



Viktor Butko

The Hannibal French House

Oil on linen, 25" x 30" (2018)

Our cover artist, who was born in Moscow in 1978, breathed in the fumes of solvents and linseed oil daily as a child on visits to Verkhnyaya Maslovka street, where his grandfather, the well-known landscape painter Viktor Chulovich, had his studio. Viktor's parents, Nikolai Butko and Marina Chulovich, were artists, too, as were the Verkhnyaya Maslovka street neighbors: Arkady Plastov had a studio downstairs, and Viktor's grandfather would summon Plastov and his own artist offspring to communal dinners in the studio by banging on the radiator pipes. In summertime, the Butko family would follow Chulovich to a village between Moscow and St. Petersburg called Vyshny Volochok, where young Viktor would wander the woods and build forts out of the native aspen and alder.

Today, Butko is married to a New England realist painter, Kelly Carmody, and lives in Waltham, Mass., making frequent working pilgrimages to the Maine coast and to Sag Harbor. Indeed, as he told Boston Voyager magazine, it was through the port of Sag Harbor that he came to the United States: He had met a group of plein air painters, including Ben Fenske and Marc Dalessio, in Italy in 2013, and a few years later was invited to participate with them in an exhibition at the Grenning Gallery (which represents both Butko and his wife).

He is an Impressionist painter. His subjects are things of loveliness, caught in moments of quiet, of stillness — a hammock out of which someone has just risen, an osprey nest in the gloaming, lilacs in a vase, wet snow in woods — but his work is not sentimental. He shows us our world as it is, when its plain beauty is evident to those who stop to look. *