



JOSEPH KEIFFER

COURTHOUSE GALLERY  
FINE ART

# JOSEPH KEIFFER

AUGUST 12 – SEPTEMBER 4, 2020

*I Still Believe In Beauty*



*Lilacs In A Silver Cup*, oil on panel, 7 x 5 inches

COVER *Red Floor*, oil on canvas, 20 x 24 inches

COURTHOUSE GALLERY  
FINEART

6 court street ellsworth, maine 04605    [courthousegallery.com](http://courthousegallery.com)    207 667 6611



*Dawn, Maine*  
oil on canvas  
44 x 32 inches



*Morning Fog*, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches

# JOSEPH KEIFFER *I Still Believe In Beauty*



*A Gentle Breeze*, oil on canvas, 16 x 12 inches

RIGHT *Red Floor*, oil on canvas, 20 x 24 inches

Beauty is a word seldom heard in writing about contemporary art. Maybe the omission is appropriate, because beauty, after all, is better experienced than discussed. But why is there so little beauty when one visits a Chelsea gallery, or an exhibition at a cutting edge private art museum?

Beauty is a precious commodity, and I look for it wherever I go, every day. Beauty can be difficult to find because it is so challenging to see. Sometimes, when one thinks they see beauty, they are only seeing pretty.

What is the difference? I hasten to say it is not for me to arbitrate this distinction, but let me take a stab at explaining the difference for me. Pretty relies on old solutions, formulas that are predictable and safe. Pretty does not shoot for the moon.

For beauty, however, think Beethoven symphonies and Chopin sonatas. In painting think Fairfield Porter, Richard Diebenkorn, or Wayne Thiebaud. These works are beautiful because their creators took chances. Their work is unpredictable yet has a way of making its case; of telling the viewer this is True. Sometimes truths shout at you; sometimes they whisper.

In my opinion, beauty is what you see in nature; truth is what you see in art. To see a painting (or to hear music), one must make some effort to grasp the artist's intention. A painting explains itself through a





*Porch Morning*, oil on canvas, 15 x 16 inches

visual language. A successful painting does not require a paragraph of explanation, or a video from a curator. Art should be self-explanatory.

I am attracted by respectful and modest interactions between humans and nature, or something hand-made. Here I find beauty. I don't like highways or high-rises, or things made of plastic.

I find beauty in a variety of places with light being the primary subject and motivating force. Light creates moods and feelings because it colors everything we see. Light makes a landscape, an interior, or a still life into something beautiful, or not. If I see it as beautiful, I will paint it, and if not, I move on.

Most of my landscapes intend to "take you there," to give you the feeling of what it was like to be at that place. *Weather On Frenchmen's Bay* is an elaboration of an oil sketch from a site on top of Cadillac Mountain, a place I never fail to visit several times every summer. The blueberry barrens in Sedgwick have become, for me, the essence of Maine. There is something wild and raw about these barrens even on the quietest summer afternoon.

In my past two summers in Maine, I went about my usual rounds between Winter Harbor, Mount Desert Island, and the Penobscot peninsula. But last summer, I was given the marvelous opportunity to spend a week at a summerhouse on Great Spruce Head Island. The house is a brilliantly and gracefully designed cottage, and my show includes a number of paintings from inside and outside the house.

So where did beauty go? It never went away. And there are no rules for beauty. I give the cutting-edge artists the benefit of the doubt: They are looking for new and

different kinds of beauty. A small handful will succeed. I don't believe that beauty or truth inheres in style. Style is the product of an artist's sensibility.

After a day sketching, I am often dismayed to find the most beautiful sight of the day happens during the last hours. My painting of Seal Harbor was one of those moments. Beauty is often an unexpected surprise.

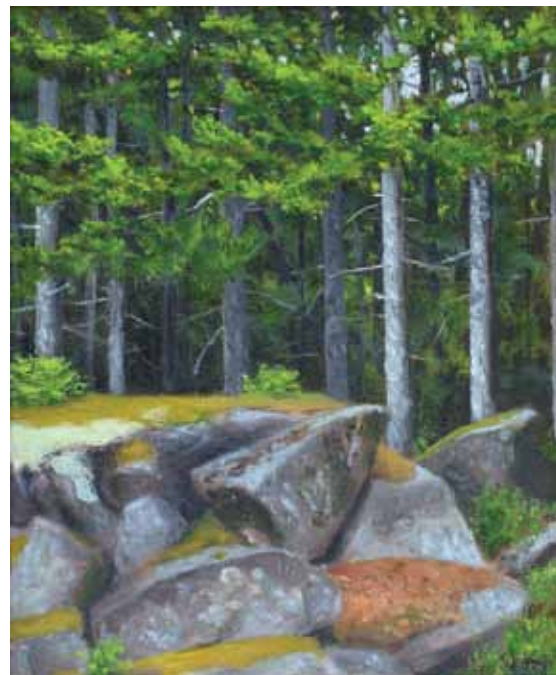
—Joseph Keiffer



*The Colors of Penobscot*, oil on canvas, 10 x 10 inches



*The Red Bucket*, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches



*Maine Woods*, oil on canvas, 12 x 10 inches



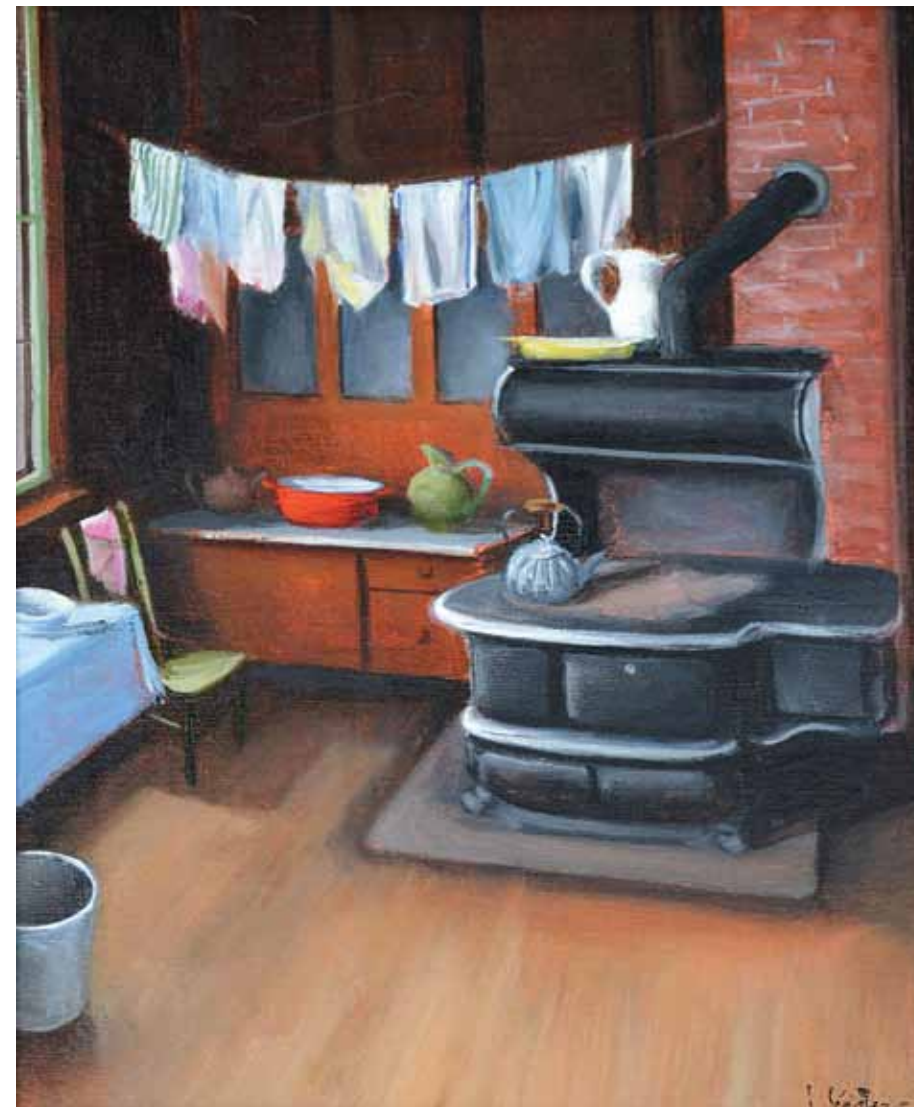
*Sunny Porch*  
oil on canvas  
20 x 16 inches



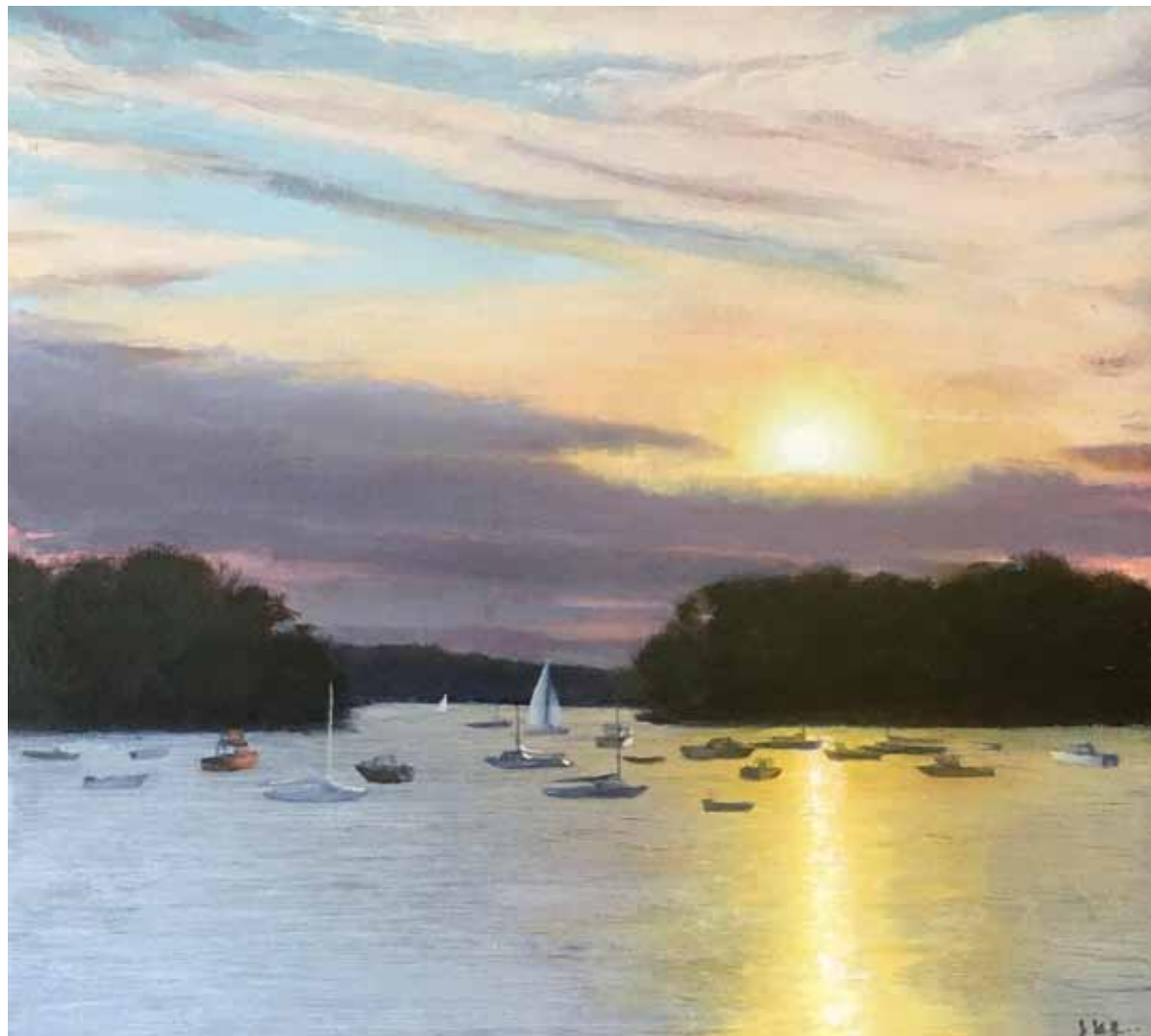
*The Blueberry Barren, Sedgewick*  
oil on canvas  
20 x 50 inches



*White Door*  
oil on canvas  
18 x 14 inches



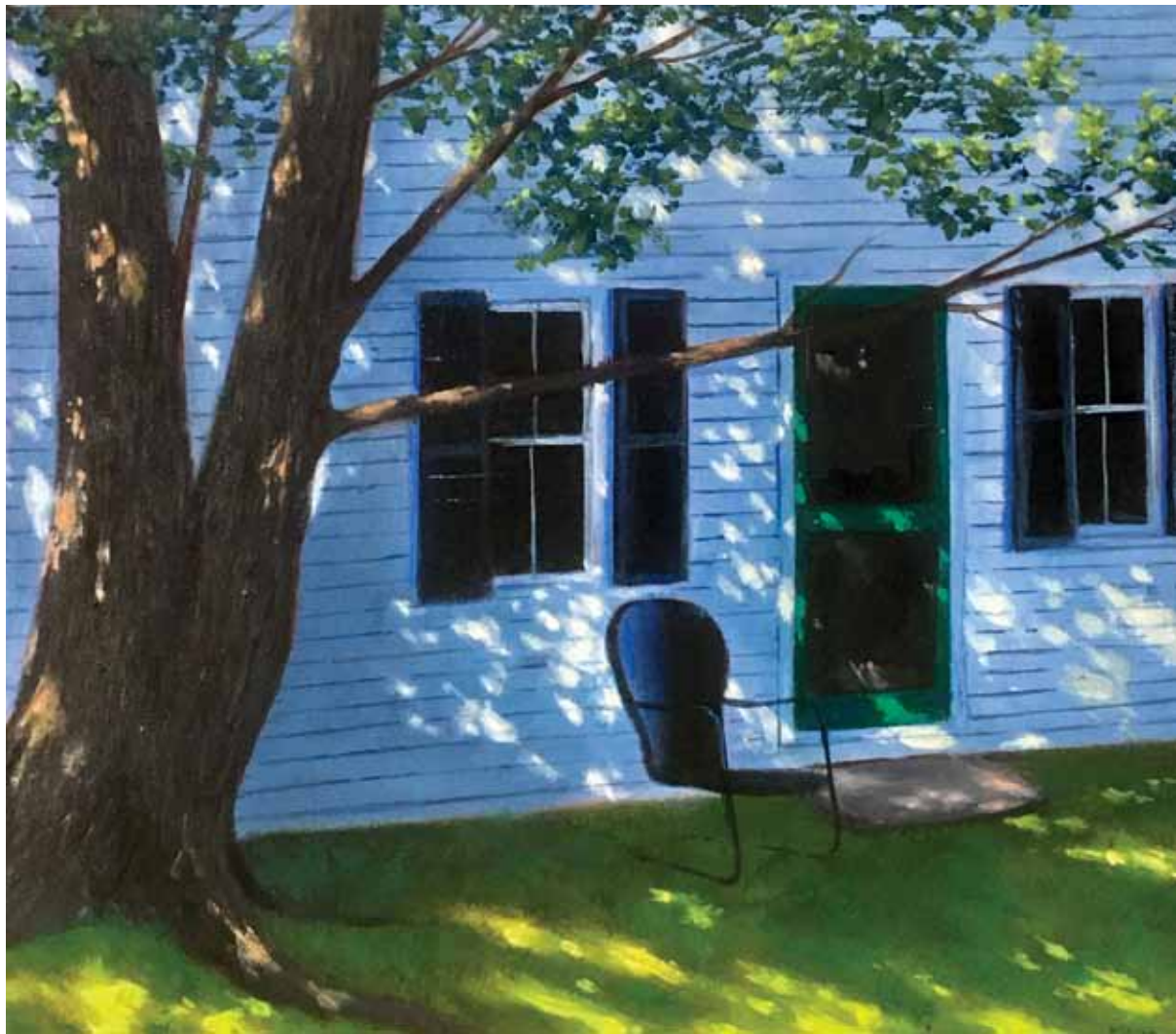
*Old Reliable*  
oil on canvas  
12 x 10 inches



*Little Harbor, Dusk*, oil on canvas, 18 x 20 inches



*Socked In*  
oil on canvas  
20 x 16 inches



*Sun-dappled*, oil on canvas, 16 x 18 inches



*Harvest Moon*, oil on canvas, 18 x 20 inches



*Somesville Meadow*, oil on canvas, 15 x 30 inches



*On Top Of Cadillac*, oil on canvas, 10 x 20 inches



*Summer Moon, Seal Harbor*, oil on canvas, 28 x 30 inches



*Daffodils In A Meissen Pitcher*  
oil on canvas  
15 x 30 inches

*Garden Nursery, Surry*  
oil on canvas  
15 x 30 inches





*Red Rocks On The Sound*, oil on canvas, 10 x 18 inches



*Blueberry Barren*, Sedgwick, oil on canvas, 20 x 30 inches



*Eagle Lake*, oil on canvas, 28 x 30 inches



*Weather On Frenchman's Bay*, oil on canvas, 12 x 30 inches



**JOSEPH KEIFFER** (b.1952) is a realist painter who credits the Hudson River School as an important influence and source of inspiration. Keiffer’s paintings ignite the senses with a cornucopia of imagery and emotions—awe, intimacy, playfulness, wonder, and joy. He takes the viewer from brilliant sunlight to twilight, from panoramic vista to cozy interior, and from fields of lavender lupine to cardboard boxes brimming with splashy annuals.

Keiffer was born in New York City. His father was a painter, and his mother was a writer, which enabled the family to spend quite a few years abroad, mainly in Europe. While living in Paris, Keiffer began painting at the age of seventeen. The following year he enrolled at Brandeis University, and after several leaves of absence to attend the New York Studio School, he graduated with degrees in philosophy and art history.

Following a year at Sotheby’s “Works of Art” course, Keiffer was employed by Sotheby’s as a cataloguer and appraiser of paintings, and after six years there, and three years at Doyle Galleries, he became a private art dealer

and president of a non-profit art foundation. In his thirties, Keiffer began painting full time, and for his living. In retrospect, Keiffer says, “I learned more about art history from my years in the art trade than I did in college, and I learned more about painting by looking at reality than from anything taught in art school.”

In the exhibition catalog for Keiffer’s 2016 solo show at Courthouse Gallery, author Lynne Barrett, an ardent collector of Keiffer’s work, says:

*“After you’ve looked long at Keiffer’s paintings, a strange thing will happen, or at least it has to me. In a familiar room, you’ll find you’re appreciating a corner, its angles and odd charm. And standing outdoors at twilight, picking out the deepening hues of foliage and sky, you’ll discover you’re awake in a world waiting to be perceived.”*

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS (selected)

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2013, ‘14, ‘16, ‘18, ‘20  
 Gallery Neptune & Brown, Washington, DC 2016–2020  
 Jane Roberts Fine Art, An American Eye, Paris, France 2015, 2020  
 Pamela Burns Presents, Recent Paintings, NY 2011  
 Kaaterskill Fine Arts Gallery, Catskills Retrospective, Hunter, NY 2009  
 The Armoire, While the Sweet Fields..., Ellsworth, ME 2009  
 Arlington Art Gallery, Hudson River Views, Poughkeepsie, NY 2008  
 Wingspread Gallery, Northeast Harbor, ME 2006, 2008  
 Jones/Clark, New Paintings, NY 2007  
 The Century Association, Recent Observations, NY 2007  
 Gallery @510, Joseph Keiffer, Harrisburg, PA 2006  
 The Armoire, Ellsworth, ME 1994–2009  
 Beauregard Fine Art, Landscape, Still Life, Interiors, Rumson, NJ 2005

Hubert Gallery, Recent Paintings, New York, NY 2004  
 Beauregard Fine Art, Rumson, NJ 2003  
 Hubert Gallery, Recent Paintings, New York, NY 2002  
 Hubert Gallery, As Far As I Can See, New York, NY 2000  
 The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, Ligonier, PA 1999  
 St. John’s College Art Gallery, Santa Fe, NM 1999  
 70th Street Art Gallery, New York, NY 1995–99  
 Meadow Creek Gallery, Edina, MN 1996  
 Capstick-Dale Fine Arts, NY 1993  
 Tiglietto, Kent, CT 1992  
 Blue Mountain Gallery, New York, NY 1992  
 Garrison Art Center, Garrison, NY 1990

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selected)

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2013–2018  
 Windham Fine Arts, Windham, NY 2016–2018  
 Spanierman Gallery, New York, NY 2011, ‘12, ‘13, ‘14  
 The Gallery at Frenchmen’s Bay, MDI, ME 2011–12  
 Midtown-Payson Gallery, Transport, Hobe Sound, FL 2010  
 Hoorn-Ashby Gallery, Landscape, NY 2007–08  
 Hubert Gallery, The Painted Gift, NY 1999–2004  
 The Century Association, Professional Painters, NY 1997–2007  
 Wingspread Gallery, Northeast Harbor, ME 1999–2001  
 Sherry French Gallery, New York, NY 1998–99  
 Spring Bull Gallery, Summer Invitational, Newport, RI 1999  
 Sherry French Gallery, *Mainely Maine*, NY 1997–98  
 Peter Hastings Falk, Madison, CT 1997  
 Gleason Gallery, Boothbay Harbor, ME 1997  
 The Schoolhouse Gallery, Croton Falls, NY 1995–97  
 Bert Gallery, Providence, RI 1994–95  
 Closson’s Gallery, Cincinnati, OH 1993–95  
 Connoisseur Gallery, Rhinebeck, NY 1992–95  
 Montgomery Gallery, San Francisco, CA 1993  
 Alexander Gallery, New York, NY 1992  
 Blue Mountain Gallery, New York, NY 1990–91

Garrison Art Center, Garrison, NY 1987–90  
 Sherry French Gallery, NY 1989, 1990

## COLLECTIONS (selected)

Adelphi University, Garden City, NY  
 The Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, MA  
 Bryn Mawr College, Special Collections Library, Bryn Mawr, PA  
 Ms. Eleanor Alter and Dr. Allan Lans, NY  
 Mr. W.M. Brady, New York, NY  
 Ms. Dominique Browning, NY  
 Ms. Candace Carpenter, NY  
 Ms. Jane Curtin, Egremont, MA  
 Mrs. F.E. Dixon, Lafayette Hill, PA  
 Mrs. Richard B. Fisher, NY  
 Mr. and Mrs. Peter Fairbanks, San Francisco, CA



*Original Sketch at Sedgwick*, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches



*Pansies On A Checked Cloth*, oil on canvas, 11.5 x 9.5 inches

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Ali Haggin, NY  
Mr. and Mrs. George Hambrecht, New York, NY  
Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Janney, Baltimore, MD  
Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Kennedy, New York, NY  
Mr. and Mrs. William I. Koch, Palm Beach, FL  
Mr. Nicholas Lemann, New York, NY  
Mr. James Maroney, Leicester, VT  
Mr. and Mrs. A.D. McCulloch, Bryn Mawr, PA  
Mr. and Mrs. Armour Mellon, Ligonier, PA  
Mrs. Charles Moffett, New York, NY  
Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Milbank, NY  
Ms. Joan Morgan, Washington, DC  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Nederlander and Pat Cook, New York, NY  
Ambassador and Mrs. John Ong, OG  
Mr. John Whitney Payson, Hobe Sound, FL  
Pfizer Art Collection  
Mr. Marc Porter, New York, NY  
Mr. G. Remak Ramsay, NY  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Rathbone, New Canaan, NY  
Sir Peter and Lady Ricketts, London, England  
Mr. and Mrs. George Segal, Kent, CT  
Mme. Arlette Serullaz, Paris, France  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sillerman, NY  
Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, Greensburg, PA  
Mr. Jerry Speyer/Katherine Farley, NY  
Ms. Linda Vester, NY  
Mr. and Mrs. Eric Widing, Ligonier, PA

## EDUCATION

Brandeis University, BA  
New York Studio School  
Sotheby's Works of Art Course



*Homarus Americanus*, oil on canvas, 10 x 12 inches

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