

Weir Farm's opening exhibit pays homage to Tile Club

By Stephanie Kim Updated 12:18 pm, Tuesday, May 30, 2017



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Xiomáro, an internationally recognized artist, writer and speaker, debuts his photo ceramics exhibition at Weir Farm National Historic Site from May through Oct. 31.

WILTON — A debut photo ceramics exhibit at Weir Farm National Historic Site tells the lesser-known tale of the **Tile Club**.

The club was formed in 1877 by **J. Alden Weir**, the father of American Impressionist painting, as a social gathering to paint decorative tiles with **Winslow Homer**, **William Merritt Chase** and other famous artists in the area.

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One hundred and forty years later, the craft remains a popular art form — as evidenced through the park's current exhibit, "Photo Ceramics by Xiomáro: An Homage to J. Alden Weir and the Tile Club."

The exhibit was born out of serendipity, said Xiomáro, who began experimenting with ceramic tiles last year when he learned about Weir's excursions with the club.

Xiomáro is an artist based in New York who uses the pseudonym to pay homage to his family's roots in Spain and the Canary Islands off the coast of northern Africa.

"I just thought it was really coincidental," Xiomáro said. "So I decided to do a whole exhibit themed on Weir Farm but also themed on the Tile Club because not a lot people know about the Tile Club."

The collection of photo ceramics have been on display at the park's visitor center and museum store since the site's opening in May and will be available for viewing until Oct. 31.

The 22 photographic prints adhered to 4-, 6- and 12-inch black ceramic tiles give an overview of the park's historic buildings and capture scenic views of New York and Connecticut landscapes.

Xiomáro hopes his work will introduce visitors to the history of Weir Farm and the excursions of the Tile Club, he said, while also providing original artwork that is both accessible and affordable. Prices start at \$35.

"I think sometimes a lot of art becomes detached from the public," he said. "I like the idea of democratizing it so that people can have a piece of art that's original, that's handcrafted."

Before photography, Xiomáro found success as a musician in his own band and later ventured on his own as a solo artist. But at the peak of his music career, he was diagnosed with cancer which led him to photography. One way he coped with the illness, and eventually overcame it, was by finding solace through visits at different national parks and taking photographs of nature.

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He displayed these photographic prints at his music shows throughout the Northeast, and at one point, the prints outsold his CDs.

“So that indicated to me that, that might be a direction that I could take artistically,” Xiomáro said. “For many years, I kind of floundered.”

It was an ad from AAA suggesting he visit Weir Farm for the weekend that kicked off his photography career. During his visit in 2010, he learned of the Artist-in-Residence program from a park ranger. He then applied and was accepted into the program a year later, becoming the Artist-in-Resident in March 2011.

After spending a month photographing the historic site, the organization formally commissioned him as the park’s visiting artist in 2012. Since then, his photography has been widely exhibited at venues across the globe, including **Harvard University**, **Long Island Museum**, **Fraunces Tavern Museum** and the **Siena Art Institute** in Italy, among others.

Having dabbled in writing, painting and other art forms, Xiomáro said photography remains his current passion.

“Photography is ideal for me because I don’t need a group of people to help me do it,” he said. “I can do it by myself.”

Viewing hours for Xiomáro’s photo ceramics exhibit are from Wednesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Weir Farm National Historic Site is at 735 Nod Hill Road. Admission is free.

For more information, call 203-834-1896 or visit www.nps.gov/wefa. For more information about Xiomáro and to receive a free e-book on Weir Farm, visit www.xiomaro.com.

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Photo: Contributed Photo / Sapna Dhandh-Sharma

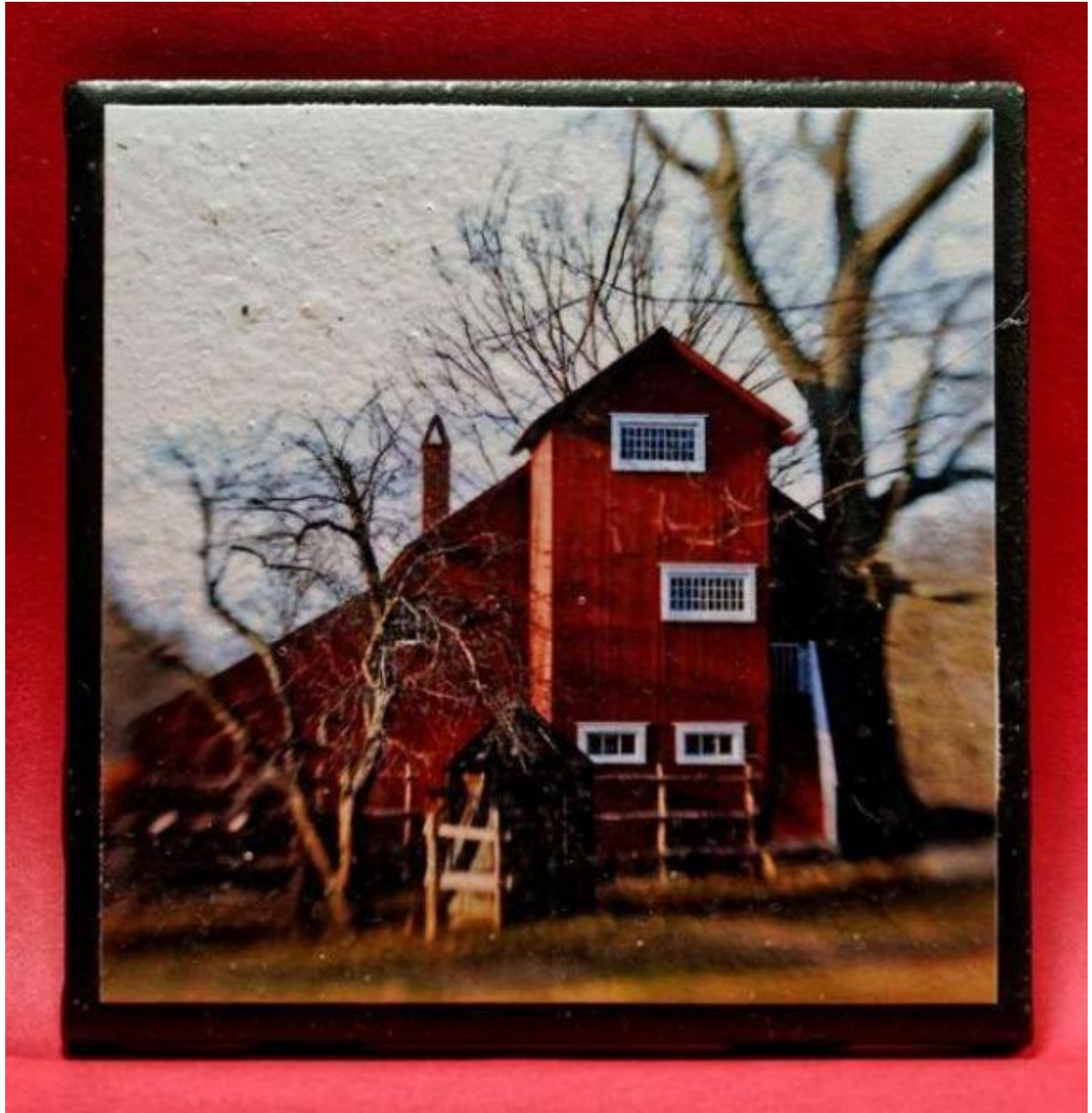
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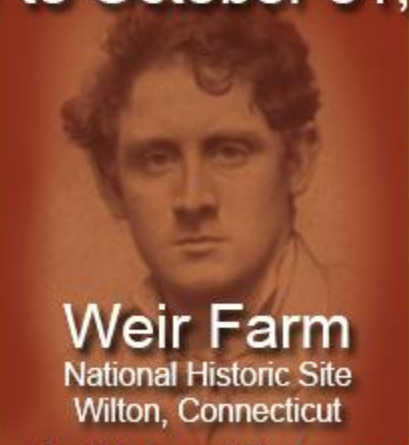
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Photo Ceramics
by **Xiomáro**
May 1 to October 31, 2017

A central portrait of J. Alden Weir, a man with curly hair and a mustache, looking slightly to the right. The portrait is set against a dark red background and is framed by a grid of lighter red squares.

Weir Farm
National Historic Site
Wilton, Connecticut

An Homage to J. Alden Weir and the Tile Club

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