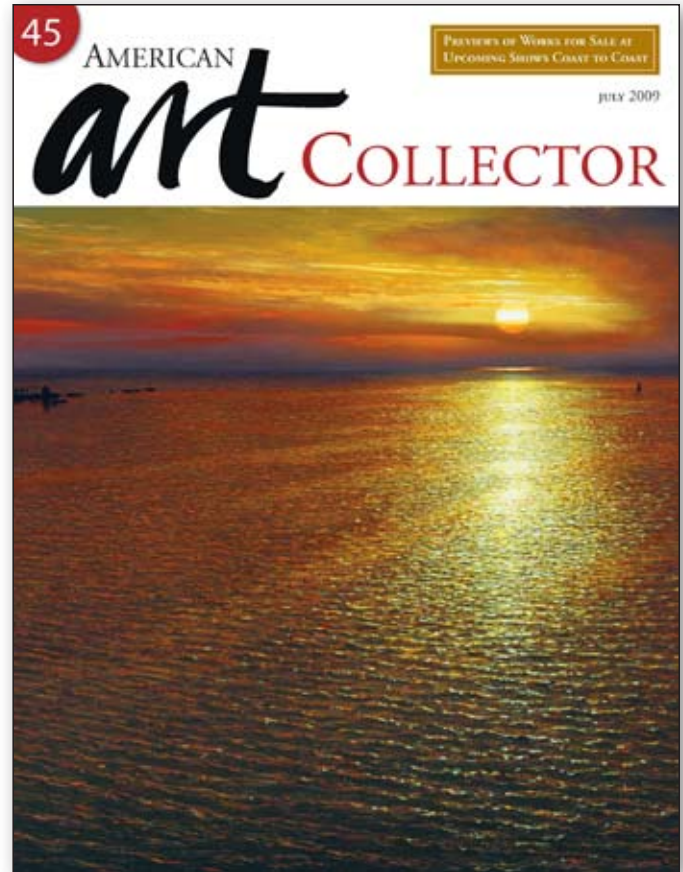


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COLLECTIBLE ART ON THE EASEL

The solitude of a wandering low tide

Rick Fleury's Cape Cod studio is the perfect place for the artist to capture the natural beauty of the area.







Intreval, oil on canvas, 14 x 18"

The shores of Cape Cod—from the national seashore on the ocean side to the marshes and wetlands on the bayside—are never-ending sources of inspiration for Wellfleet-based artist Rick Fleury. For Fleury, a one-time photorealist painter, it is not about the details of these locations but rather the emotional intensity that comes from personally experiencing the landscape.

"I strive to portray the landscape in its purest form," says Fleury. "I am drawn to the essence of a moment's beauty: the rare light as it moves across a meadow, the shadows or reflections it leaves behind; the subtle variations of color as they

change with the seasons and time of day; the movement of grasses, water and sand; the solitude of a wandering low tide."

Fleury's love affair with the Cape and its distinctive landscapes is something that does not end once he leaves the studio. As a true lover of the area, he is in a continuous state of observing and recording, creating a visual memory of the place that serves as inspiration for his paintings.

"I would say, yes, it is constant for me," says Fleury. "I'm always looking at the sky, always looking at the water. I walk my dog on the beach every day. And, if it's not at the ocean, it's along the marsh. I'm out in the beauty of the Cape all the time. I think that it is always feeding my soul, my

ideas, feeding my inspirations and what eventually comes out on to the canvas."

In the 15 years Fleury has spent on the Cape, he has seen his painting go from tight, up close realism where he would focus on individual blades of grass, to looser, abstracted landscapes that, at times, are rarely more than a horizon line and large fields of color.

"I refer to it more as a distillation," says Fleury. "It started when I first moved to the Cape. I was interested in the little things that one just finds on a wharf or a pier, and I painted that type of work in almost a photorealistic sense. Now, the details to me are a distraction."

By forgoing the details, Fleury



Headland, oil on canvas, 20 x 50"



Mirage (diptych), oil on canvas, 20 x 40"

wants viewers to key into the essence of these special places and to get a feel for themselves of what things like light, ocean air and marsh breezes are actually like on some of these days.

"I'm seeing the bigger picture, trying to capture the bigger picture, the feeling there, the skies, all of it," says Fleury. "It's so great and so awesome—the air, the motion in the sky, the color of the water, the broadstrokes of nature that I look for. That is what I want to strive to embrace and capture on canvas."

Fleury believes that the Cape is the perfect place to catch these moments

because it maintains so much unspoiled beauty. A great deal of the landscape on the Cape is protected and large areas still remain uncluttered by usual resort-area development.

"We have on the ocean side miles and miles of national seashore, so even in the busiest days of summer you can find a quiet private place on the beach, which is amazing," says Fleury. "When you live here, you know how to get to those places, know where they are. The bay side is totally different, a completely different world with inlets, marshes, wetlands and coves. It's the quiet side where you can find all these

intimate spots and clandestine treasures that become part of your life."

This is one of the aspects of Fleury's work that often draws collectors.

"His method of painting sky, water and shore is unique," says collector Greg Howe. "Since I am often sitting or walking on the shore, his gifts continue to provoke delight and wonder. The most special part is his way of rendering the continuing, changing tints of the sky in a way that is very much his own, but also very real."

Fleury's work is currently on display and available for sale at Addison Art Gallery in Orleans, Cape Cod, Massachusetts. ●