, and after that you can't sell them," Glover begins. "We thought if we go with something that is undated, we can put more than twelve images in it; we can give space for someone to write in; and we can make it into more of a book. We wanted to create something useful, as well as something that could be considered a coffee table book. It has no expiry date, so you can take as long as you like to fill it up. You can add your own thoughts or sketches or keep returning to the images and words that are already there, so there's always a reason to pick this up."

There are many reasons to return to *Coastal Moments*, to keep picking it up. The visual and literary content throughout is wonderful, in the main uncannily aligned to my own taste in art, but when flicking through its luxurious pages for the first time there were four illustrations in particular that really spoke to me: Kirsten Miller's extraordinary *Embrace* depicts an old woman with a weathered face, kindly eyes and gravestone teeth, clutching a laughing infant; Bryony Wynne-Jones' delightful ink and watercolour crow, *Edgar in Blue*; Iris Churcher's pencil drawing, *6 Wasps*, is exactly that, showing the miraculous construction of the summer pest's nest. Then there's *Coastal Moments*' final, joyously whimsical image, *Tea for Two*, from Pender Island's Ron Finnen. I won't spoil your experience by revealing it here, instead imploring you to seek it and the book out for yourselves!

But presenting these personal favourites is akin to recommending four particular strawberries from a barrelful. It is simply a deeply satisfying, thoughtfully considered collection of art and poetry, which lead me to wonder exactly how *Coastal Moments* was conceived, assembled and curated. As Greg Glover tells me, the book and his involvement in its development has been in the IIS crosshairs for many years.

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OLD BONES BY LINDA HESLOP

COASTAL MOMENTS OF THE ISLAND ILLUSTRATORS SOCIETY

by David Morrison

"If we, citizens, do not support our artists, then we sacrifice our imaginations on the altar of crude reality and we end up believing in nothing and having worthless dreams." ~ Yann Martel

For April's issue of your favourite monthly I wrote about John Tallerino and Marc Randall of Dragonfly Knoll Gallery on Denman Island. In their respective fields of shrine-making and handmade books these artists share a philosophy, being that their creations are not complete until added to in some way by the purchaser. I like that.

Although not intentionally created in the same spirit, the same could certainly be said of *Coastal Moments*, a beautiful journal-style book recently published (by Oolichan Books in Fernie) to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Island Illustrators Society (IIS). Containing gorgeous examples of the work of forty-four IIS members, amplified further by the words of noted BC poets, *Coastal Moments* is completed by plenty of blank pages. This approach to its design not only offers the owner adequate space to sketch or write – in order, if you will, to 'complete' the book at leisure in his or her own way – but also room for the art

"I helped it go all the way from concept, from 'we should do this,' to a book," he says. "The idea went on and off over the years, then finally with (former IIS President) Joanne Thomson's driving force behind it, it began to come to fruition. I collected the images from the artists, and with the help of the publisher, who sent over some different bindings and stuff, we picked the look and feel that this would have; what kind of a cover it would have; what kind of paper we would use. We also decided how many images it would have, and how many blank pages. We recruited as many Island Illustrators as possible to submit work for this book, getting everybody to submit three images each, of which we would somehow choose one. We had a jury committee of three, who would go through each artist's works and decide which one we would use. After the images were selected and a prototype of the book was put together, there was always the intention we would put poetry in it as well. The publisher (Randal Macnair), having lived on Vancouver Island for a long time, and being a poet himself, collected together poetry that his publishing house handles, and picked out various bits of poems for some of the images."

Coastal Moments is an art book that, even considering the blank pages, flows naturally. Yet when idly turning the pages and admiring the lovely images and excerpts of poetry, it may not seem immediately apparent why this is. A closer look, however, reveals that the art is thematically clustered. This was entirely deliberate.

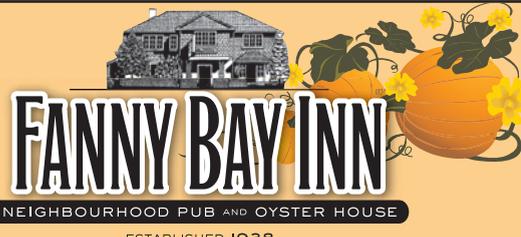
"When I did the layout and was thinking about the order the images should go in, I grouped them into concepts," Glover explains. "West Coast landscapes, interactions between people, something imaginary... and after grouping them together, I thought it best to start the book with what's expected, being the landscapes. Then we start to zoom in on things, like leaves, rocks and trees, then flowers. Then we move onto creatures, some real and some from the imagination. Each section is divided from the others by a spread, a scan of some kind of handmade paper, like marbled paper."

Coastal Moments is a fitting and triumphant tribute to twenty-five years of the IIS, and remembering that Christmas is just around the corner, a perfect gift to give or receive. Yet the quarter-century celebrations will not be stopping with this book, as there is another on the way and an exciting event to launch it.

"There's another publication coming out for the Island Illustrators very soon," Glover reveals, "with photographs of past and present members, in their studios, with write-ups for each artist." This title comes from IIS member, visual artist/photographer Ray St. Arnaud, and will be officially launched at the 25th Anniversary exhibition, "Celebrate Success: 25 Years of the Island Illustrators Society," at Cedar Hill Recreation Centre in Victoria, between October 25 and November 27. The opening reception takes place on October 27, from 7:00 to 9:00pm. Further information can be found at the IIS website (URL below).

Looking through *Coastal Moments* once more it is, of course, impossible not to be repeatedly reminded of the creative genius, fertile imaginations and senses of humour of so many good people in this beautiful corner of the world. We are truly blessed. It is one of those aforementioned reasons to keep picking it up, an inspirational reason, so serving as the best possible commendation for the great work of all involved with the Island Illustrators Society. Here's to their half-century mark! ~

Further information about Coastal Moments, the Island Illustrators Society and their forthcoming events is available by visiting www.islandillustrators.org, or by emailing contact@islandillustrators.org.



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