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**Paintings by Jane Caminos Tell Stories of Lives of Women Past and Present:
A Sentimental Journey at the Wellfleet Library Gallery**

For More Information Contact:
Christine S. Filip 917-733-5302
cfilip@greenbaumlaw.com

Fine artist Jane Caminos opens her show at the Wellfleet Public Library Gallery on August 7th through August 20, 2010. Her work, which she calls narrative portrait painting, summons the 1930's and 40's friends and relatives of our families' past. In this continuing series, begun in the mid 70's, she concentrates on the personalities of selected women subjects to give them voice, recognition, and a stake in the time of history they knew so they can tell their stories to viewers. Though most of the figures lived during The Great Depression years or the turbulent culture changing period of World War II, these women say, with voices as clear as they would be today, "Psst. I have a story to tell you, and I will not be forgotten!" These grandmothers, aunts, girlfriends, and mothers are brought to life by the listening mind and right hand of Caminos.

Caminos' use of a jeweled palette and the inclusion of pattern against pattern to suggest space and perspective stems from her training during the 60's in painting and illustration at the Rhode Island School of Design, where she was mentored by Richard Merkin and Edgar Blakeney. Caminos counts her artistic sources as Matisse, Gauguin, Chagall and Erte. Caminos enjoyed many years as a print illustrator for the book and advertising markets, while painting continually in acrylics and oils, but it wasn't until the mid 1970's that she discovered the subject of narrative painting, which combined her love of illustration and portrait painting wrapped into one. At first she painted women for political reasons; the 70's were the most active years for the feminist movement, and then found that her interest in women's lives from mid-century didn't wane. In fact, it intensified and once committed became a source of continual pleasure for the artist, who discovered that much like imaginary friends, her painted subjects became companions during the hours of sitting at the easel, and once hung together on the wall, they found friendship among one another, with the occasional spat.

To compose her paintings, Caminos uses her own family photos, and those of others', including those offered by patrons who ask her to complete commissions for their own family heritage.

In searching for a subject to paint, Jane looks for a personality first, their mood on the day the photograph was taken, eschewing stiff, posed compositions for those that have animation in body language and facial expression. It doesn't matter what's in the background; her preference is to let the painting "guide the way" once she has placed her subject on the canvas. There is no planning ahead; Jane believes making careful sketches of what will become a painting is too "clerical" for her restless imagination, and so never knows in advance what the theme of the painting will be.

"Following a sketch for a painting is like painting by numbers for me, and I'd be bored quickly working that way," she says. As a result, the paintings are never static, each is different from the next, just as no two of her women are the same. Nor does Caminos feel bound to replicate landscapes or objects that may be included in a photograph, as a matter of course, she will fill her canvasses with surprises such as fruits and animals, or an occasional flying fried egg, any of which elicit interpretation from viewers. There is a sense of humor operating here, a joyfulness that is an extension of the artist's irrepressible nature.

In 1998 Caminos suffered a lengthy leave from painting due to the discovery of an astrocytoma that was located within the spinal cord in her neck. The tumor was removed, but she spent 3 months in rehabilitation at Rusk in NYC and had to learn to walk, write, and, of course, to paint again. As a result of the severe neurological insult, she was no longer able to be a commercial artist; tight deadlines went unmet as she attempted the highly detailed pen and ink style she was known for with a hand that was now permanently

locked in a curled position. In fact, she discovered that she no longer recalled how to hold a pen, and worse yet, could not hold a paint brush.

Caminos could not accept a life without painting, and so developed exercises designed to retrain the muscles of her hand by grasping a pencil as she made circles and loops on paper, over and over until the hand settled into a position most comfortable and agile for painting.

A Sentimental Journey, the collection of paintings to be enjoyed at the Library, is a testament to Jane's strength of will and drive to create amidst the limitations of disability.

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