

Rick Fleury

Artists through the ages have strived to capture what the forces of nature and the universe have created. Some, like the notable masters from the Hudson River School have succeeded in giving their paintings an other-worldly quality as though they have transcended this world. It is the soft light, the approachable line and the composition that looks vaguely familiar, like an image from a dream. Rick Fleury is one of those artists.

Fleury's arc of expression through the various chapters of his life could have occurred in almost any classic period of artistic evolution. Forces outside of his own life plan have directed his artistic endeavors, in the way topography influences the flow of a river. Even the beginning of his practice of creating had a goal other than its ultimate destination. "My parents had retired to Sarasota, Florida and my mother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer," he recalls. "I needed to be there. I started to sketch the buildings and street scenes of Sarasota as a means of relaxation and escape. Anyway, someone gave someone some of my sketches, and Kennedy Gallery called and asked me to bring in some of my work. 'My work?' I honestly didn't know what they were talking about. What I gave them sold, and they just kept asking for more." After his mother's ultimate passing, Fleury returned to Boston and decided to try his hand at painting, now creating, "realistic watercolors is where they evolved to," Fleury recalls. Again, a gallery approached him, organized a show and sold every piece. "That's when I thought, huh? Maybe I should think about this, I should give it a shot," he remembers with the same quizzical wonder 25 years later.

A move to Provincetown, with the intent to apply his efforts and learn from anyone who was willing to teach him, landed the young man in another intersection of opportunity and serendipity. "I decided to immerse myself in an art community that would give me the ability to nurture and foster the creation of art, and see if there was anything there," he recalls. "I was in a gallery pretty quickly—within a few months—the Charles-Baltivik Gallery. I was creating hyper-realism at that point; in acrylic and watercolors. A lot of fruit,

still life, some landscapes. But I was really drawn to the landscapes and they just sort of evolved." That evolution that Fleury casually mentions seems to be the point where his path of discovery locked on to his path of destiny. "In the beginning I was painting every tiny detail, every blade of grass, and then I just kept pulling out details, and pulling out, and pulling out even more, until I got to where I am today," he explains.

Today, Fleury's work elicits a moment of consideration in those that encounter his serene landscapes. His minimalistic style of the flowing horizontal planes that link sky, sand, and water capture nature's majesty in an utterly succinct way. The shifting sands of the coastline of the Outer Cape and the Islands' barrier beaches are given a peaceful, windswept, wave-washed presentation that freezes the frame on an otherwise ever-changing and dynamic environment. Fleury's palette is restrained yet achieves the depth of subtlety and movement that is constantly in flux in the wild beachscapes he communicates. Soft blues and ash-dusted, gray clouds move across the large expanse of skies, bleached, wheat-toned sandy beaches are punctuated by walnut and umber-hued seaweed clumps and muddy, mossy estuary embankments, and tidal pools range from deep sapphire to the clarity of aquamarine.

Fleury's compositions evoke such a sense of calm and tranquil exploration that they could be a prescription for anxiety, literally. His work is found not only in private collections around the world, galleries of note in some of the most elite coastal communities, but also in public spaces like Cape Cod Hospital and specifically in their new Emergency Center and the Davenport Mugar Cancer Center. Repeatedly, as the public encounters his masterful images of the beauty of the region's coastlines—scenes that are originally created by forces greater than all of us—Fleury's interpretation of those landscapes prompts the sigh most viewers were saving for the sunset. As he says, "If I can give one person the opportunity to take that moment and pause, then everything is worth it." - *Julie Craven Wagner*

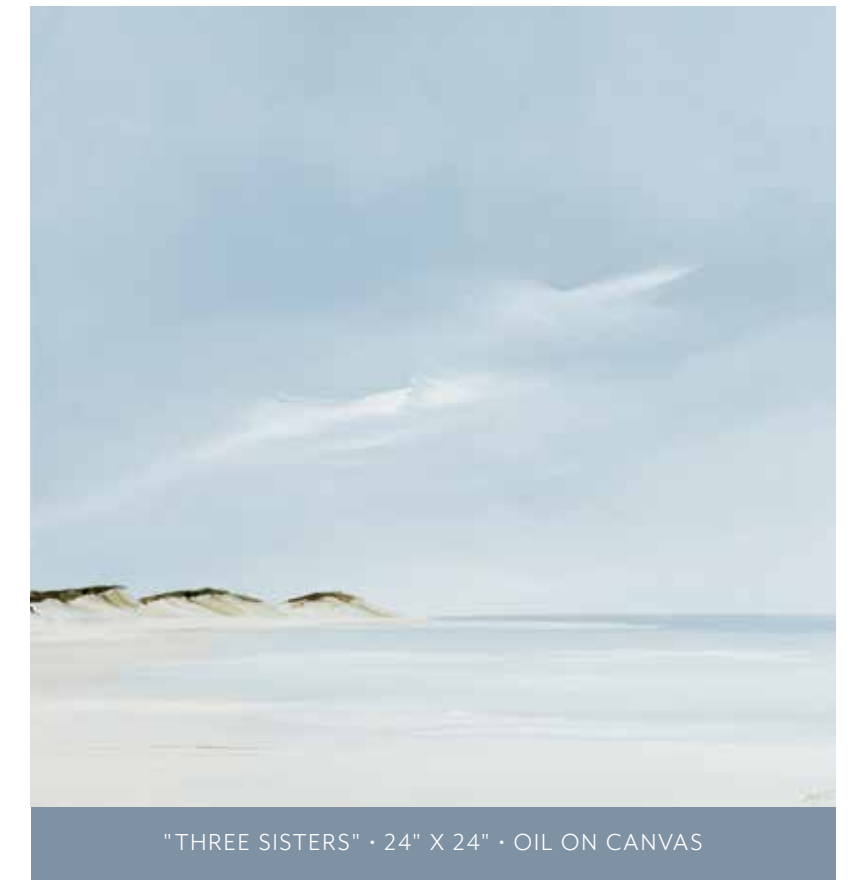
Rick Fleury's work can be seen at Louisa Gould Gallery in Vineyard Haven, Quidley & Company in Nantucket, and Trees Place in Orleans and Garvey Rita Art & Antiques in East Orleans



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