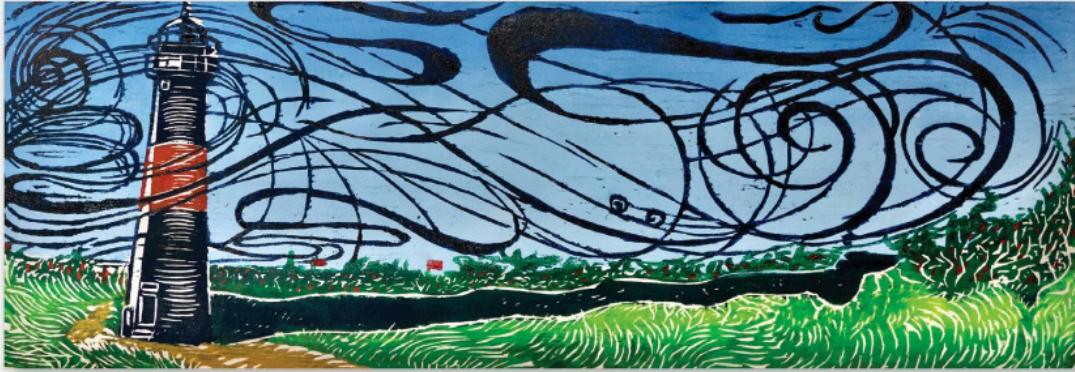


A BEAT for the New Generation



Sankaty Lighthouse

An Interview with SKS Visual Arts Chair and Woodcut Artist John Carruthers

Artist, musician, academic, historian. These are only a few words that describe the multi-faceted creative force that is SKS' Visual Arts Chair John Carruthers. Perhaps none conveys his quirky, quiet manner, his passion for teaching and learning, and his student-centric approach better than "educator." For more than 12 years, Mr. Carruthers has been developing the creative skills of his students and pursuing his own artistic passions, further enhancing SKS' reputation as a sought-out school for the arts.

Q: Tell us about your background and past influences that inspired you.

"I was born and raised in Westchester, New York. A precocious kid, I loved to copy out the illustrated dictionary—drawings and all. We had a set of encyclopedias called *World of Wonder* from the 1920s. I loved it because it was all about "the future" from a 1920s perspective—the miracle of air travel, automobiles, electricity, science, and industry! It had great old photographs, and it seemed important and anachronistic at the same time.

My favorite thing to read was the New York Times Book Review. For book reports, I covered Shakespeare. I guess I just loved

learning and education in general. I also went to summer school for fun—more science, more history! I read monster magazines, DC comics, and Mad magazine. One day, I was practicing my hero Jimmy 'JJ' Walker's funky walk. My mom asked my uncle Harry, who is an artist, "What's wrong with him?" Harry said, "It's OK, he's just a beatnik." I said, "What's a beatnik?" Little did I know that would be my life's path.

In high school, my main interests were books and music—Kurt Vonnegut, Jack Kerouac, Edgar Allen Poe, SE Hinton (who I read over and over), music—oldies, and classic rock of the day. Then, punk rock happened. Pow! Two friends and I went head over heels for it. We would go