

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

longislandtraditions.org
info@longislandtraditions.org

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Tobay Boat Show – “The Next Generation”

September 17 & 18, 2022 • 10 am – 6 pm

Please join us at the Tobay Beach Boat Show on the weekend of September 17 & 18 from 10 am to 6 pm as we present “The Next Generation,” exploring Long Island’s recreational fishing and boat building traditions. Our program will provide the opportunity to interact with baymen, fishermen, decoy carvers, artists and boat builders. Presenters will include baymen and fishermen Tom Jefferies, Bill Fetzer, Craig Oddo, Flo & Paul Sharkey, Larry Seaman; boat builder Chris Hale; decoy carver and waterfowl hunter George Rigby; and, master recreational fisherman Reed Riemer of the Atlantic Anglers Club.

The Tobay Boat Show runs Friday, September 16th, from 12 pm – 6 pm; Saturday, September 17th, from 10 am – 6



Photo by Nancy Solomon

George Rigby of Center Moriches will be at the Tobay Boat Show.

pm, and Sunday, September 18th from 10 am – 6 pm. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors, and \$5 for children 6-15. The show is located at Tobay Beach on Ocean Parkway in Massapequa, east of Jones Beach.

For more information, call Long Island Traditions at (516) 767-8803 or the NY Marine Trades Association at (631) 691-7050 or visit www.nyboatshows.com/Tobay. ■

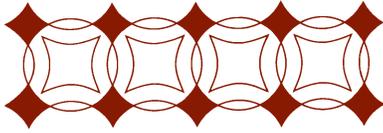
Ma’s House, Southampton

The Shinnecock Indian Nation is based in Southampton, where indigenous families have lived since the pre-colonial era. They continue to fight for sovereignty over sacred sites, burials, and cultural and natural resources. In 2020 painter and bead worker Denise Silva-Dennis and her son, photographer Jeremy Dennis, founded Ma’s House Art Studio for Black, Indigenous, and people of color. The studio hosts artists year-round so that they can explore their heritage through visual art, multi-media creations, sculpture and other forms of cultural expression. They recently received the coveted Mellon Foundation’s Creatives New York grants supporting 4 artists including Denise Silva-Dennis and Jeremy Dennis.

As Jeremy shared with us in 2021 “Ma’s House was built in the 1960s. It was mostly built using scrap materials from an old church, the Grace Episcopal Church in Riverhead. That church, I believe, was in service from the 1860s to the 1940s, and for whatever reason, they had to dismantle it, and my grandfather Peter Silva, Sr. went to that site.

As Jeremy explains “Because of the generosity of over 400 individuals, I wanted to dedicate this whole front of the house more to community events and an informal art exhibit space. I thought that kind of reciprocity between people giving and me giving back, because I now have a space, is just a great harmony of what is possible with more art-based spaces. When people come here, and when people hear it’s on Shinnecock, I think there’s a different expectation, or understanding. So the plan is to have it dedicated to the arts, and to have Ma’s House primarily serve communities of color and artists of color, and that’ll start with supporting Shinnecock youth. It will also

See **Ma’s House** on page 2



Long Island Traditions Inc.

Dedicated to the documentation and preservation of Long Island's living cultural heritage.

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For more information call: (516) 767-8803
write to us at: 382 Main St., Port Washington, NY 11050
E-mail: info@longislandtraditions.org or visit us
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**Council on
the Arts**

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encourage Shinnecock adults who want to have a creative outlet, or who want to come and support and observe different art happenings here in the house.

My personal belief is that art can help heal, it can help grant a sense of belonging. In my personal art, I really love bringing people together. And so, even though it's going to primarily support and serve artists of color, I think anyone can just show up and also support those people."

Denise is an accomplished bead worker and visual artist, whose works have been featured in area museums including the Southampton Arts Center, the Long Island Museum, the Parrish



Denise Silva Dennis 2022.

Museum and other cultural institutions. Silva-Dennis practices the traditional Eastern Woodland style of bead work that was handed down to her from the elder women of the Shinnecock and Hassanamisco-Nipmuc Nations.

Her work includes necklace and earring sets, beaded medicine fans, walking sticks, and beaded cradleboards. Her beaded necklaces have been shown at the Louise Himelfarb Gallery and at The Studio Connection, both in Southampton, NY. Several Native American exhibitors carry an assortment of her beaded creations to Powwows throughout the Northeastern United States.

Through his work as a photographer, Jeremy depicts sites on Long Island that are important to the Shinnecock, such as the sacred Sugar Loaf Hill burial site.

"The very first one I went out and photographed is called Sugar Loaf Hill, that has a history even before 1989, but that was the time when it was desecrated and destroyed. So I try to describe what it is and why it's significant to Shinnecock: it's one of our three thousand-year-old group burial sites of our ancestors. For Shinnecock and the people of Long Island who were the original inhabitants, we often had unmarked graves, we would dedicate hilltops to burial sites. And so that was one of the sites that I wanted to focus on and use as an example using photography to try to preserve and prevent future desecration."

In addition to important historic sites on Long Island, Jeremy also photographs contemporary sites, like the reservation community center and the Shinnecock Monument, a digital billboard that provides an economic opportunity for the tribe. This helps call attention to the lives of modern Shinnecock as they fight to reclaim sovereignty over their ancestral land. As Jeremy explained it:

"Probably 90% of what is taught in public school curriculum is pre-1900 about Native American people. Just that fact alone portrays the idea that we're a static people, we're stuck in the past, or we vanished as a race, or we're no longer "Indian enough." That's just a common misunderstanding that has been used, just in terms of racism and discrimination, but also in terms of politics and us trying to be a sovereign nation. Whenever we want to do something economic or politically, we always come back to this argument that people think we're not Native enough, or we're not Shinnecock enough, or indigenous enough. And so I really want to show that we have this long connection, especially to the landscape.

Connection to the land is something that you just can't really take away. Even if they try to take everything else away, like our cultural practices, and try to convert us to a certain religion, then you can always look back at the land and say this is where our ancestors once were, and we have this sense of belonging that's really strong."

Jeremy has several events planned that will help tell the story of the elders and their families in future years. They include a one-day program where reservation residents can bring their family photos to Ma's House for scanning and

preservation, to be used in telling their stories to the public. Other ongoing projects include Jeremy's "On This Site" exploration that, according to Jeremy "creates awareness of sacred, culturally significant, and historical Native American landscapes on Long Island, New York. Through curiosity



Photo courtesy Gotham Center.

The Fowler House in East Hampton is examined as part of Jeremy Dennis' project "On This Site."

about his own origin and ancestral history, Jeremy gathers and combines archaeological, anthropological, historical, and oral stories to answer essential cultural defining questions: Where did my ancestors live? Why did they choose these places? What happened to them over time? Do these places still exist? To seek the answers to his questions, Jeremy researches, visits, and photographs each site; documenting the change in each landscape and highlighting the everlasting connection between place and memory. As a revelation, these sites remain but were made invisible."

Ma's House is located at 159 Old Point Road in Southampton on the Shinnecock Reservation. During the annual Labor Day Pow-Wow the house will be open to visitors. You will see their artists in residence, along with an art show that features work by 14 artists who have participated in their artist-in-residency program. Art works will be on sale. In addition, Denise Silva-Dennis will have a booth at the Pow-Wow. The event takes place from September 2-5.

Not able to make it to the Pow-Wow? You can learn more about Ma's House on Facebook or Instagram. And of course, as a non-profit organization they can always use help. Just visit <https://www.mashouse.studio/>.



Ma's House Studio.

Courtesy Ma's House.

Bay House Showcase in the Town of Hempstead

We are proud to announce that the National Endowment of the Arts has approved Long Island Traditions for a \$15,000 grant to support a permanent interactive exhibit on the region's tradition of South Shore bay houses.

These small, vernacular wooden structures were originally built by local baymen, fishermen, waterfowlers, and other maritime tradition bearers. When Superstorm Sandy hit Long Island's south shore with tremendous force, it destroyed dozens of bay houses, small vernacular structures originally built by baymen, waterfowlers, and recreational fishermen on the south shore's marshlands. In response to the loss of these local landmarks the Town of Hempstead requested LI Traditions to prepare plans to erect a bay house that could serve as a cultural site. The town will build this structure based on the Muller bay house, one that survived Superstorm Sandy and the oldest existing bay house. The exhibit will be an interactive site for learning about bay houses' place in Long Island's history, traditions, and contemporary maritime culture.

This exhibit will focus on the three aspects of bay houses: architecture, hunting and fishing, and foodways. Bay houses are traditionally built by owners using found materials or workplace materials loaned by friends. They are also inhabited and built by those with direct connections to hunting and fishing, traditions that have been passed down through families. The bay houses are also connected to foodways, as baymen harvest and prepare ingredients for regional specialties such as clam pies and roast duck stew.

The exhibit will include stories of bay houses and their owners through videos, interpretive panels and live programs. Exhibit objects will include decoys, paintings, architectural elements, furniture items and other traditional objects commonly found in bay houses. Photographs will include historic and contemporary photographs by Martha Cooper. The bay house is expected to be completed in 2024 at Point Lookout, accessible both by land and water. Long Island Traditions director Nancy Solomon is the head curator. The multimedia curator will be Hannah DeGarmo. The exhibit designer will be Paul Orselli. Support for the bay house exhibit is also being provided by Humanities New York and New York Folklore. Stay tuned for details!

To become a member and support our work visit www.longislandtraditions.org

EVENTS OF INTEREST

PLEASE NOTE: If you have a Long Island concert or program that focuses on some aspect of traditional culture, drop us a line and we'll put it in our "Events of Interest" column.

Visit our website and our Facebook page for more events and information!

- September 2-5:** Shinnecock Pow-Wow. 1 West Church Street, Southampton. \$15 adults, \$10 seniors, children and military. Visit their facebook page for more information.
- September 17-18:** Tobay Boat Show, Tobay Beach, Ocean Parkway, Massapequa. Admission is \$15 adults, \$5 ages 6-15, free to kids under 5.
- September 27:** Boat Building and Boat Yards of Long Island. 7 pm. Free admission. Islip Library, 71 Monell Avenue, Islip.
- September 29:** A World Within a World: Bay Houses of Long Island. Music with Harbortown. 7-9 pm. \$10 suggested donation. City Lore. 56 E 1st Street, New York, NY.
- October 19:** A World Within a World: Bay Houses of Long Island. 7 pm. Free admission. Massapequa Library, 523 Central Avenue, Massapequa.

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382 Main Street
Port Washington, NY 11050