



ROBERT BAUER

[b.1942]

Robert Bauer was born in Iowa and studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Work shown in the Academy's 1967 *Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture* led to his inclusion in the show *Four Young Realists* at Kenmore Galleries, Philadelphia. In 1969, Bauer's work was featured in the *33rd Mid-Year Annual* at the Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH. Following a number of solo and group exhibitions, his work attracted the attention of New York dealer Allan Stone, who collected and exhibited his paintings in the early 1980s. Robert Bauer joined Forum Gallery in 1990.

Bauer's realist portraits are most often of family and friends and are noted for their sensitive and introspective portrayals. There is a palpable sense of life in each of these intimate works, stemming from Bauer's lengthy painting process and keen attention to subtle detail. These contemplative and pensive faces are drawn directly from the subject as well as from pencil studies and photographs. Themes of chance, choice and control are deeply a part of the artist's work.

Bauer typically presents each subject with averted eyes, a device that has the effect of slowing things down, as though the subject and then the viewer are lost in thought. Similarly, Bauer's panoramic landscapes softly drift off the edges of the paper on which they are painted, evocative of memories infiltrating our thoughts without need for resolution.

About Bauer's work, John Yau, poet, author, Arts Editor for *The Brooklyn Rail* (2007–2011), art critic for *Hyperallergic Weekend* writes: "...the reticence of Bauer's paintings mixed with his sensitivity to tonality and light suggests that he slows time down in order to register its passing. Recognizing that reality is constantly changing, and that it never repeats itself, Bauer is determined to see all that can be gleaned in a moment of sustained looking. Thus, the deeper tension that runs through these portraits...hints at a wellspring of melancholy, an unrelenting awareness that time not only stretches towards infinity, but that the now one inhabits is equally vast and infinite."

Writing for *Art in America*, Elaine Sexton observes: "...Portraits by Robert Bauer (offer) a resounding presence of spirit, almost sacred... The fine brushstrokes in Bauer's oils on wood render their surfaces flat and the skin tones luminous, compelling the viewer to move close and pause before each one as if to bear witness to a private meditation...Absence (of) background subject matter contributes to the atmosphere of hushed reverie."

Bauer's work is represented in public and private collections throughout the United States, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, Little Rock, AR; and the Janss Collection of American Realism, Boise Art Museum, Boise, ID. Robert Bauer is the recipient of three Massachusetts Cultural Council grants, two Pollock-Krasner Foundation grants in Painting (1998 and 2014), and was a finalist in the 2006 Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery's Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition.

Robert Bauer currently lives and works in Thomaston, Maine.