



PHILIP FREY

COURTHOUSE GALLERY
FINE ART

PHILIP FREY

Soft Persuasion

JUNE 20–JULY 14, 2018



Bachelor Buttons, 2018, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches
COVER *Still Standing*, 2018, oil on linen, 30 x 40 inches

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Unimagined Delicacy, 2018, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches



The Patterns of Lobstermen, 2018, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches

PHILIP FREY

Excerpts from *Philip Frey: Here and Now*



Flowers and Doors, 2017, oil on canvas, 24 x 24 inches

The following excerpts are from *Philip Frey: Here and Now* (Marshall Wilkes), a new book by Daniel Kany and Carl Little with an introduction by George Kinghorn.

Pink Pier combines the logic of *Pink and Blue* with *Light Comes Through*. Six white houses and structures gather around a working pier at low tide. The white of the structures appears mostly in shade with a bluish cast, but the low sun finds its way in from the right and lights up the center space of the pier in warm pink. Spilling over the edge from the open pink space in the center is a stable cascade of green boards that create a flat square punctuating the image and holding it in place. The reflections of these boards reach out toward us, acting like a visual bridge so that we come to think that is where our eyes first entered the painting, though, of course, they didn't.

Flowers and Doors is an interior scene, a glimpse down a shady hallway past and through doors before finding resting space (not ironically) on a well-made, well-lighted bed. While it looks so little like *Pink Pier* or *Light Comes*



Pink Pier, 2017, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches



Distant Clouds, 2017, oil on canvas, 12 x 16 inches



What the Tide Reveals, 2017, oil on canvas, 12 x 16 inches

Through, the structure unfolds with similar logic and forms: the vertical, rectangular (i.e., human-shaped) presence of a doorway. Whether we choose to see this in mystical or Modernist terms hardly matters: Frey is acknowledging the viewer's body and the distinction between his physical and visual experience of a scene. It's savvy, but nuanced, crossing the barriers between traditional modes and the systems logic of contemporary painting.

When Frey says something shifts from abstraction to representation as it comes into focus, he tacitly hints that when something slips back out of focus, it reverts to abstraction. I see Frey's project of soft persuasion as his true goal: We recognize the scene easily enough, but when we let our experience of the painting slip out of the representational focus, we return to abstraction, the true place of Frey's poetry.

Frey often employs the traditional systems of set genres like landscape, marines, interiors, or, among others, figures. But he is just as likely to question these systems as adhere to them. On one hand, this sounds like quintessential Modernist logic. But his use of systems logic to question the structural systems is a marker of contemporary art.

That Frey brings this systems approach to work that can be generally associated with traditional "Maine painting" places him among some of the strongest voices of active



Pink Perspective, 2017, oil on canvas, 12 x 24 inches

"Maine painters," such as Colin Page, Linda Packard, Roy Germon, and Henry Isaacs. And these artists mark a shift from previous generations. Whereas the boldness of painting had long been delivered with bravura swagger, we now see the leading painters appealing more to the viewers' intelligence. These artists' painterly marks are more about skilled effort and perception than about conveying a sense of their inner personality or outer virtuosity. We might

say the new model seems to be more Cézanne than van Gogh. And there we find the work of Philip Frey: smart, sensitive, and skillful.

— Daniel Kany



Magenta Door, 2018, oil on linen, 9 x 12 inches



Violet Coast, 2018, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches



When Color Sings, 2018, oil on linen, 30 x 40 inches



Empty Yet Full, 2016, oil on panel, 12 x 12 inches



Proud, 2018, oil on panel, 8 x 10 inches

Frey brings a fearless color sense to his work, often referencing the Fauves, those “wild beasts” of early-twentieth-century French painting, as art-historical heroes. Not a color-for-color’s-sake painter, he nonetheless always leans toward a bold palette: brilliant reds, warm lemon and tangerine hues, rich greens. Frey sometimes includes a color in the title of a painting—*Study in Yellow*, *Rhapsody in Red*, *Chartreuse Spring*—setting a visual key.

Frey’s paintings range from representational to abstract, with various hybrids in between. Some of his abstractions recall the work of the Synchronists—Stanton MacDonald-Wright, Morgan Russell, and company. Others bring to mind Sir Howard Hodgkin’s expressionist studies.

In recent years, Frey has been exploring interiors. His bedrooms, kitchens, and parlors are inviting: lamps on tables, an armchair in a corner, a vintage kitchen stove, a doorway opening to a deck. At the same time, painting the interior has allowed Frey to explore abstract-geometric concepts and, once again, the effects of light.

Frey is also attracted to the geometry of architectural forms. He finds visual pleasure in the lines of the buildings in an urban view or the contours of a humble ice-fishing shack on a Maine lake. He can turn a Portland street into a kind of tonal symphony, capturing the rich blue-grays of a rainy day or the yellow of a “slip” of sunlight. His energetic



Chartreuse Spring, 2017, oil on canvas, 12 x 24 inches

brushwork is perfectly suited to the dynamics of busy streets, but also to a curve in a coastal road in Stonington or South Bristol.

Philip Frey is one of those lucky ones. Fortunately for us, he has chosen to stay in that “country of the pointed firs” that has nurtured him across the decades, creating canvases that speak to us of place and passion. Frey is, as

he once stated, a “student of aesthetics.” More importantly, he is a painter who relishes the act of painting, and who strives to connect with the moment, the *here and now*. We gladly partake in the beauty of his revelations.

— Carl Little



Ball In the Hall, 2017, oil on canvas, 24 x 24 inches



Lush, 2017, oil on canvas, 12 x 24 inches



Lobsterboat Lemon, 2018, oil on panel, 6 x 6 inches



Daisy, Daisy, 2018, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches

Most noteworthy in Frey's work is his brilliance as a colorist. In *Chartreuse Spring*, an intense lime green leads us from object to object in a light-filled sitting room, while a yellow-green light glows through the rear windows, balancing the cozy interior. Frey's representation of natural light evokes a freshness and optimism, as if we were being called outside to soak up the sun and the green grass.

Frey has a remarkable ability to simplify complex environments into dynamic planes of color. *Patchwork Medley* is an energetic composition in which he renders remarkable detail through horizontal and vertical patches of color. A lobster boat tethered to a pier dissolves into abstraction through an assortment of bold marks in pale blue, steely purple, and vivid red.

Here and Now is the first book about Philip Frey's artistic journey. His willingness to take risks has kept his work fresh. And, his steadfast devotion to perceptual painting—to what lies before him in the here and now—has yielded an abundance of honest and beautiful paintings.

— George Kinghorn



Patchwork Medley, 2017, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches



Everything But the Kitchen Sink, 2017, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 inches



Fog Has Risen, 2018, oil on linen, 30 x 40 inches



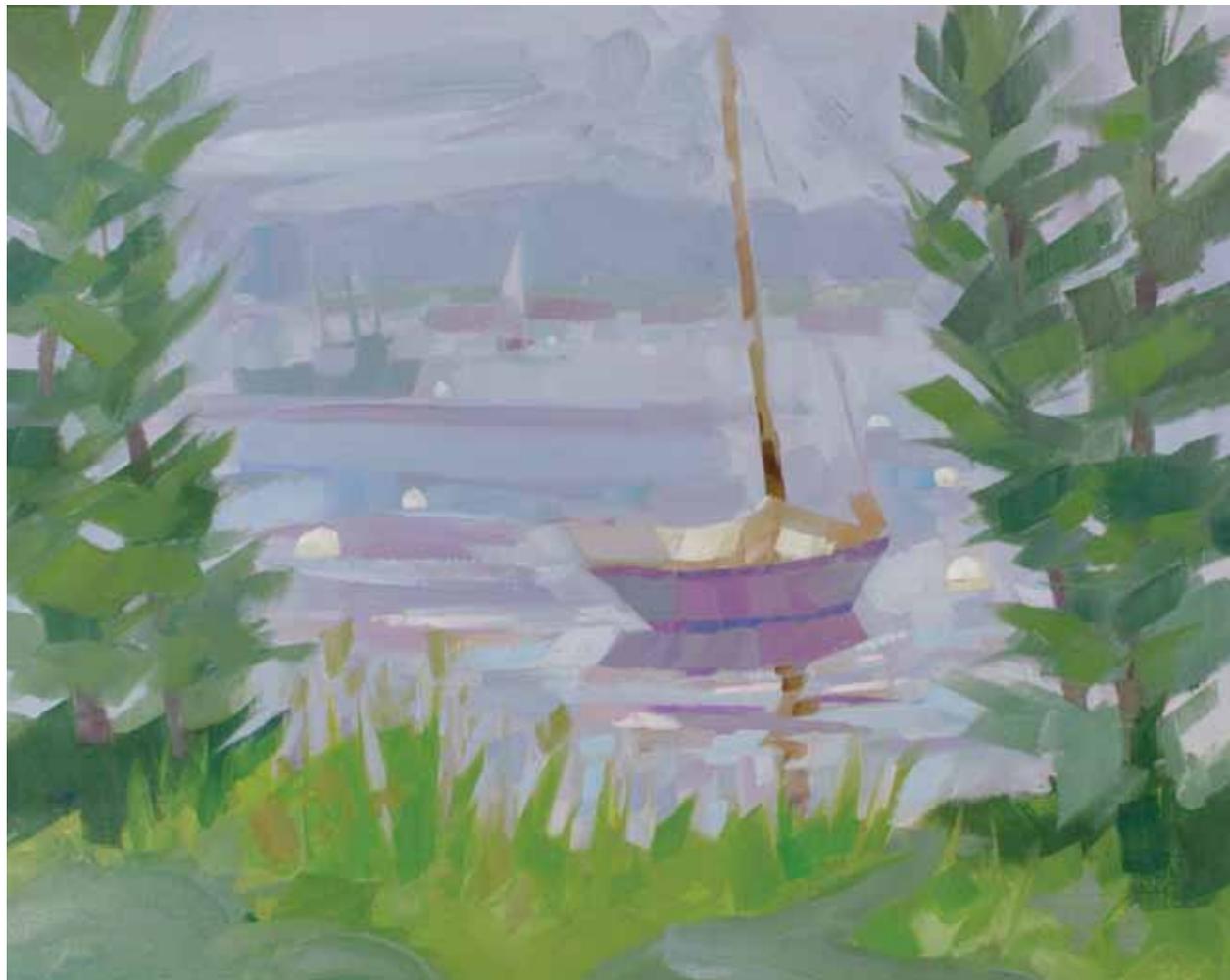
Fog and Sparkle, 2018, oil on canvas, 11 x 14 inches



Summer Shadow, 2018, oil on canvas, 11 x 14 inches



Fading Mist, 2018, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches



Misty Harbor, 2018, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



Tree Top Twilight, 2018, oil on linen, 24 x 30 inches



Light Beyond, 2018, oil on panel, 6 x 6 inches



Liquid Lemon Light, 2018, oil on panel, 6 x 6 inches



Summer Haze, Mount Desert, 2017, oil on panel, 6 x 6 inches



Caterpillar Hill
2018
oil on linen
36 x 60 inches



Near Far, 2017, oil on canvas, 18 x 18 inches



Facets, 2017, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches



Looking North from the Mountain, 2018, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches



Rain Showers, 2017, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches



Pink Dianthus, 2018, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches



Blue, 2017, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches



The Ocean is a Wetter Version of the Sky, 2018, oil on panel, 12 x 12 inches



Enjoying the Shade, 2017, oil on linen panel, 8 x 10 inches



Lapis Lazuli Coast, 2018, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches



Violet and Viridian Tango, 2018, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches



Where Does the Sky Stop and the Ocean Begin?, 2018, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches



The Day is Done, 2018, oil on canvas, 12 x 16 inches



The Sun Also Shines, 2018, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



Winter Light, 2018, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches



Faith in the Sun
2018
oil on linen
36 x 60 inches



Winter Melt, 2018, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches



The Sun Rises and Reaches into the Earth, 2018, oil on canvas,
18 x 24 inches



Winter Tracks, 2018, oil on canvas, 12 x 16 inches



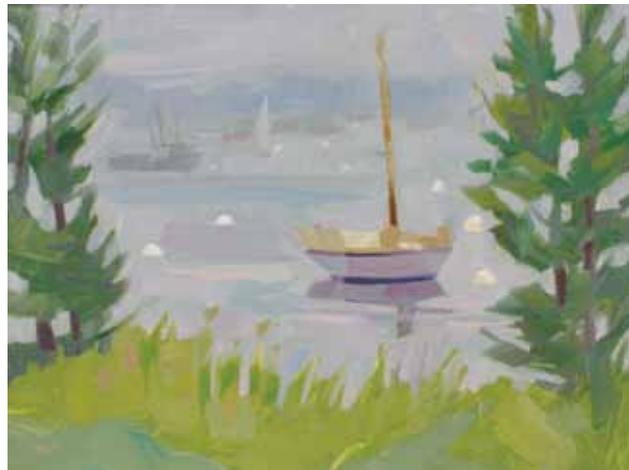
Long Pond, 2017, oil on canvas, 12 x 16 inches



Sea and Tree, 2017, oil on linen panel, 9 x 12 inches



Tree Top Twilight Study, 2018, oil on canvas, 8 x 10 inches



Misty Harbor Study, 2018, oil on canvas, 12 x 16 inches



The Patterns of Lobstermen Study, 2018, oil on linen, 11 x 14 inches



Path to Discovery, 2017, oil on canvas, 12 x 16 inches



Lily Pond, 2017, oil on linen panel, 8 x 10 inches

PHILIP FREY



BORN 1967, Portland, Maine

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2009, 2011, '13, '14, '16, '18
Edgewater Gallery, Middlebury, VT, 2018
Carver Hill Gallery, Rockland, ME, 2017
University of Maine Museum of Art, Bangor, ME 2016
Maine Art Gallery, Kennebunk, ME, 2015
Gleason Fine Art, Boothbay Harbor, ME 2012

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2006–2018
Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME, 2001–2004, '14, '16, '17, '18
Maine Art Gallery, Kennebunk, ME, 2008–2018
Edgewater Gallery, Middlebury, VT, 2017
Thos. Moser, Freeport, ME 2008, 2016, '17
Penobscot Marine Museum, (juried), Searsport, ME 2004, 2016
Gleason Fine Art, Boothbay Harbor, ME 2010–2016
Bert Gallery, Providence, RI, 2014
University of Maine, Lord Hall Gallery, Orono, ME 2010
The Firehouse Gallery, Damariscotta, ME 2003–2009
Shaw Jewelry, Northeast Harbor, ME 2001–2008
Élan Fine Art, (juried) Rockport, ME 2007
George Marshall Store Gallery, ME 2006
Target Gallery, (juried), Alexandria, VA 2003
Clark House Gallery, Bangor, ME 1998, '99, 2000, '01
Argosy Gallery, Bar Harbor, ME 1997, 98, '99, 2000

McGrath Dunham Gallery, Castine, ME 1996, '97, 98, '99, 2000
Between the Muse Gallery, Rockland, ME 1997
Spring Street Gallery, Belfast, ME, 1997
June Fitzpatrick Gallery, Portland, ME 1996
Frick Gallery, Belfast, ME 1994

SELECTED CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

Acorn Capitol Management, PA
Company C, NH
Dick Wolf Films, Dick Wolf, CA

AWARDS

Castine Plein Air Festival, First Place Award, Castine, Maine 2014
Heliker-LaHotan Foundation Residency, Great Cranberry Island 2012
Good Idea Grant, Maine Arts Commission 2004

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Kany, Daniel, and Carl Little. *Philip Frey: Here and Now*. Marshall Wilkes, 2018.
Little, Carl, and David Little. *Paintings of Portland*. Down East Books, 2018.
Little, Carl, and David Little. *Art of Acadia*. Down East Books, 2016.
Kany, Daniel. "Greenhut's Biennial 'Portland Show' Sets a Standard." *Portland Press Herald*, 2016.
Burnham, Emily. "Finding Solace in Landscape." *Bangor Daily News*, 2016
Kingham, George. "Regionalism and Contemporary Artists in Maine: Opportunities and Challenges." *Maine Policy Review* 24.1, 2015.
Kadour, Ric Kasini. "Philip Frey: Lavish Attention," exhibition catalog. Maine Art Gallery. 2015.
Gettysburg Review, Fall 2012.
Little, Carl. "Philip Frey: In the Moment." *Art New England*, 2014
Kany, Daniel. "The Cultural Space of Painting," exhibition catalog. Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, 2014.
Little, Carl. "Fresh Ways," exhibition catalog. Courthouse Gallery Fine Art. 2011.
McAvoy, Suzette, "The Canvas." *Maine Home+Design*, 2010.
Maine Home+Design, "One's to Watch." 2009.
Maine Home+Design, "Extraordinary Artists Whose Work Reflects Maine's Timeless Mystique." 2008.
Carl Little, and Arnold Skolnick. *Paintings of Maine: A New Collection*. Down East Books, 2006.
Carl Little, and Arnold Skolnick. *The Art of Monhegan Island*. Down East Books, 2004.

EDUCATION

BFA (Painting) Cum Laude, Syracuse University, NY 1990
Columbus College of Art and Design, Columbus, OH 1986–1988



Frozen Quarry, 2018, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches

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