

# Artist James Chisholm takes a close look at streams and waves in Endicott exhibit

By Keith Powers / Correspondent

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James Chisholm paints outdoors. Seemingly, every inch of it. His oil landscapes — five large paintings, with some accompanying pen-and-ink sketches — hang at the atrium Carol Grillo Gallery at Endicott College's Manninen Center for the Arts through Feb. 8.

## If you go...

**WHAT:** James Chisholm, "Reflections: Ocean Waves, Inland Streams"

**WHERE:** Carol Grillo Gallery, Manninen Center for the Arts, Endicott College, 406 Hale St., Beverly,

**WHEN:** through Feb. 8

**TICKETS:** Free. Visit [www.endicott.edu](http://www.endicott.edu) or call 978-232-2655.

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The plein air artist has to choose a place to stop. The fullness of detail available in nature — what to leave out? And those times when it seems like the artist has indeed left nothing out — just an illusion, really — then the accomplished outdoor painting feels like an achievement.

James Chisholm paints outdoors. Seemingly, every inch of it. His oil landscapes — five large paintings, with some accompanying pen-and-ink sketches — hang at the atrium Carol Grillo Gallery at Endicott College's Manninen Center for the Arts through Feb. 8.

Chisholm teaches and lives on the North Shore, and has had a long association with the Museum of Fine Arts education department. He also teaches at North Shore Community College.

The centerpiece of the exhibition, five large oils, demand examination. Views taken from the Ipswich, Topsfield and Boxford woods, at first glance they seem strikingly similar: all large canvases, crammed full with detail, nothing painted superficially. Every leaf, every inch of bark, every watery square foot of river a mass of texture, color variation and intrigue.

Subtleties are overwhelmed. Nothing gets treated casually. Every cloud, branch, tree trunk and muddy bank is painted with heightened technique.

What seems like an impossible thicket of branches is only revealed as a broad river archway after some time — and depth perspective. (The works are helped greatly by their space in the atrium, allowing viewers to stand far back from the paintings.)

Chisholm's pen-and-ink accompaniments are no less detailed. They are hardly studies, and definitely not details, but rather fully imaged companion works using similar views.

A work like "Cross Street Cornfield, Ipswich" reveals its shapes not by using outlines or shadows, but by the movement or energy of the objects being viewed. "Millbrook, Summer, Boxford" brings an overwhelming sense of precision to the simple view of an aged forest near water.

An entirely different set of works examines wave patterns off the East Gloucester coast. Not representational at all, the four panel wave study is executed with India ink on watercolor paper. The effect is bold, chiaroscuro. The energy is unmistakably taken from the ocean, but the works do not fill the vertical canvases with any horizon line or distant perspective.

Strikingly, the studies look like wave action, but not captured over time. It's as if all the action of a wave took place simultaneously. Without color, with a flat perspective, the notion of waves is all energy — and partly abstract. Like the oils and the pen-and-ink drawings, Chisholm's wave studies also reward extended examination.

James Chisholm's "Reflections: Ocean Waves, Inland Streams" remains on view at Endicott College's Carol Grillo Gallery in the Manninen Center for the Arts through Feb. 8. For more information visit [www.endicott.edu](http://www.endicott.edu) or call 978-232-2655.

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*Keith Powers covers music and the arts for GateHouse Media and WBUR's ARTery. Follow [@PowersKeith](https://twitter.com/PowersKeith); email to [keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com](mailto:keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com)*



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