

Language of Landscape

New Works by Marguerite Robichaux



PUCKER GALLERY • BOSTON



Sunset on the Lake, 2005 • Maine
Watercolor • 4 x 6"
MR70

Language of Landscape

By Meredith F. Day

Driving toward western Maine to visit my longtime friend Marguerite Robichaux, I get past Portland and begin to feel as if I am heading into one of her paintings. The hills, pale ochre, roll out before me, and birch branches wear their leaves with an open delicacy that breathes light into the thick growth below. Marguerite has never made an effort to reinvent this poetry on her own terms, always having taken the more unassuming position of describing a place she knows intimately and loves profoundly.

As I get closer to my destination, the roads narrow and curve before me, and the profiles of mountains that Marguerite can see from her back door appear beyond familiar stands of dark green conifers. I have just one more river to cross before I arrive at my friend's home and studio, deep in the woods. There, where she has designed a space that leaves no interior untouched by the natural surroundings, I will see her paintings of the land I have traveled through and come to. Her intimacy with the subject is as clear as the windows through which she watches the sun pass over the Bigelow Mountain Range. Everything here bears witness to her unity with the truths of place.

In her studio, the palette echoes nature. Within a subtly modulated middle range, both lights and darks find their harmony, and often drama, in her paintings' space. Marguerite chooses and edits the views I have just seen in order that description will be most fully honored; all the while acknowledging that she is not a camera but an inhabitant. The grandeur of place - this place - is achieved in her work with understated emotion that keeps it unsentimental and corresponds to her own integrity.

With sketch pad and watercolors in hand, she walks the trails of the woods, takes her boat out on the river or sits on her garden deck. She will interrupt painting to pull out her binoculars when she hears a warbler call, or cast her fly rod when fishing looks good. She then returns to her drawing or her painted studies. She will record a fresh impression.

Sometimes Marguerite takes her camera along. She uses photographs less to jog her memory than to bring the trails, and especially the vistas along the highways, back to her easel for companionship. She paints from her own photographs only, and, she is quick to say, "Just the bad ones." But one look at her landscapes tells us these paintings are made from a much deeper place than reproduced images. Marguerite has seen, experienced and internalized what is around her - this is where her paintings come from.

In being determined by her relationship to nature rather than by a camera - or a convention, or a school - the paintings remain, above all, descriptive. If Marguerite exaggerates a bend in a tree trunk or branch, it is at nature's urging - to give the subject an expressive lyricism that she sees. Although she has often said that the drips in her paintings are reminders that the viewer is looking not at a natural view, but at a painting, Marguerite does not strain for transformation as a goal or for self-conscious enactment of "vision." She goes about the work of painting by letting nature guide her as she observes, records, studies, and then gives herself over to its cycles and seasons.

Two recent paintings, *Picked Chicken Hill* (MR82) in Maine and *Feliciano Grove* (MR87) in South Louisiana, stretch the landscape's

horizon out to take the eye along the striations of light and distance associated with landscape painting. Both paintings capture a place at its most tranquil time of day, and the horizontal elongation is quietly affecting. Most of the work, however, has a vertical orientation. Trees are tall where Marguerite lives in Maine, and the space between earth and sky reaches upward. Even when she travels, which she does frequently, she sees the vertical reach of growth and topography. In her recent series of ravines and waterfalls on Ireland's Dingle Peninsula, individual paintings are three and four times as high as they are wide. More than aerial views, these paintings describe, in their verticality and sensitivity to scale, land of vastness and incline into which the water flows, as if through a vein pumping life into the body that contains it. The paintings' modest sizes and literally translated subject belie their abstract force.

The theme of water brings with it a touching reminder of Marguerite's development as an artist. Long before she moved to Maine from our native Baton Rouge, Louisiana, she worked during her high school years at the local art store, whose owner, Ann Collier, was also her art teacher. Part of Marguerite's work involved using watercolor to tint Ann's offset drawings. Marguerite was a natural, having taken to watercolor and used it to explore and record her world from the age of five, when her mother gave her an easel and smock - which she still owns - and enrolled her in art classes.

Overlaying of transparencies and sensitivity to light and surface in watercolor painting were critical in Marguerite's movement into oil painting. During a residency at Vermont Studio Center in 1988, she experimented with larger and meticulously prepared surfaces to adapt her sensibilities to another medium. Having no intention of leaving watercolor, Marguerite continued to use it for studies and small finished works, developing a rhythm of painting in both mediums that she continues to this day. Another residency, this one at Carina House on Monhegan Island in 1990, provided the impetus to keep a journal of ink and watercolor drawings that would record her discoveries and observations. From these visual notes, she made larger oil paintings, as well as new watercolors that might be more inclusive or otherwise amended.

Marguerite has kept her home in Louisiana. The land there, so different from Maine, gave her the first language in which she painted - a language that she continues to use and that has remained an influence on all she has seen since. Green, wet, and profusely floral, Louisiana offers a climate that supports painting outdoors year-round.

When I got to know her in graduate school at Louisiana State University, Marguerite was, like all of us, painting from the figure and doing narrative work along with self-directed studies. She went against the tide in continuing her watercolor landscape painting. She knew well her sensitivities, her responses to observed nature, and her commitment. She remains true to herself and awed by the world she paints. Because of her gifts as a painter she is able to depict her love of that world, and we are able to see it through her eyes.

Meredith Fife Day is an artist and visual arts writer. She is in her fourth year as artist-in-residence at the Whistler House Museum of Art in Lowell, Massachusetts.



Lafourche, 2005 • Louisiana
Watercolor • 6 x 9"
MR101



Minard Castle, 2006 • Ireland
Watercolor • 6 x 9 1/2"
MR111

Maine



Back Falls Fields, 2005 • Maine
Oil on Linen • 54 x 48"
MR76



The Point II, 2005 • Maine
Watercolor • 4 x 5 1/2"
MR65



Morning Fog, 2005 • Maine
Watercolor • 4 x 6"
MR66



The River, 2005 • Maine
Watercolor • 4 x 5 1/2"
MR67



The Flowage, 2005 • Maine
Watercolor • 4 x 5 ½"
MR68



Fields, 200 • Maine
Watercolor • 4 x 5 ½"
MR69



Bigelow, October, 2005 • Maine
Watercolor • 3 ½ x 6"
MR84



Sumac, 2005 • Maine
Watercolor • 4 x 5 ½"
MR71



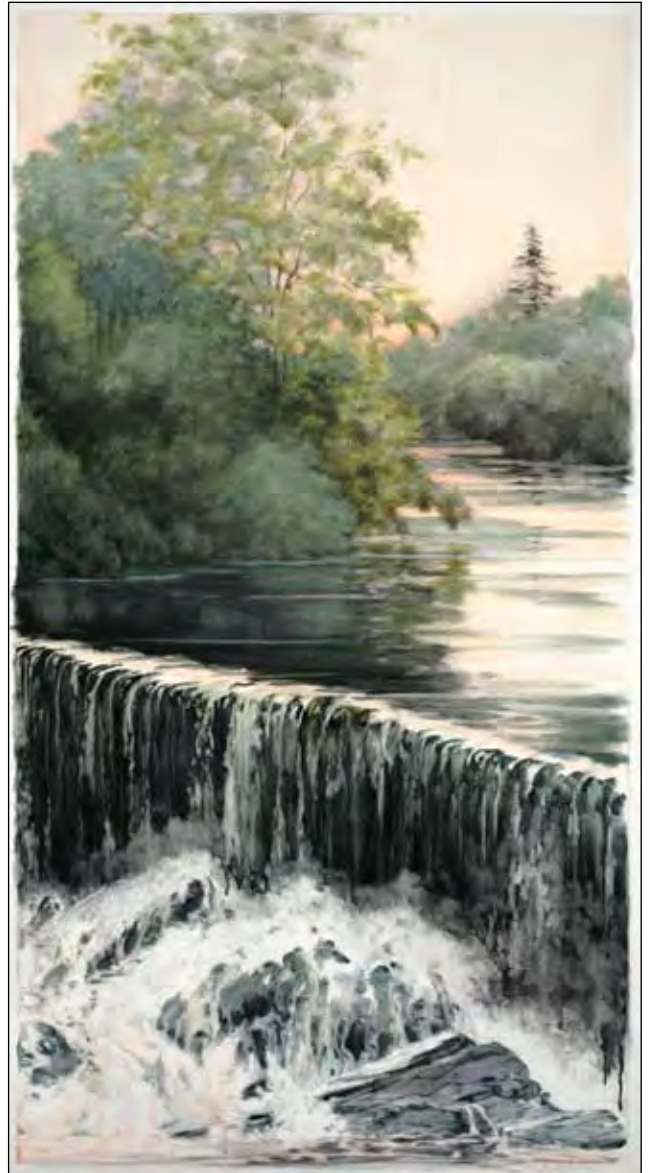
Grand Falls, 2006 • Maine
Hand Colored Etching • 6 x 9"
MR85



Ground Fog, 2005 • Maine
Oil on Linen • 18 x 18"
MR83



Morning Fog, 2005 • Maine
Oil on Linen • 20 x 24"
MR64



Stroudwater, 2005 • Maine
Oil on Linen • 44 x 24"
MR75



Dresden Mills, 2005 • Maine
Oil on Linen • 24 x 40"
MR79



Picked Chicken Hill, 2006-07 • Maine
Oil on Linen • 28 x 56"
MR82



Birch, 2001 • Maine
Oil on Canvas • 60 x 24"
MR80



Poplar, 2001 • Maine
Oil on Canvas • 60 x 24"
MR81



Back of Bigelow, 2001 • Maine
Oil on Canvas • 56 x 56"
MR78

Louisiana



Bayou Banana, 2005-07 • Louisiana
Oil on Linen • 48 x 48"
MR89



Goodwood, 2005 • Louisiana
Watercolor • 9 x 6"
MR97



Mercy, 2005 • Louisiana
Watercolor • 9 x 6"
MR98



Ardenwood, 2005 • Louisiana
Watercolor • 9 x 6"
MR96



Golden Meadow, 2005 • Louisiana
Watercolor • 6 x 9"
MR100



Spillway, 2005 • Louisiana
Watercolor • 6 x 9"
MR99



Oak Alley Triptych, 2005 • Louisiana
Oil on Hinged Wood Panels • 36 x 72” closed
MR86



Oak Alley Triptych, 2005 • Louisiana
Oil on Hinged Wood Panels • 72 x 72” opened
MR86



Swamp Maple, 2005-07 • Louisiana
Oil on Linen • 18 x 18"
MR93



Palmetto, 2005-07 • Louisiana
Oil on Linen • 18 x 18"
MR91



Amaryllis, 2005 • Louisiana
Oil on Linen • 12 x 12"
MR92



Alstroemeria, 2005-07 • Louisiana
Oil on Linen • 12 x 12"
MR95



Cereus, 2005 • Louisiana
Oil on Linen • 12 x 12"
MR90



Dutch Iris, 2005-07 • Louisiana
Oil on Linen • 12 x 12"
MR94



Banana, 2005 • Louisiana
Oil on Linen • 12 x 12"
MR88

Ireland



Dingle Falls, 2006-07 • Ireland
Oil on Yupo • 26 x 20"
MR105



West Minard, County Kerry, 2001 • Ireland
Hand Colored Etching • 9 ¼ x 7"
MR112



Hedgerows, 2006 • Ireland
Oil on Linen • 8 x 8"
MR108



Dingle Bay, 2000 • Ireland
Oil on Birch Panel • 12 x 16"
MR109



Minard, County Kerry, 2005 • Ireland
Watercolor • 4 x 7"
MR74



Glan Mountain, 2000 • Ireland
Oil on Birch Panel • 12 x 16"
MR110



Valley of the Free, County Kerry, 2005 • Ireland
Watercolor • 4 ¾ x 8"
MR73



Glanteenassig Falls, 2006 • Ireland
Oil on Linen • 32 x 10"
MR113



Conarch Falls, 2006 • Ireland
Oil on Linen • 32 x 10"
MR103



Anascaul Falls, 2006 • Ireland
Oil on Linen • 32 x 10"
MR102



Kerry Falls, 2006 • Ireland
Oil on Linen • 38 x 8"
MR104



Acres Mountain, 2006-07 • Ireland
Oil on Yupo • 16 x 20"
MR106



Minard, 2006-07 • Ireland
Oil on Yupo • 13 x 20"
MR107

Biography

EDUCATION

- 1974 MFA, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
1972 BFA cum laude, Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, Louisiana

GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 2000 Percent for Art. Maine State Office Building, Main Lobby, Augusta, Maine
1994 Earthwatch Artist Award.
The Joan and Charles Payson Charitable Foundation
1990 Carina House: A Monhegan Residency.
The Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine
1988 Fellowship. Vermont Studio Colony, Johnson, Vermont

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, Maine
Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine
The Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine
New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, Louisiana
The Ogunquit Museum of American Art, Ogunquit, Maine
Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine
State of Maine, Augusta, Maine
United States Department of State, Washington, D.C.
University of Maine, Orono, Maine
University of Southern Maine, Portland, Maine

LECTURES

- 2005 Lecture. The Rye Art Study Group, Rye, New Hampshire
2001 Panel. *The Art of Somerset County*, L.C. Bates Museum, Hinckley, Maine
1999 Symposium. *Art and Nature*, Maine Audubon Society, Falmouth, Maine
1998 Lecture. *The Farnsworth Guild*, The Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine
1997 Lecture. *Landscapes North and South*, Old State Capitol, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
1996 Lecture. *Professional Women in the Arts*, State Archives, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

- 1993 Gallery Talk. *40 Years of Maine Painting*, Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine
1993 Artist Lecture Series. Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2007 Pucker Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts
Greenhut Galleries, Portland, Maine
2005 Pucker Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts
Sylvia Schmidt Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana
Greenhut Galleries, Portland, Maine
2004 University of Maine Museum of Art, Bangor, Maine
2002 Sylvia Schmidt Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana
Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers, Freeport, Maine
2001 New O'Farrell Gallery, Brunswick, Maine
2000 New O'Farrell Gallery, Brunswick, Maine
1999 O'Farrell Gallery, Brunswick, Maine
1997 O'Farrell Gallery, Brunswick, Maine
The Louisiana State Archives Gallery, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
1995 O'Farrell Gallery, Brunswick, Maine
1993 O'Farrell Gallery, Brunswick, Maine
1992 Round Top Center for the Arts, Damariscotta, Maine
1991 O'Farrell Gallery, Brunswick, Maine
1989 O'Farrell Gallery, Brunswick, Maine

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2006 Greenhut Galleries, Portland, Maine
Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport, Maine
Elan Fine Arts, Rockport, Maine
Pucker Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts
L.C. Bates Museum, Hinckley, Maine
2004 Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport, Maine
Pucker Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts
2003 Greenhut Galleries, Portland, Maine
Pucker Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts
L.C. Bates Museum, Hinckley, Maine

- 2002 L.C. Bates Museum, Hinckley, Maine
CW White Gallery, Portland, Maine
- 2001 L.C. Bates Museum, Hinckley, Maine
ARA Gallery, South Hamilton, Massachusetts
- 2000 L.C. Bates Museum, Hinckley, Maine
- 1999 The Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine
Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, Maine
- 1998 Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, Maine
Round Top Center for the Arts, Damariscotta, Maine
University of New England, Portland, Maine
- 1995 The Ogunquit Museum of American Art, Ogunquit, Maine
The Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine
- 1993 Condeso/Lawler Gallery, New York, New York
The Ogunquit Museum of American Art, Ogunquit, Maine
- Little, Carl. *The Art of Maine in Winter*. Down East Books, Camden, Maine. 2002.
- Catalogue. *Along the Kennebec*. L.C. Bates Museum, Hinckley, Maine. 2002.
- Catalogue. *Somerset: The Art of Somerset County*. L.C. Bates Museum, Hinckley, Maine. 2001.
- Larocco, Claudia. *Walls of Winter at O'Farrell Gallery*. The Times Record, Brunswick, Maine. February 24, 2000.
- Catalogue. *Animals in Art by Maine Artists*. L.C. Bates Museum, Hinckley, Maine. 2000.
- Catalogue. *Carina House: The First Decade*. The Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine. 1999.
- Catalogue. *Maine Light: The Ambassador's Residence, United States Embassy, Santiago, Chile*. Art in Embassies Program. Department of State. United States of America. 1999.

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- Catalogue. *Language of Landscape: Paintings by Marguerite Robichaux*. Pucker Gallery, Boston. Massachusetts. 2007.
- Little, Carl. *Paintings of Maine*. Down East Books, Camden, Maine. 2006.
- Illustrations. *Ladies of the Lake*. Down East Magazine, Camden, Maine. April, 2006.
- Illustrations. *My Own Private Antiques Road Show*. Down East Magazine, Camden, Maine. November, 2005.
- Illustrations. *Girls Gone Fishin'*. Down East Magazine, Camden, Maine. May, 2005.
- Keyes, Bob. *Robichaux's Road Home*. Maine Sunday Telegram, Portland, Maine. March 6, 2005.
- Illustrations. *Babes in the Woods*. Down East Magazine, Camden, Maine. February, 2005.
- Catalogue. *Achievements of Place: Landscapes by Marguerite Robichaux*. Pucker Gallery, Boston. Massachusetts. 2005.
- Little, Carl. *The Art of Monhegan Island*. Down East Books, Camden, Maine. 2004.
- Little, Carl. *Marguerite Robichaux: Over Yonder*. Art New England, Brighton, Massachusetts. August/September 2004.
- Illustrations. *Habitat*, Journal of Maine Audubon, Falmouth, Maine. Fall 2004.
- Austin, Phyllis. *On Wilderness: Voices from Maine*. Tilbury House Publishers, Gardiner, Maine. 2003.
- Catalogue. *Fine Choices: Something Old, Something New*. Pucker Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts. 2003.
- Catalogue. *United States Embassy Skopje*. Art in Embassies Program, Washington, D.C. 2003.
- Bonner, Judith. *Color Explorations*. The New Orleans Art Review, New Orleans, Louisiana. November/December 2002.
- Catalogue. *Carried Away: The Joy of Collecting Art in Maine*. Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, Maine. 1999.
- Driscoll, John and Arnold Skolnick. *The Artist and the American Landscape*. First Glance Books, Cobb, California. 1998.
- Little, Carl. *Art of the Maine Islands*. Down East Books, Camden, Maine. 1997.
- Peavey, Elizabeth. *She Took to the Woods*. Down East Magazine, Camden, Maine. February 1997.
- Price, Anne. *The Real Sense of Place*. The Advocate, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. February 23, 1997.
- Illustrations. *The Gettysburg Review*. Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Autumn 1995.
- Wright, Virginia. *Follow that Cloud!* The Times Record, Brunswick, Maine. October 12, 1995.
- Greenleaf, Ken. *Someone's Been in Robichaux's Woods*. The Maine Sunday Telegram, Portland, Maine. September 26, 1993.
- Cannon, Kim. *The Woods of Maine*. The Times Record, Brunswick, Maine. September 16, 1993.
- Watkins, Eileen, *Monmouth Museum Show*. The Sunday Star Ledger, Newark, New Jersey, September 6, 1992.
- Crichlow, Beth. *Moods of Monhegan*. Down East Magazine, Camden, Maine. September 1991.
- Beem, Edgar Allen. *Maine Art Now*. Dog Ear Press, Gardiner, Maine. 1990.
- Beem, Edgar Allen. *Vermont Landscapes Writ Large in Maine*. The Maine Times, Topsham, Maine. April 7, 1989.
- Isaacson, Philip. *Idealized Landscapes*. The Maine Sunday Telegram, Portland, Maine. April 16, 1989.
- Isaacson, Philip. *Maine Art and a Farewell to Nostalgia*. The Maine Sunday Telegram, Portland, Maine. September 25, 1988.

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New Works by Marguerite Robichaux

Dates:
8 September to 8 October 2007

Opening Reception:
8 September 2007
3:00 to 6:00 PM

*The public is invited to attend.
The artist will be present.*

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Feliciana Grove, 2005-07 • Louisiana
Oil on Linen • 24 x 60"
MR87

FRONT COVER:
Sandy River Farms, 2005 • Maine
Oil on Linen • 54 x 48"
MR77

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