

Gerald Garston



The

Art and Joy

of Color

PUCKER GALLERY

"Every work of art is more or less a criticism of life, an attempt to deliver it from shapelessness, to make it more consistent and unequivocal, if not more perfect."
(Hauser, *The Philosophy of Art History*).

If artists are indeed here to offer a constructive criticism of life's disorder, then Gerald Garston is among our kindest but most uncompromising of critics. Garston distills the randomness and multiplicity of our visual world into its essences, ordered in deceptively simple paintings to look behind the objects that clutter and confuse our lives to the ideal in them: to see shapes, structures and colors, intensified and purified, in pleasing and rational coexistence. The effect of contemplating a Garston painting is profoundly meditative. We feel graced with its harmony, as its beauty and peace do their work in us, and become ours.

The serenity in these works does not come, however, because Garston turns his back on the everyday, physical world. He engages with life fully, in canvases vibrant with bold contrasts of color, shapes and patterns in vivid interaction: athletes, wild animals, bright fruits and flowers. But with artistic vision and control, he stills their fervor into a thoughtful order so that every line seems precisely placed, every meeting of color with color in exact accord, and the whole centered, balanced, and intact.

Take, for example, *Minuet*, a still-life of clean, vivid colors and lively shapes. The canvas is filled with eggs and cherries, the bright reds and whites in cheerful contrast to the green stripes behind. The objects themselves seem to be engaged in motion, weaving strands in a close and intricate pattern, even the three bowls queuing up to join the dancers. But as we gaze, we see complexities of structure which control and center the group. The dance is a closed circle, eggs, cherries and bowls moving ever round and round, the roundness echoed and strengthened in the shapes of the objects themselves. The horizontal line running through the table and precise row of bowls, and the string vertical stripes of the background anchor the dancing objects firmly in the scene. The colors are carefully distributed across the composition: the masses of white eggs are poised like two sides of a scale, with the rich weight of cherries in the center as the fulcrum. The painting gives us exuberant life, in meticulous and harmonious balance.

In *Da Capo*, as in many of Garston's works, we are reminded of music. Bottles and vases are assembled with the intimate orderliness of a chamber orchestra. Dark colors flow into light in a circular sweep, punctuated by the one clear note of the blue vase. The ascending and descending heights of the bottles seem to play an elegant melodic line, which the shadows in the background echo.

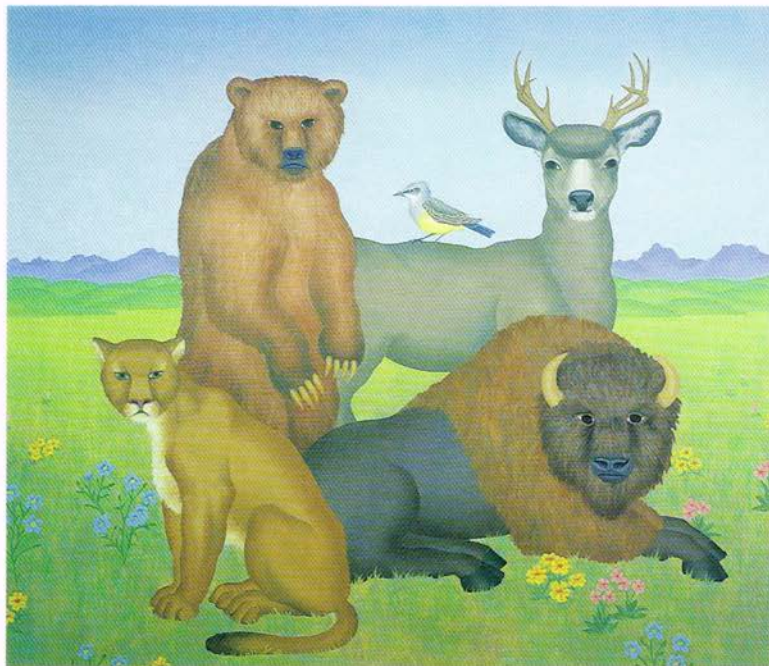
A still-life by definition is a world at rest; yet in his animal and figure paintings also, Garston creates tranquility through balance and harmony. In *Peaceable Kingdom - West*, wild beasts (grizzly bear, mule deer, bison, cougar and kingbird, all denizens of our untamed wilderness) are posed as in the most dignified of family portraits. The lines of the powerful bodies — bear and deer erect and perpendicular, bison and cat more sinuously reclining — are in comfortable fit. The group forms a square, positioned evenly within the almost-square canvas, corners matching corners; the composition as a whole has a zestful diagonal beat, accentuated by the details of the antlers, ears, claws, delicate bird. The varied palette of browns creates a wealth of contrasts, dark against light, cool against warm, all against the sunbleached lightness of the grass, sky and distant mountains. Four pairs of fierce, contemplative eyes, evenly spaced, hold ours, exerting upon us the same controlling calm which the painter has worked upon them.

The serene, contemplative gaze holds us also in *Summer Star*, a painting breathtaking in its visionary play upon shape and structure. The batsman, like a Renaissance prince, stands in timeless swagger. His swelling, muscular curves, the crisp blue and white stripes, the pristine bat, the four balls, as if frozen in flight — all fairly sing to us of baseball. Here is our summer pastime, and summer itself, in evocative essence.

Front Cover *Summer Star*, Oil on Canvas 40 × 40", GP941

A painting is in the end a unique visual experience, to which verbal explanation can add nothing. We may be tempted to analyze or describe, as we make fresh and illuminating discoveries; but we do not *need* to translate our emotions into language in order to know how we feel. If we choose to use words about Garston's work, however, we will be talking, finally, about beauty, pure and simple.

Cornelia Reid



Peaceable Kingdom - West, Oil on Canvas , 48 x 56", GP945

The Art of Color A Personal Tribute

The work of Gerry Garston continues to fill our eyes, minds and spirits with joy and energy. For more than two decades, we have been privileged to present, to share and to enjoy his unique vision and version of clarity, color and calm.

As we approach each exhibition, we await the arrival of his newest work. The figures and objects that fill his canvases are familiar to us but their fresh disposition and presentation bring a smile to our hearts. Bottles, containers, fruit, baseballs pour forth onto the canvas and brilliant color enlivens the spaces for all to behold and partake.

In so many ways the paintings are emblematic of the essence of the artist, human being, and friend. The sense of order, the harmony of colors, the profound commitment to the joy of life — all are Gerry Garston to us and all who have and who continue to be surrounded by his creations.

Our thanks to Gerry for allowing us to share his work. We invite you to enhance your universe by viewing his work.

Bernie and Sue
June 1993, Boston



Quietude, Oil on Canvas
36¼ × 36⅛", GP938



Da Capo, Oil on Canvas
34½ × 42", GP934

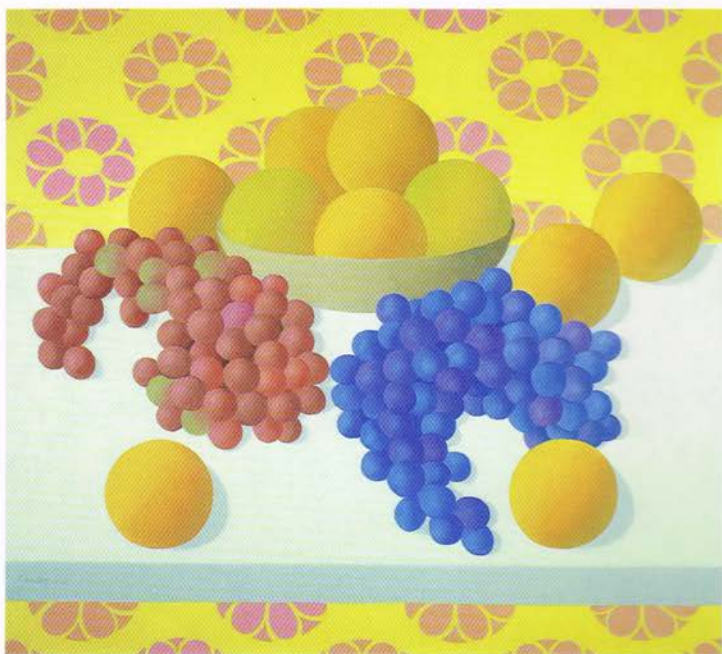
Minuet, Oil on Canvas
30 × 44", GP932



Straight Flush?, Oil on Canvas
40³/₁₆ × 36³/₁₆", GP943

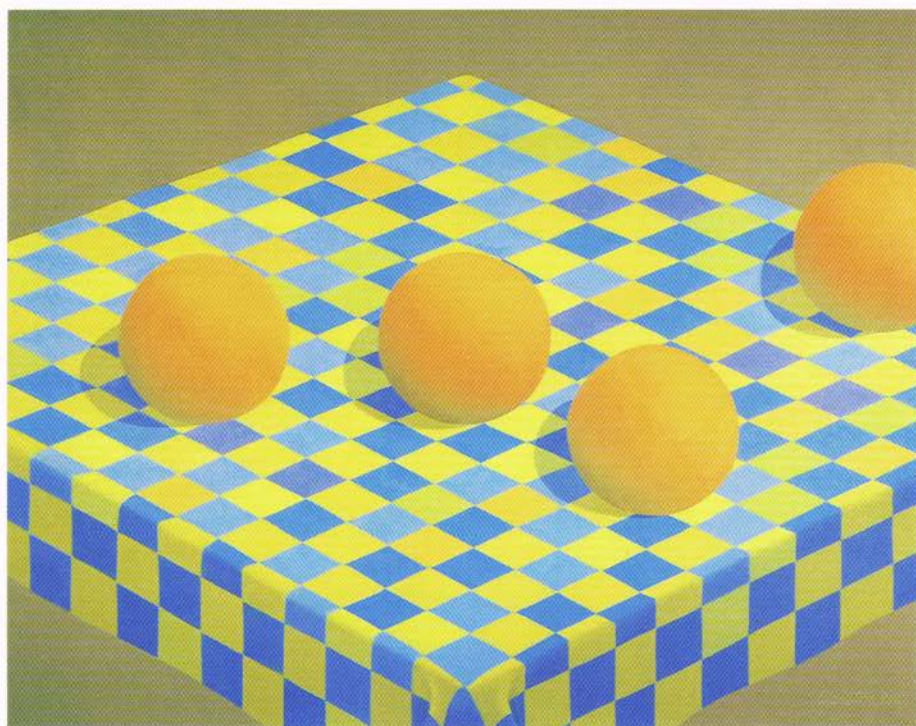
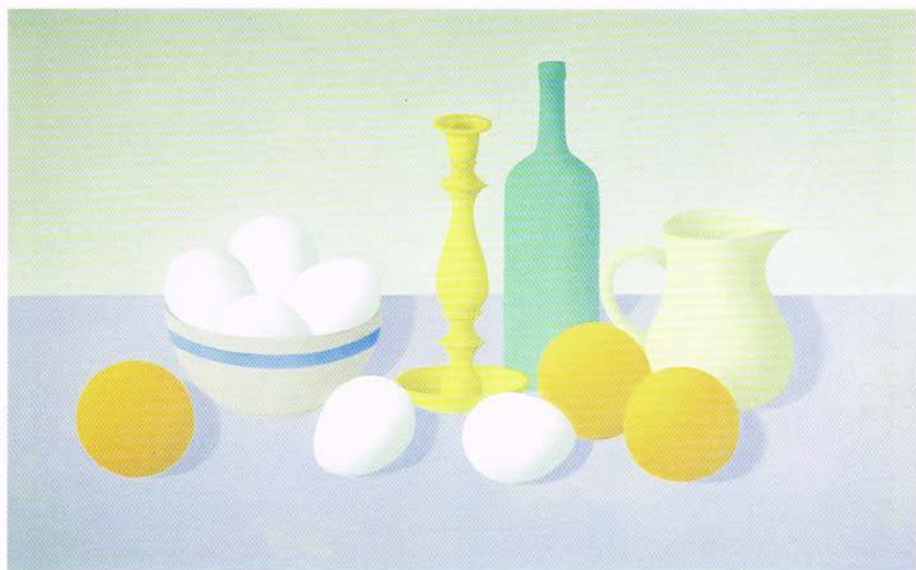


Duo, Oil on Canvas
40 × 44", GP944



Roman Still Life, Oil on Canvas
36 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 40", GP936

Focused, Oil on Canvas
29 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 29", GP926



Tranquility, Oil on Canvas
 30 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 48 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", GP933

Still Life Vibrant, Oil on Canvas
 34 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 42 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", GP940



Diva, Oil on Canvas
30 × 36 $\frac{1}{8}$ ", GP931

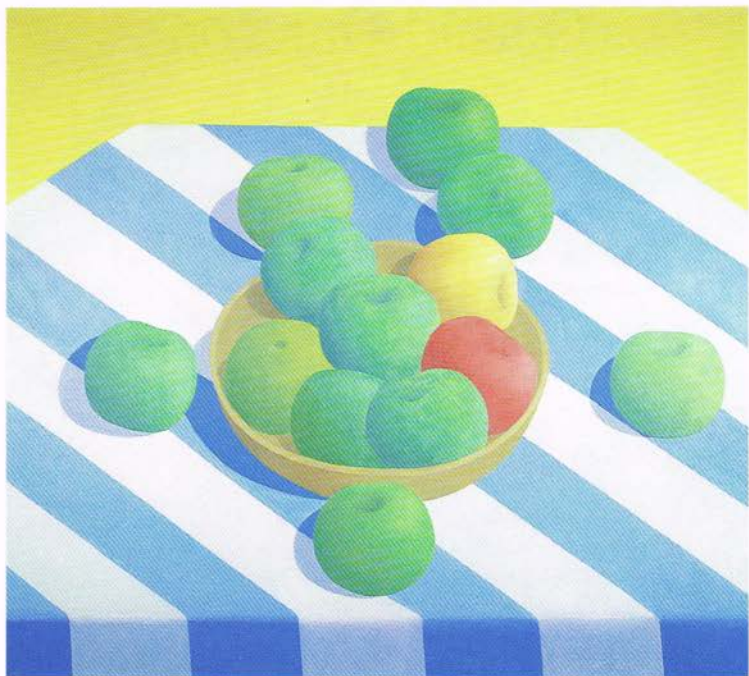
Daybreak, Oil on Canvas
26 × 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", GP925



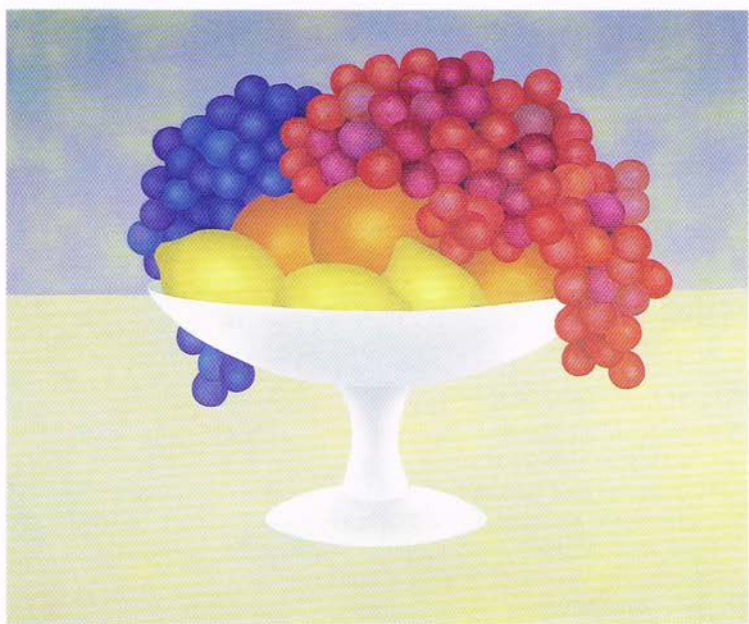
Metaphor, Oil on Canvas
40 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 30 $\frac{3}{8}$ ", GP942



Plums, Oil on Canvas
36¼ × 36¼", GP939



Autumn Still Life, Oil on Canvas
 36¼ × 40⅞", GP937



Fruit Bowl, Oil on Canvas
 30⅞ × 36⅞", GP929

Gerald Garston

BORN:

Waterbury, Connecticut, 4 May 1925

EDUCATION:

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland
Student of painter/sculptor Karl Metzler, Baltimore, Maryland
Student of printer Louis Boucher and printmaker Harry Sternberg,
Art Students League, NY
Student of Josef Albers, Yale University

ONE-MAN EXHIBITIONS:

1951 860 Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland
1954 Gallery 77, New Haven, Connecticut
1962 Poindexter Gallery, New York City
1964 Greengross Gallery, New York City
1965 Ross Talalay Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut
1966 John Slade Ely House, New Haven, Connecticut
1967 Graham Gallery, New York City
1970 Winfisky Gallery, Salem State College, Massachusetts
1970, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988
Pucker Saffrai Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts
1973 Kendall Gallery, Wellfleet, Massachusetts
1977 Freedman Art Gallery of Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania
1985 Creative Arts Workshop, New Haven, Connecticut
1993 Pucker Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts

OTHER EXHIBITIONS:

1960 Betty Parsons Gallery, New York City
1964 Stable Gallery, New York City
1965 A.M. Sachs Gallery, New York City
1966 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts
1967 "Sport In Art", Pan-Am Building, New York City
1968 Quinnipiac College, Hamden, Connecticut
1987-1990 "Diamonds are Forever", travelling exhibition

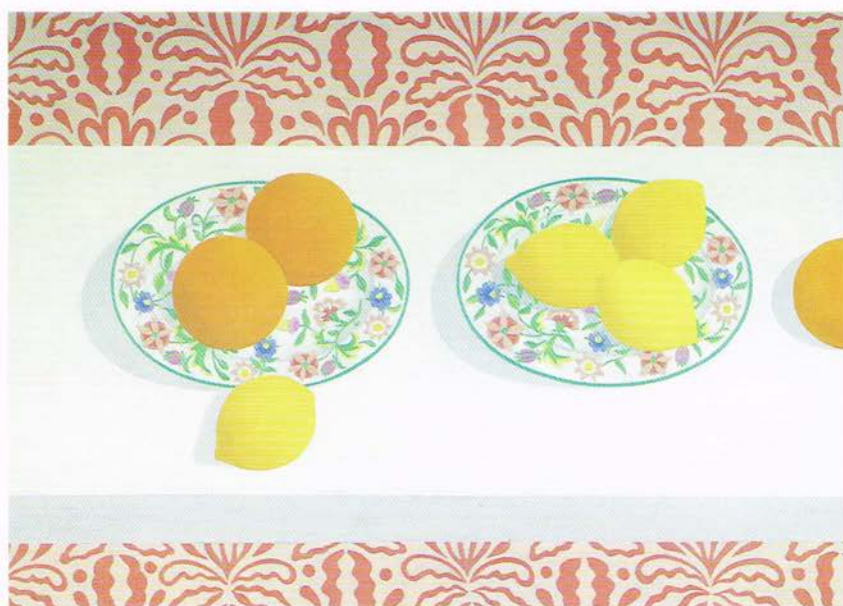
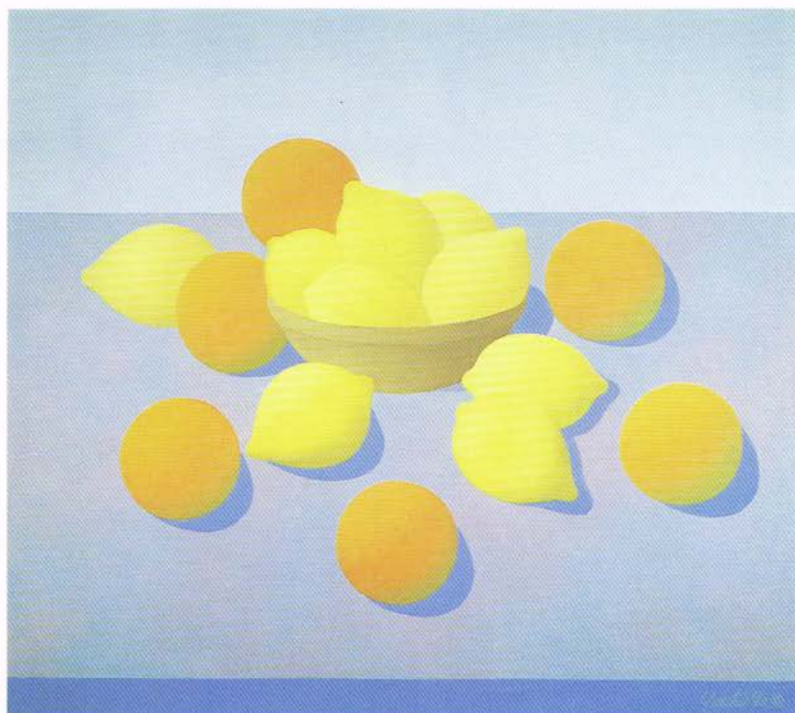
MUSEUM COLLECTIONS:

Fogg Museum, Harvard University
Los Angeles County Museum
William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, Missouri
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Rose Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut
DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts

Photography, Laird Van Riper Elting Design, Donna Bodell

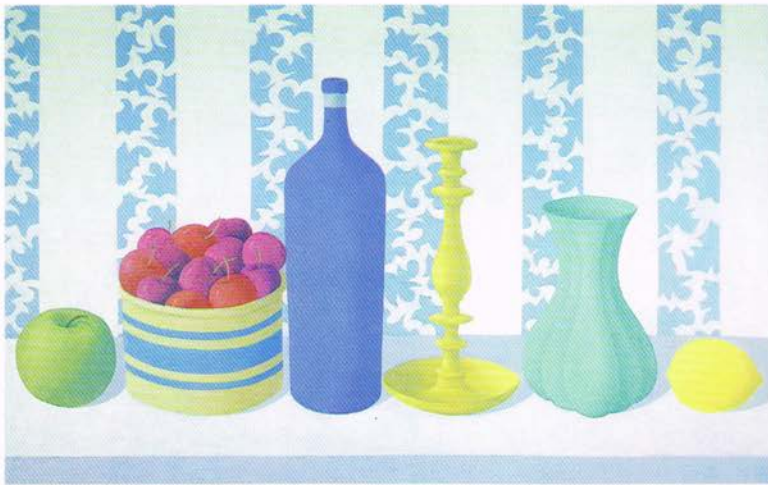
Preparation, Karin E. Isaacson and Jill K. Richardson

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Still Life Citrus, Oil on Canvas
36 × 40¼", GP935

Minton, Oil on Canvas
28⅞ × 40⅞", GP928



Sextet, Oil on Canvas, 28 x 44 1/8", GP930

Gerald Garston
The Art and Joy of Color

December 4, 1993 — January 12, 1994

Reception

Saturday
December 4, 1993
3:00 - 6:00 pm

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

PUCKER GALLERY
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