



Winter Reverie

INTRODUCTION BY JOHN O'HERN

The consummate garden designer Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) wrote, "There is always in February some one day, at least, when one smells the yet distant, but surely coming, summer." But a person so attuned to nature must have got up from perusing seed catalogs to admire the snow that covered her Surrey garden. There is a softer palette in winter that may prepare us for the riot of summer color, but can be enjoyed for itself.

Tom Curry lives on the coast of Maine not far from a perennial subject for his paintings, Chatto Island, uninhabited and rising 20 feet above the sea. It provides a buffer for Center Harbor and is an anchor in the constantly changing weather, light and tides of coast. He says, "As a plein air

painter, I immerse myself in landscape to explore the relationships between stillness and flux." Chatto provides a spot of stillness in the flux of nature while also being part of the flux. *Record Snowfall*, necessarily horizontal in its composition, depicts the solid green island anchored among ephemeral bands of color from snow to sea, nearby to distant clouds and the infinity of space.

The anchor for Keith Jacobshagen's *West Little Salt Road After the Blizzard* is a line of telephone poles along an arrow-straight strip of highway crossing the prairie. The soft grays, pink, mauve and blue of the sky rise above the otherwise featureless snow-covered landscape. He says, "I'm a Midwesterner who has stayed put to make sense of where I live. My

interest in the land is crystallized in my paintings about it."

Jacobshagen's intimate familiarity with the landscape is similar to Curry's. While Curry prefers to paint in plein air, Jacobshagen works in the studio where he feels more able to create and to imagine based on his experience of the scene itself.

Douglas Fryer seeks to bring out the beauty in unexpected places. He says, "Relying on the assumed beauty of the subject is the wrong way to go." Sunsets are a given. A scene caught out of the corner of his eye is a springboard for a composition that develops as he paints. There is little detail in *Edge of Morning*. "Sometimes detail can be far less realistic than something suggested," he explains.



1

1. **Tory Folliard Gallery,**
West Little Salt Road
After the Blizzard, oil on
paper, 8 x 28", by Keith
Jacobshagen.
2. **Gleason Fine Art,**
Record Snowfall, oil,
36 x 43", by Tom Curry.



2

COLLECTOR'S FOCUS WINTER LANDS



3



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5



6

3. Meyer Gallery, *Edge of Morning*, oil, 18 x 18", by Douglas Fryer. 4. Lori Putnam, *Fall at Logan Pass*, oil on linen, 24 x 32" 5. Sally Ruddy, *Ribbons of Blue*, oil on canvas, 18 x 24"
6. Sally Ruddy, *Winter Morning*, oil on canvas, 11 x 14" 7. Lori Putnam, *Breakfast*, oil on linen, 30 x 40"

Fryer shows us the spirit of the place that he has seen and felt.

The beauty in unexpected places at unexpected times is there to be seen. In her book *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Annie Dillard wrote, "The answer must be, I think, that beauty and grace are performed whether or not we will or sense them. The least we can do is try to be there."

In this special section collectors can glimpse even more sparkling, snowy scenes that capture the heart of the winter season.

Lori Putnam is known for her expressive brushwork and gorgeous impressionist paintings. Often, she paints in plain air, soaking in the mood and essence of a location. "By traveling to

paint outdoors, I can gather so much good information for use in larger pieces back in the studio. Many times, I do not refer to a photograph at all, and use the painting sketch made on location. That is the case here," the impressionist painter says of her chilly landscape *Fall at Logan Pass*. "It gives the painting a fresh feel, unlabored and exciting," she adds.

In *Breakfast*, another recent piece by Putnam, cows graze in front of a dairy barn amidst fresh snow. "This dairy barn and all of the surrounding buildings cuts an interesting, rhythmic shape against the sky. It seems sometimes a million decisions must be carefully thought through before the painting process

even begins. Adjusting compositional elements for just the right flow, deciding on just how intense the light will be (and of course its color and direction), and making dozens of thumbnail sketches helps me prepare. Finally, when I am convinced it is time, I can just enjoy the paint," says Putnam.

Encapsulating the essence of pictorial nostalgia, Sally Ruddy lures viewers into a gentle dialogue with her painted compositions. Interpreting her surroundings and subjects in a way that she explains as "sensual rather than literal," Ruddy feels her way through each painting as she is led by pure emotion. Omitting fine details in the scenery, Ruddy creates a



7

setting that is otherworldly, transporting her viewers into her intimate memories of self. With meticulous dedication to her subjects, her paintings are dreamlike and sentimental as they vibrate with color and emotion. Although infused by imagination, Ruddy says she feels as though she has truly been to and experienced the scenes she creates. Drawing inspiration from the familiar vistas, natural beauty that goes unrecognized, and feelings of nostalgia, her paintings recount a deeply rooted love affair with her California surroundings. With regular weekend drives through the foothills, Ruddy continuously reinvents her daily encounters with nature. ●

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