

Review of David Little's Art
From *The Maine Sunday Telegram*
29 October 2000
by Philip Isaacson

DAVID LITTLE is showing a large selection of his paintings -- 41 of them -- at Thos. Moser, Cabinetmakers in Freeport. Over the years, Moser has been hospitable to painters and craft artists of particular interest, and I have generally applauded the selections.

I decided to review Little's show for a number of reasons. One among them is the fact that it gives the public a chance to look at an attitude in development. Conventionally, in a show that examines a year and a half of work, there is a formal and chromatic consistency, a chartable flow. Such a flow would not be easy to document in Little's case. This article will expand on the concept of development, or transition as it is sometimes called.

To begin with, David Little is an on-site landscape painter. He works in the fresh air and that quality manifests itself in his art. His work does not have the patness that goes with studio work. There is a looseness to it that suggests the impulse -- the enthusiasm -- of the moment. I find this throughout his paintings.

Some of the paintings are gestural and some are encased in determined outlines, but whatever the attack, nothing blasé is present. This is the work of a painter who wants his work to sail. And it often does.

I find it interesting to observe that whether the approach favors the impressionistic, veers toward the abstract or toward Fairfield Porter, the lift is the same. I hesitate to call it joyousness, but clearly, Little is an engaged and enthusiastic artist.

The subject matter ranges from Katahdin to Monhegan -- our iconic locales -- to sunlit flower gardens, and the shift often seems abrupt. This is part of what I meant by a career in development. That is not to say that the level of the work is not well-accomplished, but the movements from simplification to complexity, from generalization to specificity, from light to heavy tonal values are noticeable.

The range of the exhibition is allowed by its size, and its effort is as much to show us what's going as a statement that a peak has been reached. This is the most engaging part of this very likeable event.

All in all, I thought Little's new work richer, more assured and more of the place than any I had remembered.

Philip Isaacson has been writing about the arts for the Maine Sunday Telegram for 34 years.