

The Long Island
ADVANCE

A salute to ice boats and their history



(/uploads/original/20240305-171121-adv Tyler Healy .jpeg)

Artist Tyler Healy by his window exhibit at Marquee Projects Inc., "Scooters 2024," last weekend.

ADV/LEUZZI

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Linda Leuzzi

Ice boats aren't a common occurrence anymore on Bellport Bay. But you have this weekend to catch the end of Tyler Healy's exhibit, "Scooters 2024," in the window of Marquee Projects Inc., a respectful nod to the ice boats that gained popularity in the early 19th century.

Healy's two paintings were gleaned from inventoried images via the Museum of Natural History. "You can click through a museum inventory," Healy said.

Via research, he chose a working scale model of an ice boat built on Long Island. "He was a naval architect," he said of the scale model's creator. "I think you can see this culture today with the duck decoys. These are salty old guys who make scale models of duck boats."

The Museum of Natural History photos were black and white; Healy painted his 11-by-14-inch versions via an automated photo-to-painting website, www.mydavinci.com.

"It's a web service where you select a photo and direct how you want it painted in colors and dimensions. I chose oil."

The background is silver mylar foam, 77 by 86 inches, resembling ice. "The color pops are the nails and tape," he added, interesting touches to the installation.

The process took a month, with the installation requiring an afternoon.

Healy was one of the original young, energetic Auto Body artists who took over a former vacant auto body space on Main Street in 2010. He's also an earnest environmentalist and salutes Bellport's history.

The South Bay Scooter Club, formalized in 1921, pretty much came to a standstill in 2012 when warmer waters flooded in via Sandy's breach.

"The ice boat was made to get equipment to Fire Island," he added. "It was also fishing, hunting. These boats were designed to hit soft spots, sail, and get back to the ice."

He pointed to Wilbur Corbin, a lifelong Bellport resident who played a pivotal role in creating Long Island's first scooters.

He pointed out that this once seasonally used object serves as a visual tether to the past, compelling us to confront the shifting climate and the human capacity to move forward.

Raised in Bellport, where he still visits, Healy attended Parsons School of Design, lives in Chinatown, and works with a construction team that produces final touches on interiors in the city. Healy's dad is a contractor; that background has helped in his installations.

Healy has exhibited several times at Marquee Projects. You can find his art for sale on Artsy as well.

His dream: "To have my art be more sustainable like in an Auto Body gallery, where I get to work with other artists and a community," he said.