



Irma Cohen discusses her handmade art with Joe Tedesco during the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody. (Spenser Hasak)

Peabody seniors showcase artwork

February 18, 2026 by [Amanda Lurey](#)

PEABODY — The Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Assisted Living hosted its third annual Resident Art Exhibition Wednesday afternoon, and the seniors showcased their various mediums and works, ranging from quilting and painting to doll making and woodworking.

Pam Fiske displayed four of her paintings, each a reflection of a moment outdoors she cherished from her travels. Two came from in-state, in Gloucester and Harwich, and the others from Maine and Wales. Her watercolor painting of Devil's Gorge in Wales received first place recognition from the Reading Art Association, which she is a member of.

Fiske said she's always liked painting outside, and she's often able to finish most of the painting out in nature before bringing it inside for final touches. Her mediums of choice are pastel and watercolor, with her heart siding toward the latter because of the detail she's able to create.

Another acclaimed artist, Ruth Wierenga, showcased her acrylic painting “Spring At Last,” which earned her first place recognition from the Reading Art Association. Her painting is bright and vibrant, with a stark contrast between the yellow daffodils and blue background. Wierenga, who has been painting since she was 10, was proud to point out the reflection she was able to achieve on the vase, which she joked was likely an old pickle jar.

Wierenga is a member of the North Shore Art Association, the Copley Art Society of Boston, and Reading Art Association, to name a few. She is now working on a small painting of a tree in front of Kaplan Estates because she likes that it has a crooked branch. Wierenga said she finds the fun in creating balance and choosing colors.

The most unique artwork showcased, which had every attendee stopping to take a closer look, was Irma Cohen’s bear house. Cohen was ahead of her time, wanting to take woodworking instead of home economics. While her school didn’t let that switch happen, Cohen did take up woodworking later in life.

Cohen said it took her about six months to make the bear house, which was two stories and adorned with carefully chosen decor, including a dart board, kitchen trinkets, a planter in the windowsill, and even a pipe to bring smoke from the bear’s kitchen outside. The home was created with half of a tree stump, which Cohen used a chainsaw to cut herself, and was filled with her “classy” bears, various needlepoint rugs and wall art, and seating options.

Additionally, Jennie Ruggiero showcased her handmade quilt “Around the World” and a few Raggedy Ann dolls; Roberta Mendelsohn displayed knitted blankets and needle point cushions; Marilyn McAskill presented her crocheted Christmas and Halloween ornaments; Maria Mellace laid out her handmade wedding dress, hat, and crocheted shawl; Betty Benn showed off her hand-sewn quilt; and Kathleen Plummer’s charcoal owl artwork and John Ingalls’s pine wood carving were also on display.

“Peabody is full of beautiful people and amazing talent... I am blown away by the examples of their work,” said Thea Sheveloff, Kaplan resident.

Director of Resident Life Barbara Lee shared that, as an artist herself, she feels it’s “important for our residents to be recognized for who they were and who they are now.” She said what stood out to her is how talented the residents are and how unique each and every piece of art was.

“The fact that some of them are still doing these paintings, amazing paintings, knitting, crocheting, whatever it is, is pretty astounding, and it’s nice for us just to be able to recognize them and to say thank you to them for sharing their work,” Lee said. “You can see the pride in their faces, so it’s nice to be able to do it for them.”



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Irma Cohen discusses her handmade classy bears in a home made from a log owth admirers during the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Irma Cohen's handmade classy bears in a home made from a log on display during the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



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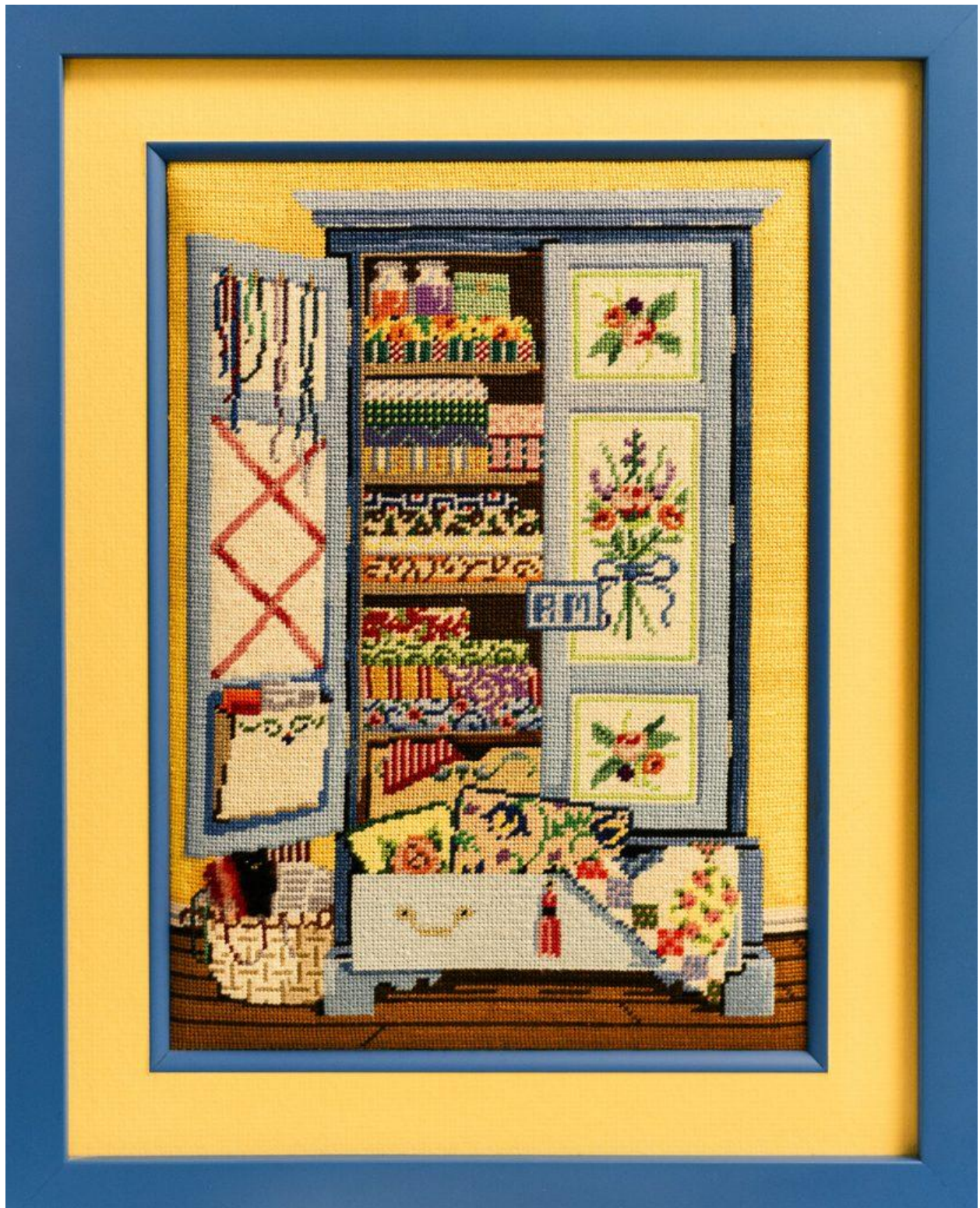


Photo: Spenser Hasak |

A framed petit point by Roberta Mendelsohn on display in the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

A detail of Roberta Mendelsohn's knit blanket.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Crocheted ornaments by Marilyn McAskill on display in the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Marilyn McAskill stands with her crocheted ornaments on display in the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Marilyn McAskill talks about her crocheted ornaments on display in the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Betty Benn sits with her hand-sewn quilt, which is on display in the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Details of a hand-sewn quilt made by Betty Benn on display in the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Thea Sheveloff came down for the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody and had this to say, "Peabody is full of beautiful people and amazing talent... I am blown away by the examples of their work."



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

John Ingalls shows off his pine wood carving on display in the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Ruth Wierenga stands with her painting, "Spring At Last," which is on display in the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Maria Mellace discusses her handmade dress, hat, and shall which is on display in the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Maria Mellace, left, chats about art with Betty Benn during the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

"Autumn Harvest at the Cranberry Bog," by Pam Fiske on display in the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.



Photo: Spenser Hasak |

Jennie Ruggiero sits with her handmade quilt and Raggedy Ann Dolls during the third annual Harriett & Ralph Kaplan Estates Resident Art Exhibition in Peabody.