

## Grenning Gallery Showcases Artist's New Found Maturity



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Laura Grenning and Ben Fenske pose for a photo at his 12th show at Grenning Gallery in Sag Harbor. (Photo: Chelsea Katz)

When painter Ben Fenske was 22, he found himself in the hands of stock market turned self-owned art gallery curator [Laura Grenning](#). Twelve years later, he had shown in her Sag Harbor gallery twelve times and moved beyond his painting comfort zone.

Squeeze into [Grenning Gallery](#) on Saturday, August 3rd and you were automatically greeted by an Italian Renaissance Medici Boar and paintings celebrating Fenske's newfound education and maturity.



"This show as opposed to shows that led up to this- a lot of his older works were beautiful and easy to sell but they were sketches of a light effect," Grenning said. "What's happening is I see an accumulation of knowledge starting to be applied to a very, kind of succinct canvas instead of an impression."

About two or three winters ago, Fenske started to study with Russian artists whose style focuses more on architectural elements and joints and structure, a style that easily shines in his first collaborative attempt at sculpting. (He worked with Richard Zinon, a pairing which Grenning says is unusual in that most artists tend to work alone.)

She also said that training with artists who primarily focus on structure is only a natural stepping stone to turn to three-dimensions. Fenske, Grenning feels, is an artist who is more focused on his process than he is on selling a painting.

"Ben is more like a scientist," she said. "And I think the great artists in the world are more focused on their processes as opposed to creating something that someone will buy."

She seems most impressed by his willingness to look to the past for his technique. Meanwhile, Fenske says he likes painting faces and whatever is lying on the kitchen table.

With paintings hanging on walls surrounding the sculpted boar in the center of the room, the painting of the hour sat solo on a back wall. Looking closely, inch-wide brush marks create a scene in the park. Zoom out and a small dog emerges out of the abyss in the lower-right hand corner.

"It wasn't until I had seen it five or six times that I noticed a dog in the foreground," Grenning said. And that's because his tonal values were spot-on."

Fenske who was making rounds at the opening garbed in an inside-out red t-shirt and jeans enjoyed painting "Florence, Shade" (with the dog) the best.

"I think I have a vision to where I'm going and this is one step closer to that vision," Fenske said. He was not able to put into words where said vision, only that he wanted to continue sculpting.

"That's why I'm a painter," he joked.

As people walked past him mingling in between paintings, Robert Stuart from East Hampton, who has been to a number of Grenning's exhibits including Fenske's, called the room "high energy."

"I like what he paints," Stuart said. "I like the way he paints."

*For more information on Grenning Gallery, visit them online at [www.grenninggallery.com](http://www.grenninggallery.com).*