

Nelson White

RETROSPECTIVE



Nelson Holbrook White

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It is with great pleasure that we are hosting the first major retrospective show of Nelson H. “Beebe” White (b. 1932, Waterford, CT). Since 1997, I’ve been lucky enough to make an annual pilgrimage to White’s studio, in Italy or to his family compound in Waterford. In those several hours together, we’d go through the stacks of paintings, and to this art dealer’s frustration, I would be denied access to some of the best works. “Beebe”, smartly, held back. These primo paintings have acted as his ambassadors at museums and special cultural events over the years, as they represent his finest works across a broad spectrum of subject matter. Miraculously, on our recent trip to his home, nestled in the family compound at White’s Point in Waterford, he allowed me to select each and every gem that we came across! The catalogue is a supersized version of our normal publication because there were so many important paintings to illustrate.

Interestingly, there’s a seismic shift in his work this year, which is likely due to the Pandemic’s disruptive impact on his traditional movements. After the summer sequestered on Shelter Island and in New London, White was barred from travelling back to his beloved life in Italy for the first time in over 65 years. His first winter in the United States in a very long time, has yielded some breakthrough autumnal scenes with “Autumn Creek, Lot 9”, and the two “The Road, Shelter Island” paintings. Here White has pushed the color envelope, added more impasto than ever, and simplified the details which has somehow modernized and flattened the images. Most notable is the introduction of an almost dayglow orange, which pops against the bright blue skies, a quintessential East End sight throughout the autumn. These joyous paintings also recall the finest works of his father Nelson C. White and grandfather Henry C. White, who both reveled in the heat of this season’s palette.

By the winter, we see that he pushed this move towards abstraction even further with “Coopers Beach Dec 27th” and “Sunset Seas and Sky, Feb 2021”. These latest works feel like an apt culmination of over 70 years of painting out of doors, “en plein air”. White, like many masterful painters as they enter their latter years, has eliminated unnecessary distractions from his compositions. After so many years of looking directly at color in nature, his mission has narrowed. In these latest works, White’s sole focus has shifted to capturing the magic of the light, through pure color, deftly and liberally laid on his canvas, in wise yet still fresh marks.

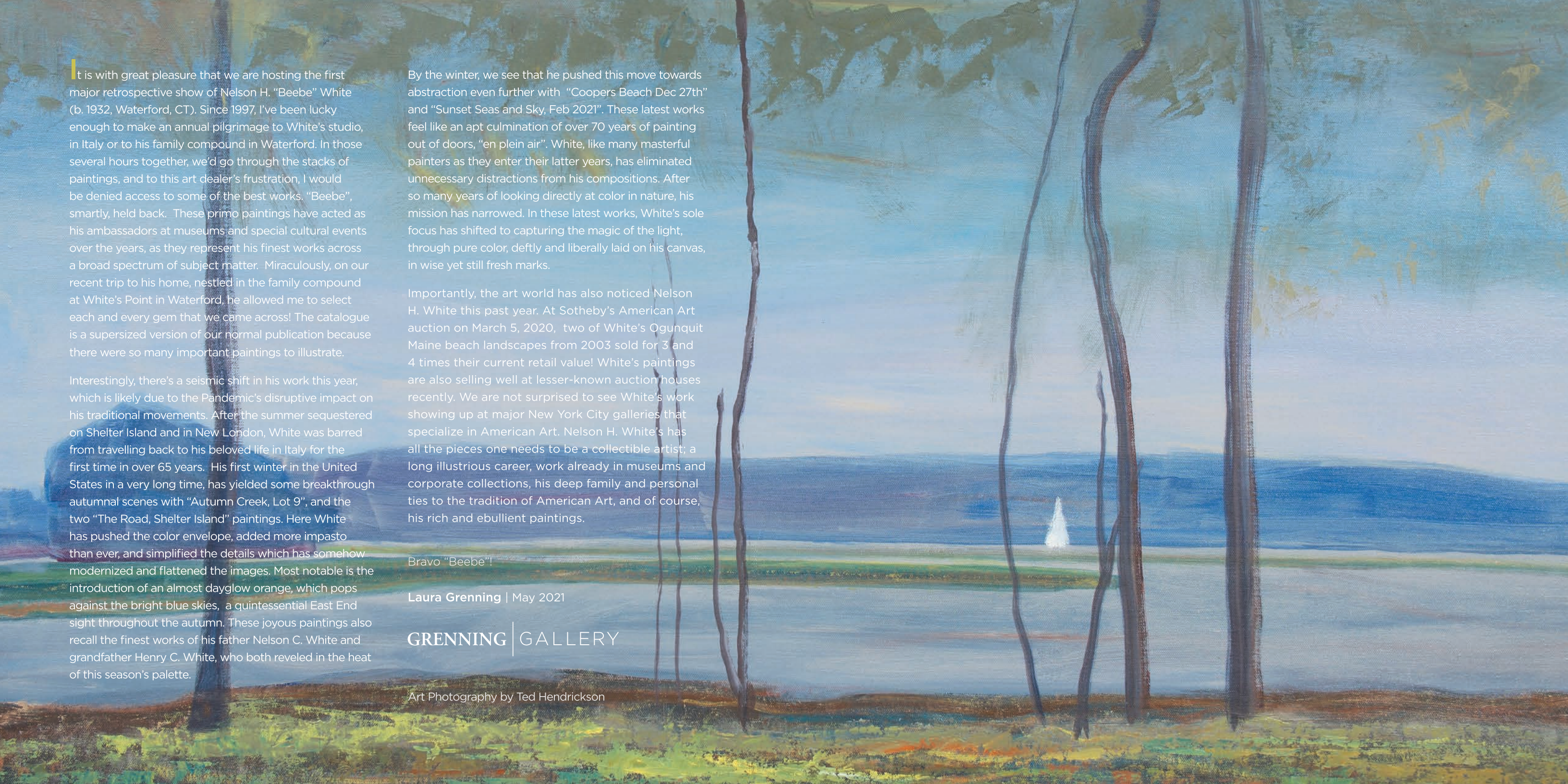
Importantly, the art world has also noticed Nelson H. White this past year. At Sotheby’s American Art auction on March 5, 2020, two of White’s Ogunquit Maine beach landscapes from 2003 sold for 3 and 4 times their current retail value! White’s paintings are also selling well at lesser-known auction houses recently. We are not surprised to see White’s work showing up at major New York City galleries that specialize in American Art. Nelson H. White’s has all the pieces one needs to be a collectible artist; a long illustrious career, work already in museums and corporate collections, his deep family and personal ties to the tradition of American Art, and of course, his rich and ebullient paintings.

Bravo “Beebe”!

Laura Grenning | May 2021

GRENNING | GALLERY

Art Photography by Ted Hendrickson





“Bagno Paradiso, Italy | 06.05.2015”
16 x 24 in, Oil, 2015



“The Woods, Shelter Island | 09.29.2020”
20 x 48 in, Oil, 2020



“Coopers Beach | 12.27.2020”
9 x 12 in, Oil, 2020



“Coopers Beach, Southampton | 07.25.2020”
8 x 12 in, Oil, 2020



“Sunset, Sea & Sky | 02.01.2021”
30 x 40 in, Oil, 2021



“The Road, Shelter Island, NY | 11.10.2020”
8 x 12 in, Oil, 2020



“The Road, Shelter Island | 11.18.2020”
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2020



“Autumn, The Creek, Shelter Island (Lot 9) | 09.08.2020”
18 x 32 in, Oil, 2020



"Autumn, Waterford | 11.01.2015"
16 x 24 in, Oil, 2015



"The Marsh, Waterford | 11.05.2020"
12 x 20 in, Oil, 2020



"Coopers Beach No. 3 | 09.01.2020"
18 x 32 in, Oil, 2020



“Jamaican Scene | 03.30.2021”
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2021



“The Wild Rose Hip Bush | 06.23.2020”
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2020



“Shelter Island, Long Island, NY | 01.01.2000”
16 x 24 in, Oil, 2000



“The Sea, Harmony | 05.26.2019”
12 x 20 in, Oil, 2019



“Viareggio, Italy No. 2 | 04.12.2008”
16 x 24 in, Oil, 2008



“Sunset in the Dunes | 01.01.2003”
27 x 70 in, Oil, 2003



“Coopers Beach No. 1 | 08.01.2020”
16 x 24 in, Oil, 2020



“Mashomack Point | 01.01.2013”
20 x 48 in, Oil, 2013



“The Waves | 08.29.2010”
8 x 12 in, Oil, 2010



“Bagno La Salute | 09.19.2019”
30 x 40 in, Oil, 2019



“Sea & Sky, Bahamas | 12.19.2018”
6 x 12 in, Oil, 2018



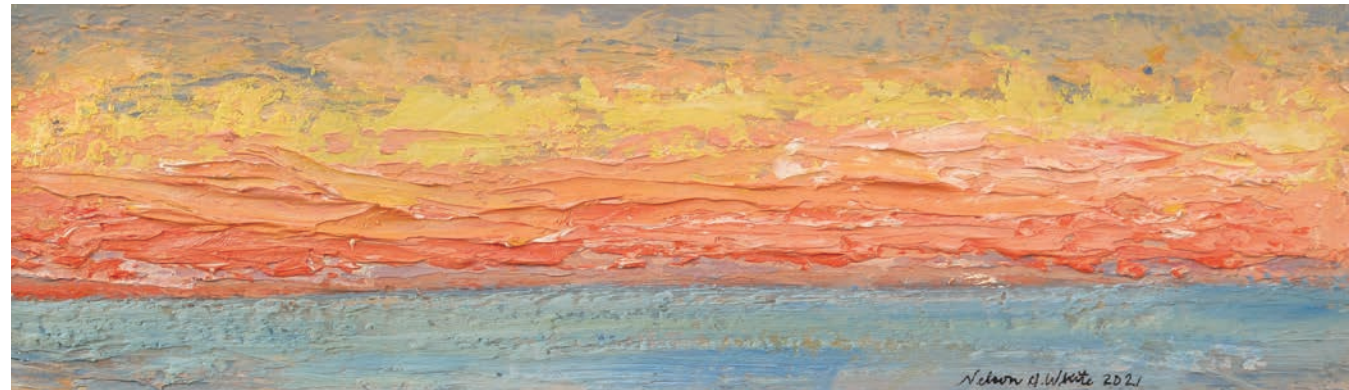
“Sea & Sky, Bahamas | 01.01.2013”
14 x 35 ½ in, Oil, 2013



“The Waves Coopers Beach | 08.29.2020”
8 x 12 in, Oil, 2020



"The Flame Tree, Jamaica | 03.17.2021"
4 x 6 in, Oil, 2021



"Sunset, Sea & Sky | 02.21.2021"
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2021



"Cable Beach, Nassau, Bahamas | 12.23.2004"
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2004



"Bagno Cabotto, Viareggio, Italy | 04.29.2007"
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2007



"Beach Scene, Ogunquit, Maine | 04.02.1996"
9 ½ x 12 in, Oil, 1996



"Bagno La Salute | 01.01.2016"
30 x 40 in, Oil, 2016



“Dering Harbor, Shelter Island, NY | 08.01.2006”
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2006



“Bagno La Salute | 09.19.2019”
18 x 32 in, Oil, 2019



“Tranquility | 04.05.2008”
16 x 22 in, Oil, 2008



“Mashomack Point | 12.27.2005”
9 x 20 in, Oil, 2005



“Waterford, Beach Scene | 08.18.2009”
16 x 24 in, Oil, 2009



“The Waves, Coopers Beach | 09.21.2020”
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2020



“Bagno Carla | 01.01.2008”
12 x 20 in, Oil, 2008



“Bagno La Salute, Viareggio No. 2 | 02.24.2008”
12 x 20 in, Oil, 2008



"The Poppy Field | 01.01.2019"
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2019



"The Poppy Field | 05.02.2019"
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2019



"Bagno Martinelli | 04.01.2019"
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2020



"Bagno La Salute | 09.11.2012"
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2012



"Versilia, Italy | 04.02.2008"
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2008



"Bagno La Salute, Viareggio | 09.03.2008"
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2008



“The Sunset | 01.06.2018”
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2018



“Galilee, Rhode Island | 01.08.1988”
12 x 16 in, Oil, 1988



“Long Beach, Sag Harbor | 11.09.2020”
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2020



“Coelcles Harbor, Shelter Island | 07.21.2002”
9 x 12 in, Oil, 2002



“The Creek, Shelter Island | 09.20.2020”
12 x 24 in, Oil, 2020



“Tuscany | 04.12.2019”
8 x 9 in, Oil, 2019



“Bagno La Salute, Viareggio, Italy | 09.17.2007”
9 x 11 in, Oil, 2007



“Bagno Artiglio | 10.23.2019”
16 x 31 ½ in, Oil, 2019



“The Poppy Field | 05.20.2020”
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2020



“The Poppy Field | 04.21.2019”
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2019



“Pond Lilies | 11.19.2011”
4 x 7 in, Oil, 2011



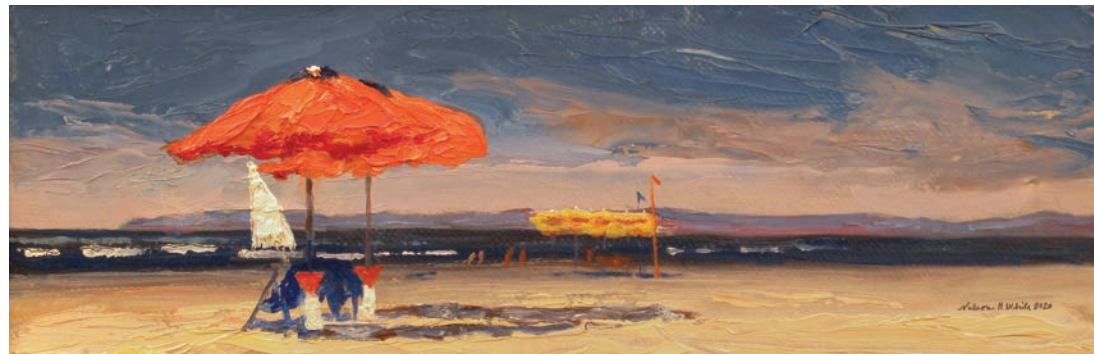
“The Pond Lilies, Sag Harbor | 01.01.2013”
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2013



“The Yellow Umbrella | 05.27.2020”
4 x 6 in, Oil, 2020



“The Yellow Umbrella | 06.07.2020”
4 x 6 in, Oil, 2020



“Versilia, Italy | 01.31.2020”
5 ½ x 16 in, Oil, 2020



“Bagno Martinelli | 05.20.2018”
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2018



“The Waves (Coopers Beach) | 09.02.2020”
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2020



“Noyac | 08.02.2020”
4 x 9 in, Oil, 2020



“Waterford, Connecticut | 07.29.2013”
8 x 10 ¼ in, Oil, 2013



“Coopers Beach | 08.03.2020”
8 x 12 in, Oil, 2020



“Coopers Beach, Southampton, Long Island, NY | 07.26.2020”
8 x 12 in, Oil, 2020



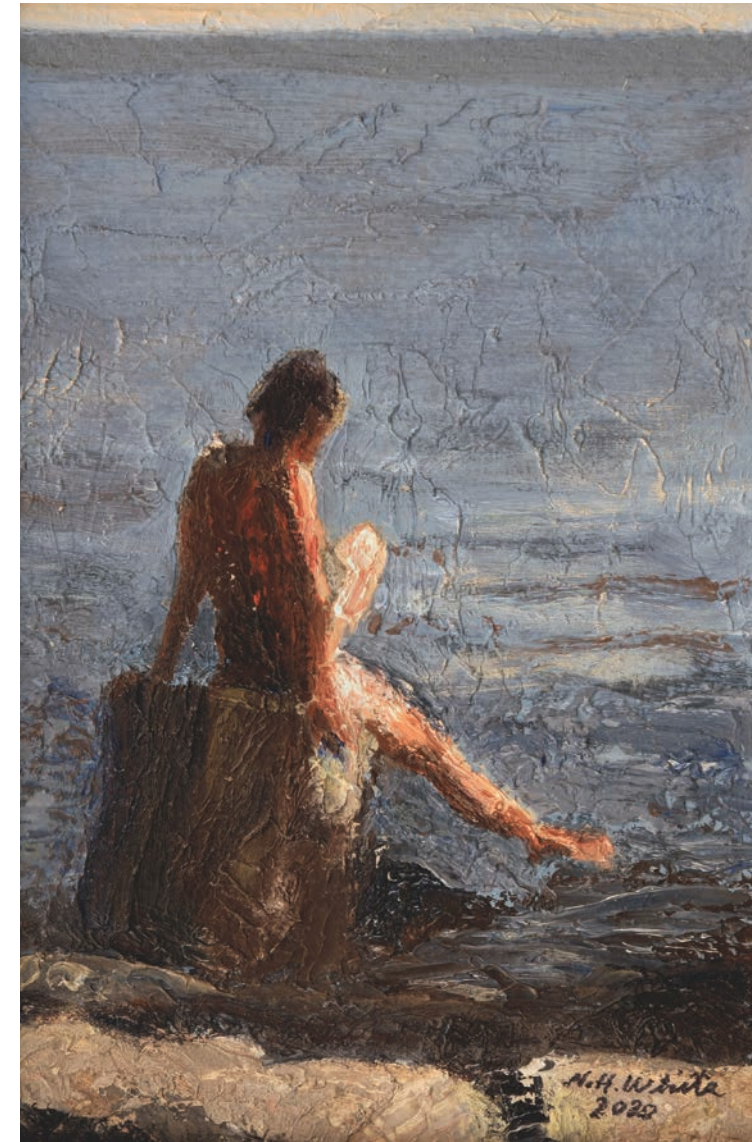
“Ogunquit, Maine | 03.16.2020”
11 x 14 ¼ in, Oil, 2020



“Winter Scene, Pleasure Beach Landing | 02.03.2021”
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2021



“Alpi Apuane | 02.28.2020”
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2020



“At The Seaside, Elba | 05.01.2020”
6 x 4 in, Oil, 2020



“The Poppy Field | 06.11.2011”
4 x 6 in, Oil, 2011



“Tuscan Poppy Field | 01.01.2010”
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2010



"The Flame Tree | 03.19.2021"
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2021



"Bagno Artiglio, Viareggio | 03.18.2019"
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2019



"Nassau, Bahamas | 12.18.2019"
9 x 12 in, Oil, 2019



“Healdsburg, California | 11.08.2009”
4 x 9 in, Oil, 2009



“The Brooklyn Bridge No. 3 | 01.30.2011”
4 x 9 in, Oil, 2011



“St. Petersburg, Russia | 01.17.2004”
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2004



“Bagno Paradiso | 09.07.2015”
4 x 11 in, Oil, 2015



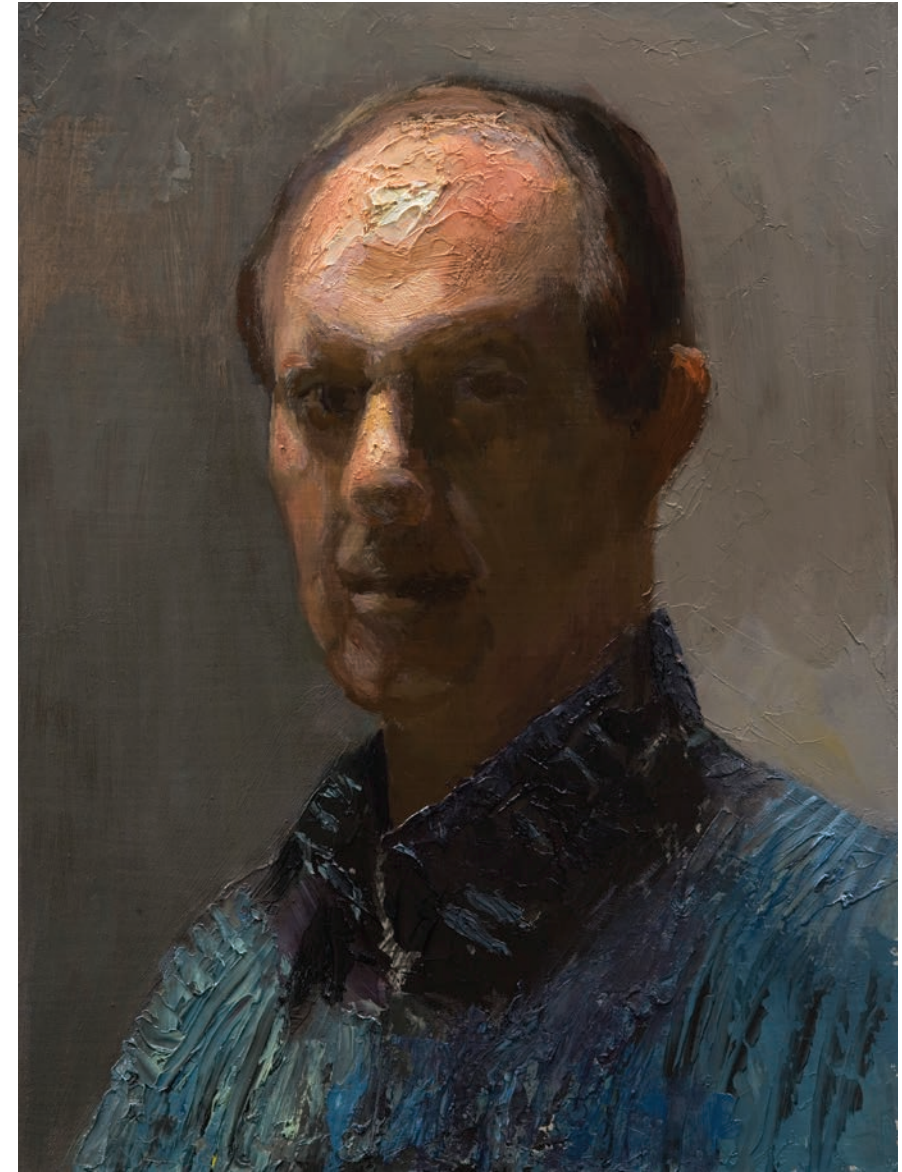
“Sunset Lido Di Torre Del Lago | 04.25.2003”
8 x 12 in, Oil, 2003



“The Wild Rose Bush | 06.17.2020”
9 x 16 in, Oil, 2020



"The Marsh | 01.01.2009"
24 x 36 in, Oil, 2009



"Self Portrait | 01.01.2011"
16 x 12 in, Oil, 2011

Nelson H. White (b.1932, Waterford, CT) has been surrounded by art and artists since birth. He received his earliest art instruction from his grandfather, Henry Cooke White (1861-1952) and his father Nelson Cooke White (1900-1989), both important American artists. The family lived in Waterford, Connecticut and the eldest White had been an early member of the art colony in Old Lyme, Connecticut. Known for his paintings of the Connecticut landscape and shoreline, Henry Cooke White became a teacher to his son, Nelson Cooke White. Living with his parents at the Florence Griswold house in Old Lyme, N.C. White met some of the most important and influential artists of the day, including but not limited to Childe Hassam, Will Howe Foote and Harry Hoffman.



“The Oysters”
N.C. White, 6 x 20 in, Oil, 1947

In 1908, Nelson H. White’s grandfather bought some waterfront property and began to take his family to summer on Shelter Island. The White clan became friendly with many of the artists of the Peconic Colony such as Irving Wiles, an important American impressionist, and the Prellwitz family. After graduating from the Tabor Academy in Marion, Massachusetts in 1951, Nelson H. White began to study at Mitchell College in Connecticut but left to pursue studies in the violin, musical theory and composition. At this time, he began to spend more time studying art with his father and grandfather. By 1955, Nelson H. White had decided to devote himself to a career as a painter and traveled to Florence, Italy to become an apprentice to Pietro Annigoni, the world-renowned Florentine master. Within two years, the young White had won two awards for his work. While in Florence he also studied with the great Italian teacher, Nerina Simi. Today, White divides his time between Shelter Island, NY; Waterford, CT and Florence, Italy.

Although he has received instruction from some very important artists, White’s work is highly individual. He paints with great spirit. Upon seeing his work one quickly senses White’s great love for nature and the outdoors. Through his eyes we are able to view and interpret nature in an intimate manner. Whether Nelson H. White is painting the Connecticut shore, a beach in Italy, a pond on Shelter Island or the hills of Vermont, he allows the observer to view a soft, yet dramatic side of nature. His ability to use color, coupled with rich brush work and a graduation

of light, one senses the air and atmosphere. Drenched in the tradition of American impressionism, combined with his decision to be a lifelong student of classical training, means that White is able to sense and then convey the feeling of a place in his paintings. It is a mood that leaves us with a lasting impression.

Since the early 1950s White has shown his work in numerous galleries across the globe, from the United States all the way to Italy and Russia. White’s first museum retrospective was in the New Britain Museum of American Art in July 2012. His work can be found in many private and public collections, as well as several museums.

COLLECTIONS

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut | New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, CT
Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, Connecticut | Pfizer Corporation | Fleet Bank

EXHIBITIONS + AWARDS

- 2021 Retrospective, Solo Show, Grenning Gallery
- 2020 *California Dreaming*, Group Show, Grenning Gallery
- 2019 *Thick & Wet*, Group Show, Grenning Gallery
- 2018 *Neptune in Pisces*, Group Show, Grenning Gallery
- 2017 Nelson White, Solo Show, Grenning Gallery
- 2014 Grenning Gallery, Group Show, *Summer Landscapes*
- 2013 Grenning Gallery, Group Show, *Immerse Yourself*
- 2012 New Britain Museum of American Art, *Scenic Spirit*
- 2011 Florence Academy of Art, Alumnae Exhibit & W. H. Patterson, London
- 2010 Nelson H. White Solo Show, Grenning Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY
- 2009 W. H. Patterson Gallery, London, Florence Academy of Art Alumni Show & Grenning Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY, Group Show
- 2008 Centro Francese Internazionale, Massa, Italy, Group Show / W. H. Patterson Gallery, London, Florence Academy of Art Alumni Show / Cooley Gallery, Old Lyme, CT, *All Paintings Great and Small*, Group Show

- 2007 Grenning Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY, *Studio Selects* / W. H. Patterson Gallery, London, Florence Academy of Art Alumni Show / Cooley Gallery, Old Lyme, CT, All Paintings Great and Small, Group Show Brigham Gallery, Florence Academy of Art Alumni Exhibition, Nantucket, MA
- 2006 W. H. Patterson Gallery, London, Florence Academy of Art Alumni Show / Brigham Gallery / Florence Academy of Art Alumni Show, Nantucket, MA
- 2005 Grenning Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY, *Shifting Sands* / Florence Academy of Art Alumni Show, Florence, Italy
- 2005-11 Maritime Gallery at Mystic Seaport, Mystic, CT, *International Maritime Art Exhibition*
- 2004 Grenning Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY, *By the Sea, By the Lovely Sea*
- 2003 Grenning Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY, *Two person show with Urban Larsson* / Hirschl and Adler Galleries, NYC / Panorama Museum, East Germany, *Realism Revisited* ** Also Awarded the Career Award, Biennale Internazionale, Florence
- 2002 Grenning Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY, *Local Landscapes & Unique Florals*
- 2001 Grenning Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY, *Sumptuous Still Lifes & Lush Landscapes* / *The New Masters Show*, General Electric Headquarters, Fairfield, CT / Museum of Maritime History, New London, CT, *Whites of Waterford* / Flinn Gallery, Greenwich, CT, *Three Generations of Whites*
- 2000 Grenning Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY, Solo Show
- 1998-99 Grenning Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY, Group Shows
- 1997 Feathers Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ
- 1992 Kolomenskoy Museum, Moscow, Russia
- 1990 Hammer Gallery, New York, NY, Solo Show
- 1985 Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, CT
- 1964 Lyman Allyn Museum, New London, CT

ART EDUCATION

- 1999—Present The Florence Academy of Art, Florence, Italy
- 1956—1987 Student of Ms. Nerina Simi, Florence Italy
- 1955—1980 Apprentice to Pietro Annigoni, Florence, Italy and studied watercolor painting with Ogden Pleissner
- 1940—1955 Student of H.C. White and N.C. White



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Detail from "Bagno La Salute, Viareggio No. 2" 12 x 20 in, Oil, 2008