

THE MAGAZINE of *SPLENDID HOMES and GARDENS* • MAY/JUNE 2014

DESIGN

NEW ENGLAND

Laid-Back
living





‘Where I’m Supposed to Be’

Craig Mooney finds his calling creating evocative, romantic oils on canvas

WRITTEN BY LORI FERGUSON • PHOTOGRAPHED BY SUSAN TEARE

The change came about in a quixotic way, as shifts in an artist’s life often do. On a visit to London several years ago, painter Craig Mooney found himself standing in the Tate Britain before a late work by the English Romantic artist J.M.W. Turner. “The piece was atmospheric and ephemeral and had an unfinished quality that deeply appealed to me,” Mooney recalls. “I knew immediately that I wanted to incorporate that loose, romantic feel into my work.” This realization, coupled with recent changes in Mooney’s per-

CRAIG MOONEY SITS in front of two of his large, atmospheric landscapes at West Branch Gallery in Stowe, Vermont, where he also maintains a studio. “I’m transfixed by the power of nature,” he says. “I believe art helps people to understand life in an abstract sense.”



sonal life, induced the artist to alter his stylistic approach to painting. Mooney leaned harder on his imagination in shaping content, began applying his paint in layers, and became a more “creative colorist,” employing a bold palette in some pieces and hewing to a more monochromatic approach in others.

Mooney is no stranger to dramatic shifts in direction. A native New Yorker who now divides his time between homes in Vermont and on Cape Cod in Massachusetts, Mooney took a peripatetic path to the life of a full-time fine artist. He flirted briefly with a career in the film industry, sought, unsuccessfully, to

MOONEY OFTEN WORKS ON SEVERAL PAINTINGS simultaneously. “I follow my bliss,” he says. “Sometimes I paint in a tighter style and other times more loosely.” Here, he uses different palettes on two of his signature big-sky landscapes.

Make yourself at home

The Boston Globe’s Real Estate section, Address, combines an expanded Home of the Week feature with new additions that highlight the state’s best cities and towns to live in, gives readers more design advice, and more.

Stop by and visit every Sunday.
Available wherever newspapers are sold.

To advertise, contact **Bob LeRette** at **617-929-2104**.

The Boston Globe
 BostonGlobe.com

Address
 YOUR REAL ESTATE GUIDE TO BUYING, SELLING, LIVING
 BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE

attend medical school, and eventually discovered that his passion for painting could potentially evolve into a meaningful livelihood. Today, he paints full time and is represented in galleries up and down the East Coast, including DFN Gallery in New York, Galerie Sono in South Norwalk, Connecticut, and West Branch Gallery in Stowe, Vermont.

“I became an artist from acquiescence more than ambition,” Mooney says with a chuckle. “Painting has always been a precious means of escape for me, yet for the longest time I didn’t view an artistic career as viable. But the twists and turns in my life repeatedly brought me back to the canvas, and I finally accepted that this is where I’m supposed to be.”

In recent years, Mooney’s work has been consistent in style — oil paintings rendered in a dreamy, semiabstract vein — but bifurcated in subject matter. In the American Northeast and South as well as in Great Britain, he is



MOONEY'S PAINTINGS ARE among the works on exhibit at West Branch Gallery. “The tranquility of rural Vermont provided the space necessary for my internal voice to finally emerge,” he says. His landscapes are breathtaking, yet calm and peaceful. “I like my works to convey drama, but I don’t want them to be too serious.”



Summer Sale



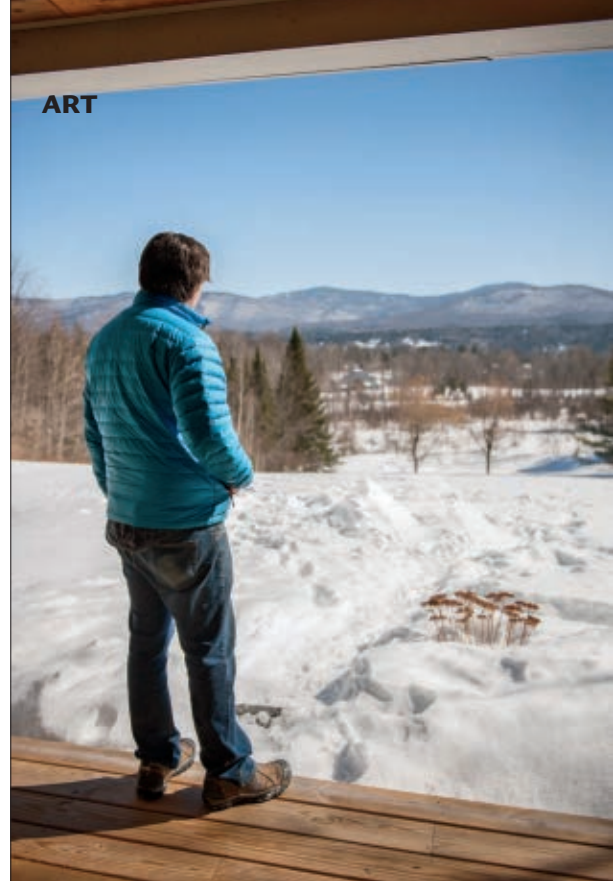
POOL & PATIO SPECIALISTS

Greater Boston's Largest Selection of Outdoor Furniture
375 PROVIDENCE HIGHWAY, WESTWOOD

781-329-1222

MONDAY - FRIDAY 10-6, SATURDAY 10-5, SUNDAY 12-5
poolandpatiospecialists.com

ART



MOONEY LOOKS OUT on the snow-covered vista behind his Stowe studio, a scene he has interpreted on canvas. "Painting is an escape for me," he says. And whether in the mountains of Vermont or near the sea on Cape Cod, he draws his inspiration from the surrounding landscape.

best known for his atmospheric, big-sky landscapes, while on the West Coast he is recognized for his city scenes and figurative work. More recently, he has been creating what he calls "expressionistic" images inspired by the sea.

"My latest works are more imaginative, they have an element of fantasy about them," he says. "Spending so much time on the coast of New England, I've become fascinated with the sea. But I'm not interested in painting the stereotypical ship captains and maritime storms; instead, I like to examine old paintings and subjects and give them a contemporary update. For me, painting has become more about the subject as metaphor. My portrait of the ship's captain is a symbol for a deeper tradition, rather than a portrait of a specific individual."

Mooney also has an affinity for allegory, which he attributes to his interest in film. "I have a cinematic sensibility," he says. "I'm not concerned with how accurately I can render a specific scene. I'm more interested in evoking a sense of mystery and intrigue. I like my works to convey

Renjeau Galleries

79 Worcester Street
Route 9

Natick, MA 01760

508-655-5121

www.renjeau.com

Peter Kuttner - Tradewinds - 60x48 Oil-Canvas

Envision.....Tranquility

Renjeau
Galleries

Fine Art - Framing - Restoration



Custom Homes

Major Renovations

Small Projects

Lifestyle Services

Metro Boston
Cape Cod • Nantucket

508.460.9508
wellerconstruction.com

“I’m not concerned with how accurately I can render a specific scene,” says artist Craig Mooney. “I’m more interested in evoking a sense of mystery and intrigue.”

drama, but I don’t want them to be too serious.” Take, for example, the painting *Fantastic Voyage*. A solitary skiff sails toward the horizon, heading into the sunset and new adventure. It is dwarfed by a captivating sky that dominates the canvas with its evocative play of light.

In this piece, as well as many others, an alluring mixture of mystery, serenity, and solitude prevails. “I grew up in Midtown Manhattan,” Mooney says, “and as a child, I loved venturing out into the empty city on the weekends. I wandered those cavernous canyons of concrete, reveling in the silence that contrasted so sharply with the hectic weekday environment. I was deeply moved by the solitude I experienced then, and I think I’ve spent my life trying to recapture that in my paintings, both for myself and for viewers of my works.”

Judging from the responses his paintings evoke, Mooney has succeeded. “What’s most remarkable about Craig is his ability to capture a moment of time,” says Julie Mussafer, owner of the Boston-based gallery Jules Place, which represents the artist. “His clouds and shifting skies take your breath away, and his waters are so calm and peaceful they make you want to exhale. Craig’s paintings are both unique and recognizable, and also highly collectible.”

One buyer of a landscape painting recently sent Mooney an e-mail asserting that the painting enriched his life every single day. “For me that means so much,” says Mooney. “It tells me there was a reason for me to go in this direction and to do what I do. Painting provides me with serenity, hope, and a healing escape from the stresses of day-to-day life. I want my work to give that to others as well.” ■

FOR MORE
DETAILS,
SEE
RESOURCES



781.449.7407 :: www.rwinteriors.net :: rwinteriors@comcast.net



Hammer Architects

Cambridge, MA 617-876-5121
Truro, MA 508-349-7525
www.hammerarchitects.com