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By MARSHALL HEYMAN
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Two Business Types Show Off Their Artistic Selves With Exhibits in the Hamptons



A reception to celebrate 'Permanent Transience,' an installation by the restaurateur Toni Ross. PHOTO: JENNY GORMAN

Toni Ross is perhaps best known in neighborhood circles as the restaurateur behind Nick & Toni's, probably the hardest reservation to get in town. But she is also an artist.

Her newest work, "Permanent Transience," involves three large sculpted straw bales attached to three boulders in the back of Marders, the landscaping store in Bridgehampton. The show is scheduled to be open through Labor Day, though Ms. Ross expects it to be there much longer.

Earlier this year, the Parrish Art Museum in Water Mill asked Ms. Ross if she might participate in its Road Show program, which would entail creating a site-specific installation.



Ms. Ross PHOTO: JENNY GORMAN

“That’s the only info they give you,” she said, during a visit to see “Permanent Transience.”
“I got excited and panicked.”

Ms. Ross had always admired a wall of hay that lived in the back of Marders, which separated the store from a parking lot and those three boulders that sit on a circle of crushed shells.

“It’s incredibly beautiful,” she said, “and I love these boulders.”

Ms. Ross said she liked to explore cubes and containers of any form. The hay bales in particular have small openings “to look and wonder what’s inside. You can’t access, but you can see a little bit.”

After the opening, a party took place at Ms. Ross’s Georgica Association home. Among the attendees included artists April Gornik and Eric Fischl, Terrie and Donald Sultan, playwright Joe Pintauro, architect Lee Skolnick and designer Mary Jane Marcasiano and photographer Ralph Gibson.

One topic of conversation: Where do the straw containers go once they’ve worn out their welcome at Marders?

“My theory is we’ll cross that bridge when we get to it,” laughed Ms. Ross.