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'Yankee artist' shares talent

Wednesday, March 23, 2011

By **SUZANNE McLAUGHLIN**

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WILBRAHAM - Painter Robert Brooks recently taught a workshop on oil painting techniques to a group of young women in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Most of the women came from a Reach for Success program on the island which raises money to help students get college educations, according to Brooks.

"For most of the people on the island, college is beyond reach," Brooks said.

The girls were junior high and high school age and were very nervous about painting in the beginning, he said. Some came back to finish their paintings the next day, he said.

A translator helped the girls to understand Brooks' directions. He said he showed them how to capture an image in a view catcher, handle the art equipment, use thinner to develop a first layer of paint and then apply color.

"The girls then carried their donated French easels and materials out on the lawn of Gallery Galleon and created their own works of art," Brooks said.

Brooks was visiting Vieques for the opening of his art show, "The Vieques Portfolio," which opened in mid-February and runs through later this month.

Brooks donated his time for the workshop and the gallery donated the space and art materials.

Anyone interested in seeing his paintings from the show, "The Vieques Portfolio" can go online to the Gallery Galleon's website at www.gallerygalleon.com.

To see his previous art work visit his website, www.rob-brooks.com.

Brooks has lived on Cape Cod and exhibits at the Munson Gallery in Chatham and Cove Gallery in Wellfleet. He also exhibits at R. Michelson Gallery in Northampton.

Brooks said he has been able to make a living as a fine artist, although he said that during the recession, people stopped buying art.

Now things have turned around, he said.

"I consider myself a traditional Yankee painter," he said. "Years from now, people will try to understand these times by looking at the art of the times," he said.

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