

Nathaniel Foote



Golden Rod

Nathaniel Foote is an American landscape painter who has mastered the art of shoreline, landscape, and seascape painting through his use of luminescence and his technical proficiency. His paintings tell nonverbal stories of his life and discoveries on the Southern Connecticut coastline and along the Connecticut River. He captures real life ethereal paradises that are the essence of the New England shore.

Foote's paintings take us on a journey to the shore, inviting us to enter and creating a longing to return to the beaches and shoreline habitats and communities. His coastlines swirl with curves, colors and big skies; they bask in sunlight or moonlight. He displays the varieties of environmental elements near his Connecticut home, from the trees, shorelines, marshes, saltwater, and brackish estuary water to the buildings, bridges and neighborhoods, all illuminated to create energy and peacefulness at the same time.

"Goldenrod" is a breakthrough painting for Foote. In it, he depicts the magic hour, just after sunset, on the Connecticut shore. He uses a luminous approach to make this shoreline landscape come to life. The goldenrods are center stage, their colors and delicate shapes made vivid by the lighting effects. They are set in the middle of a multitude of other shoreline plant forms, with the marsh on the left and the Long Island Sound to the distant back, beneath a long, enchanting sky. He merges the end of the magic light - sunset light - with the nocturnal light in his painting. As the sunlight fades and the moonlight begins, energy is created. The painting dazzles by using opposite and complimentary colors.

Goldenrod adopts a filmmaker's 180-degree rule to track both the sun and the moon. The sun, although unseen, and the moon face each other in a straight line. The natural structures are assembled below and have

a flow that creates a living symmetry within the painting. The goldenrod plants appear to be dancing, like Degas ballerinas, emitting the golden light of their flowers to mimic the golden shafts of the sun and the moon.

Foote faced difficult challenges that needed to be solved to make the Goldenrod painting work as it does. He overcame the challenges through a process of self-discovery. The goldenrod's importance as a food source for the Monarch butterfly and other pollinators resonated deeply in Foote's mind as he learned to paint these whimsical flowers and make them the central element of the painting while they occupy a small but preeminent portion of its space. He demonstrates the complexity of the form of the goldenrod plants by rendering them as moving dancers instead of still plants. Their sparkle and complex form make them the most important subject in the painting.

Foote's paintings demonstrate that light can be blinding and continuously changing. His command of color creates a stereopsis, giving a sense of depth, making the images in his paintings vibrate and shimmer as the light bounces off them. The goldenrods in his painting appear to be on fire.

Foote is fascinated with the history, environment, and geology of his part of New England, the Essex and Old Lyme quadrangles, which extend from the Long Island Sound through the southern portion of the Connecticut River estuary.

While this habitat is a repeating theme in his paintings, his use of colors and light and his understanding, perception and depiction of the natural life, landscapes and seascapes ensure that each painting will continue to be unique.

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