



JOSEPH KEIFFER

COURTHOUSE GALLERY  
FINEART

# JOSEPH KEIFFER

JULY 23–AUGUST 17, 2014

## **Fugues, Themes, Harmonies**

essay by Carl Little



*Rhododendrom Blossom*, oil on panel, 12 x 10 inches

*June Meadow*, detail, oil on canvas, 24 x 36 inches

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



*Northeast Harbor*, oil on panel, 15 x 18 inches



*Glaring Sun, Maine*, oil on panel, 10 x 20 inches



# JOSEPH KEIFFER **The Meaning of Light**

by Carl Little



*Lamplight*, oil on panel, 12 x 14 inches

Twenty or so years ago, when my family lived on Oak Hill Road in Somesville, one summer night the field behind our house filled with fireflies. It was a dazzling display, the intermittent flashes spread over the near distance. We looked on in wonder.

That magical scene comes back to me when standing in front of Joseph Keiffer's *Fireflies II*, a lovely nocturne that features what the painter calls "a miraculous invasion" of those aptly named lightning bugs putting on a show in a moonlit meadow. As is the case with so many of Keiffer's landscapes, this painting does not simply transport us to a locale: it heightens our experience of it. "One wants more the feeling of a place," the artist says, "than the actual contour of it."

For Keiffer "light carries meaning" and it is the foundation of his vision of the landscape. In the painting *Somesville*, he responds to the last sunlight of a summer day illuminating parts of a field that features patches of lupine. Elsewhere, *Dusk over Acadia* offers the twilight glow of what the French call *crépuscule*.



*June Meadow*, oil on canvas, 24 x 36 inches





*Rosie's Bed, Somesville*, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



*Dusk Over Frenchman Bay*, oil on canvas, 20 x 36 inches

The painter is part tonalist, part luminist—and sometimes both, as in the canvas *On Top of the World* with its nightfall atmosphere and glory rays. In a sunset view of Northeast Harbor as seen from Thuya Garden, bands of orange create an evanescent scene.

Fireworks over the Maine coast are a signature Keiffer motif. In his offering this time around, titled *Apocalypse!*, two shadow figures on the shore view a display of rockets lighting up the sky. The painter is expert at rendering both the glare and the smoky residue of the pyrotechnics.

While an aficionado of the panorama, in Maine and in the Catskills where he lives much of the year, Keiffer is also an intimist, as witness his floral still lifes. This exhibition features a newfound favorite in this category: *Pansies, Petunias, Nasturtiums, etc.*, a wonderful abundance of blossoming annuals straight from the nursery (they are still in the box they were carried in).

*Red Rhododendron Blossom* turns over center stage to a single radiant bloom spilling out of vintage stoneware. It is a lovely arrangement, as is *Daffodils in Chinese Vase*





*The Red Chair*, oil on canvas, 15 x 12 inches

where the yellow blooms contrast with the deep blue of a bit of *chinoiserie*.

In Keiffer's interiors, the light is carefully measured. As its title suggests, *Lamplight* is about the illumination provided by a standing lamp. A stairway, bouquets, a chair with pillow, the lamp itself—all are bathed in a quiet light. It's a study in blue—and of shadows.

There is an inviting quality to Keiffer's images. With its lanterns, rocking chairs and table draped in cloth, *Porch at Twilight* is like the prelude to a lovely al fresco evening. The space in *Pink Foyer*, lit by a skylight, is arranged to accommodate visitors and to lead them to other parts of the house.

Keiffer has fun, too, seeking out the offbeat subject. In this show, it's a balancing act of enamel cups; a pair of spiffy sharp-toed dancing shoes; and a kite surfer activating the vacant sky above a stretch of French coastline.

Citing a line from an essay by the novelist Henry James, "In the arts, feeling is meaning," Keiffer states his aligned mission this way: "You want to bring the viewer of the painting to the feeling you had." This exhibition makes abundantly clear the success of this endeavor.

*Carl Little's latest book is "William Irvine: The Painter's Journey." He helped produce the film "Jon Imber's Left Hand" and offers commentary on the video "Richard Estes: My Camera Is My Sketchbook."*



*Porch at Twilight*, oil on canvas, 18 x 20 inches



*On Top of the World*, oil on canvas, 16 x 30 inches

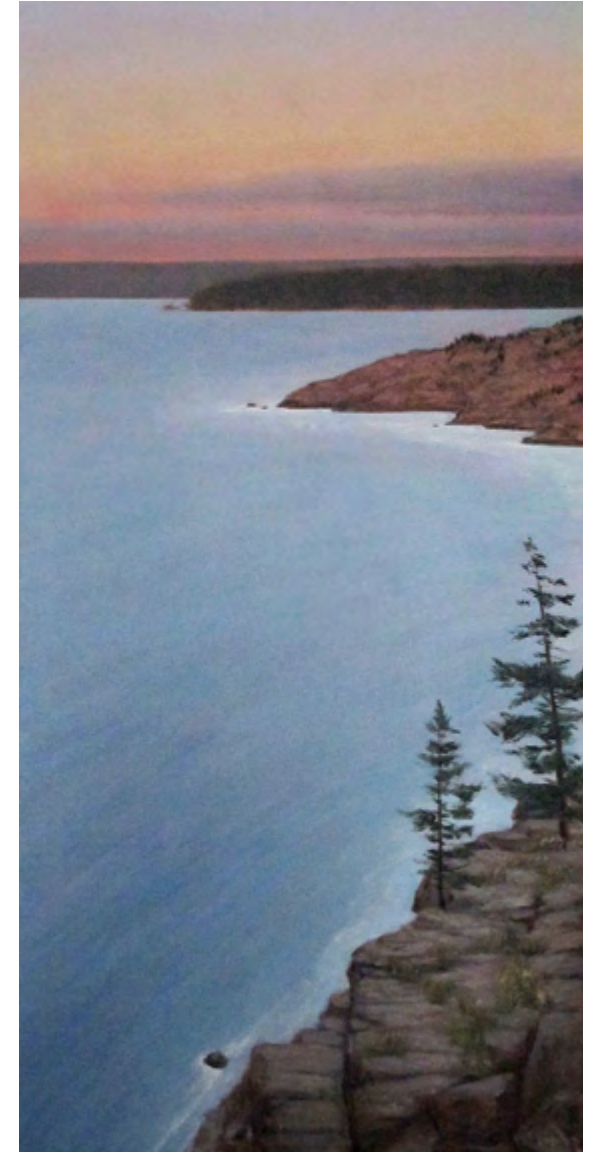


*Apocalypse!*, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 inches





*Pink Foyer*, oil on canvas, 14 x 18 inches



*Dusk Over Acadia*  
oil on canvas  
48 x 24 inches





*Frenchman Bay*  
oil on canvas  
18 x 40 inches



OPPOSITE  
*In Primary Colors*  
oil on canvas  
16 x 14 inches

*Delilah's Shoes*  
oil on canvas  
20 x 12 inches







*Stonington*, oil on canvas, 10 x 15 inches



*Pansies, Petunias, Nasturtiums, etc.*, oil on canvas, 18 x 20 inches



*New Potted Pansies*  
oil on canvas  
9 x 13 inches



*Daffodils in Chinese Vase*  
oil on canvas  
12 x 8 Inches



*Tipsy Cups XIV*  
oil on canvas  
14 x 8 inches





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

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Spanierman Gallery, New York, NY 2011, '12, '13, '14  
 The Gallery at Frenchmen's Bay, Mount Desert Island, 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, *Mainly 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

SELECTED

Adelphi University, Garden City, NY  
 Ms. Eleanor Alter/Dr. Allan Lans, NY  
 Mr. W.M. Brady, NY  
 Ms. Dominique Browning, NY  
 Ms. Candace Carpenter, NY

## JOSEPH KEIFFER

BORN New York, New York 1952

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2013, 2014  
 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



*Richard Lester's Mighty Bath*, oil on canvas, 10 x 8 inches; *Purple and Gold*, oil on canvas, 10 x 8 inches; *Spring*, oil on panel, 8 x 8 inches

Ms. Jane Curtin, Egremont, MA  
 Mrs. F.E. Dixon, Lafayette Hill, PA  
 Mrs. Richard B. Fisher, NY  
 Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Giuliani, NY, NY  
 Mr. and Mrs. Ben Ali Haggin, NY  
 Mr and Mrs. Stuart Janney, Baltimore, MD  
 Mr. and Mrs. William I. Koch, Palm Beach, FL  
 Mr. and Mrs. E.J.Landrigan, NY  
 Mr. Nicholas Lemann, NY, NY  
 Mr. and Mrs. A.D. McCulloch, Bryn Mawr, PA  
 Mr. and Mrs. Armour Mellon, Ligonier, PA  
 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. and Mrs. Thomas Puccio, NY  
 Mr. and Mrs. George Segal, Kent, CT  
 Mr. G. Remak Ramsay, NY  
 Mr. and Mrs. Peter Rathbone, New Canaan, NY  
 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



*Aspiration*, oil on canvas, 28 x 30 inches





*Fireflies II*, oil on canvas, 18 x 20 inches

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