Charlestown Gallery highlights local agriculture with new exhibit

SUBMITTED PHOTO

"Cow Series #1: Two Brown Cows (2026)" by Burl Dawson, an 18 x 24 in. oil on canvas painting, is one of the pieces on display in Charlestown Gallery's new exhibition titled "Farmers Market." The gallery's latest offering opened last week and runs through Oct. 12.

In 'Farmers Market,' artists share love for the rich history of farming in Southern RI

By Stephanie Bernaba
Special to the Independent

CHARLESTOWN — Two brown cows graze in an oil painting hung near a delicate watercolor of Matunuck cornfields, while a sprawling landscape of Jamestown farmland stretches nearly six feet across a nearby wall. The region, as its artists see it, is now on view in Charlestown Gallery's new exhibition, 'Farmers Market,' at a moment when markets are drawing renewed attention and surges in demand across Rhode Island.

The show, which opened last week and runs through October 12, brings together more than 20 artists working in oil, acrylic, watercolor, pastel, mixed media, sculpture, ceramics and jewelry. All of them were asked to present the farmers' markets and farmland that have shaped Rhode Island's identity for generations.

The exhibition was conceived and curated by Kimberly Howard, director of Charlestown Gallery, who has led the gallery for the past two years.

"South County is fortunate to have a rich history of farming, land conservation and preservation, which provides our talented artists with landscapes and subjects in which to create," Howard said.

A reception celebrating the show is scheduled for Saturday, September 19, from 5-7 p.m. at the gallery, located at 5000 South County Trail.

For many of the artists, the theme was a natural fit. Shawn Kenney, an East Providence painter who has been represented by Charlestown Gallery for close to two decades, contributed "Farm Fresh," an acrylic painting of a weathered blue tractor parked outside a red barn, a rooster trotting across a dirt road in the foreground.

Kenney said the tractor was real, one he had photographed on a farm, but that everything else in the scene was created in his imagination.

"It was really more about the sense of place, like this idea that you stumbled down a little farm road in South County and you could hear the crickets, and you've got this beautiful sun setting behind you and there's a

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