

## Gas Station Studies

Edward Hopper and Peter Holbrook

Edward Hopper (July 22-1882- May 15- 1967) is known as one of the most recognized American realist painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century along with Winslow Homer. One of Peter's favorite paintings of Hopper's was *Nighthawks*. Hopper said his inspiration for the painting came from a restaurant on Greenwich and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue in New York. Hopper also acknowledged that unconsciously he was painting the loneliness of a large city. Throughout his career Hopper's use of light created geometric shapes as shadows to convey a mystery drama and mood across his canvases. Hopper once said "Great art is the outward expression of an inner life in the artist and his inner life will result in his personal vision of the world."

Back around 2003 Peter had work in the Legends Fine Art Gallery in Livingston, Montana. In 2004 the gallery had a show called Nocturnes. The gallery challenged its artists to paint night scenes. Peter decided to do a series of paintings from 35 mm slides he had taken while living in Chicago in the 1960's. One of the paintings he titled *All Night Gas* since it depicts a Texaco Gas Station (see top right of painting) with an attendant filling the customer's gas tank. In Peter's painting the interest comes from the outdoor overhead hanging lights illuminating a yellow glow to the darkened surroundings. I gave *All Night Gas* to my daughter a few years ago as a gift. She said the painting reminded her of Peter traveling in search of new material for his artwork. I wonder how many all night gas stations and diners he stopped at over all those years.

In 1940 Hopper painted *Gas*, his vision of a working gas station at dusk. The painting is in the permanent collection of The Museum of Modern Art in New York. Hopper had a 850 square foot summer home/studio in South Truro, Massachusetts. The Bogsey's Gas Station was off Route 6 and Pamet Point Road on the Truro line, which was not too far from his residence. While investigating this story further I came across a very interesting article about the gas station's property. In 2010 the Bogsey Gas Station was barely standing. The red gas pumps and hoses were long gone. The property had been purchased in 1993 by the Cape Cod National Seashore Park. They saw the property as a danger to the public. However the Massachusetts Historical Commission saw the property as a landmark example of the long gone mom and pop gas station. All interested parties agreed that the station could not be salvaged but the question still remained, should it be considered a historical site? I decided to write to the Cape Cod National Seashore Park to see what the outcome was. I heard back from the administrative assistant who told me that yes, the station was demolished in 2010. It was also not considered a historical site because Hopper's inspiration for the *Gas* painting wasn't one particular gas station but a composite of several in the area.



[Edward Hopper](#) *Gas*1940



**Peter Holbrook "All Night Gas" 2003 18" x 26" Canvas**



**Peter Holbrook "LaSalle St. – Out my Window" 2003 18" x 26"  
Oil/Canvas**



**Peter Holbrook "State St. - Christmas" 2003 24" x 18" Oil/Canvas**