



SNOW SCENES

BY JOHN O'HERN

Not everyone will agree with Robert Frost's statement "You can't get too much winter in the winter," but Frost, a hardy New England type, knew that with its harshness, winter has space for beauty and frolic.

Winslow Homer (1836-1910) portrayed the harshness of winter in *Fox Hunt*, 1893. The predator becomes prey as it becomes bogged down in deep snow. At first glance, the fox seems intent on its own prey until the dark forms of the crows become clear, ominously hovering above and converging from the distance. The dramatic, nearly 6-foot wide painting was purchased by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1894, the first

of his paintings to enter a public collection.

The scene is near his seaside studio in Maine where winter carries on while his little drama unfolds. The sun breaks through the clouds of the passing storm as the waves crash on the shore and a seagull looks for its next meal. Red berries from the past season hold the promise of spring.

Timothy Barr depicts a less ominous scene in *Fox in Squall*. Barr is as immersed in the landscape of eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware as Homer was in the coast of Maine. He says, "As a landscape painter it's important to know the soul of the landscape you are painting...I only hope I can someday do the material justice by getting closer to

the soul of it visually." His paintings are often wonderfully detailed. In *Fox in Squall*, fallen snow covers the detail of the landscape and falling snow blurs and blends the scene into a soft, luminous whole.

Lynn Boggess immerses himself in the landscape, as well—literally. He sets up a portable shelter and paints in plein air with oils in all seasons. Applying paint with a trowel, he captures the experience of being in the landscape rather than its detail. He presents a brief moment in time and titles his paintings with the date they were painted. His explorations of the qualities of the painting surface, a fascination of abstract expressionists, allow the viewer to

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share a studio "in a dynamic atmosphere where curiosity, open mindedness and traditional wisdom co-mingle with experimentation, innovation and change."

In his own work, McCaw's experimentation allows him to scrape a painting down and "rebuild" it. He says, "I always begin a work one way, but then it takes a wholly different direction at the end."

Throughout the pages of this special section are a number of snow-covered landscapes, wrought with the beauty and chill of the season. There are also insights and information from artists and dealers about these timely works of art.

Along with McCaw, Trailside Galleries in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, represents a number of artists who paint winter scenes that show the terrain bathed in white or as it is melting at the end of winter. According to the gallery, "Artists use the unique quality of the gray winter light to capture the ethereal, almost spiritual season of winter." On February 18, the gallery will open *Winter's Embrace* with work by Michael Godfrey and Robert Moore.

Godfrey translates his emotional and spiritual engagement with the landscape onto the canvas, as well as his interpretation of the many moods of light. Godfrey softens edges to imply detail rather than actively state it, which allows him to concentrate on the experience of the moment.

Moore says, "Winter puts the wide spectrum of summer and fall hues and intensities to sleep for the year, leaving beautiful grays and neutral colors."

Lotton Gallery in Chicago features the works of Dutch artist Simon Balyon, who often depicts a more idyllic time and place. "Simon paints serene winter skies and snowy meadows with the mastery of the old Dutch painters," says gallery director Christina Franzoso. "His paintings reminisce to the 16th and 17th centuries; ice skaters on the dykes of Holland and icy windmills bring the romance and sentimental feelings of the winter. The detail in Balyon's paintings makes for something new every time you look."

At the recent exhibition *Master Realists* at M & M Fine Art in New York City

were works on view by John Baeder, Bo Bartlett, David DeSimone, Andrew Wyeth and Daniel Sprick. One of the main pieces in the exhibition was Sprick's *Glenwood Springs*, which depicts a snow-covered edge of a stream. The ethereal work is of the Colorado resort city known for its hot springs.

An artist who has been enthralled by the season is Brooke Borcharding, who has found a particular interest in the challenges and excitement of painting using white. She says, "Over the past few years white has become an amazing color to me. It's the only paint I have a gallon tub of so that I can scoop it right out of the bucket with my brush and smother it on the canvas with glee."

Borcharding adds that while winter may be a cold season, "a landscape painting depicting a snowy scene can still feel warm and invite you to walk along through the canvas. Winter scenes have a nostalgic quality for me, so I advise to pick a painting that provides a place you feel comfortable and warm getting lost in." ●