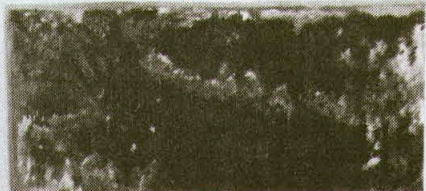


Flowers and Fields, 1976



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Jane Freilicher is a New York painter who came to adulthood in an atmosphere dominated by the heady innovations of abstract expressionism. With full recognition of the options available to the contemporary artist, Freilicher has inclined consistently toward the retention of subject matter in her work. During the decades when such a direction was often discouraged, Freilicher remained responsive to her own intuition.

Freilicher's work at mid-career manifests an equipoise between her enchantment with her subject and her exhilaration with the act of painting. Eschewing doctrine, she has restlessly explored and re-explored that fertile passage between realism and abstraction. Says Freilicher, "As soon as I do something that seems very tenuous I get bored with it and when I get more and more specific I begin to feel ...cloistered."

As the works in MATRIX indicate there is more specificity in Freilicher's current effort than there has been at times in the past. This willingness to navigate among a broad range of possibilities in an intelligent but unpredictable manner has been a constant in her development.

Unlike most realist painters Freilicher doesn't sketch her scenes on the canvas in advance but improvises directly with paint as she goes along. With relaxed, self-assured brush strokes she adeptly builds her shapes and forms with color rather than line, and her color is pure, clean and intense.

The Arcadian serenity that often pervades Freilicher's completed works belies the tense drama through which Freilicher tenaciously "wills the painting into being." She has expressed a special interest in the poignancy of that highly charged moment after the first smear of paint is added to a blank canvas. Her sensitivity to the way in which the artist's original

intentions and preconceived expectations can be instantly altered in response to the initial mark on a canvas suggests that she brings to the genres of landscape and still life a spontaneity and a sense of confrontation commonly associated with the legacy of abstract expressionism. True to this legacy is her obvious delight in the handling of the paint and her predilection for allowing this delight to come into play in the surfaces of her work. John Ashbery, poet and close friend of the artist, has written in reference to one of her paintings about the "cloud on the horizon which is not really a cloud but a brush stroke."

Yet Freilicher is unequivocal about the importance of content in her work. She considers it essential to feel "a fervor about the image" she is painting. She unabashedly values beauty and strives to make beautiful paintings. Her efforts often result in illuminated reconsiderations of the familiar.

So responsive and alert is Freilicher to the terrain outside her studio at Water Mill, Long Island that the changes brought about by the rotation of crops, the plowing under of a field or the alteration of even a small architectural component become the occasion for fresh inspiration. Freilicher has painted this landscape many times. No other artist has more ably captured the essence of the Long Island dunes and marshes. Her intense communion with the site seems to enable her to beatify this familiar scene in each new variation.

Freilicher's affection for the subjects she paints, her responsiveness to beauty wherever it might be found, her sophisticated handling of the paint and her special gift with color each play an important part in Freilicher's work. Favoring paintings that offer

many levels of experience, Freilicher currently shuns any radically reductive approach which she feels tends to strip paintings of their potential richness and their implicit mystery.

Jane Freilicher was born in New York city in 1924. She received a BA from Brooklyn College and an MA in art education from Columbia. She also attended the Hans Hoffman School of Fine Arts. For many years she has worked in studios in New York City and Water Mill, Long Island. Freilicher's Wetlands and Dunes was seen by Atheneum visitors this summer in the United States Department of Interior Bicentennial Exhibiton "America 1976". Freilicher is represented by the Fischbach Gallery of New York City.

AMK

Works in MATRIX:

Still Life With Calendulas, 1954, oil on canvas, 65" x 49".
Courtesy of the artist.

Coast of Greece, 1957, oil on canvas, 40" x 79 3/8".
Courtesy of the artist.

The Mallow Gatherers, 1957-58, oil on canvas, 75" x 76 1/2".
Courtesy of the artist.

Flowers and Fields, 1976, oil on canvas, 50" x 60".
Courtesy of Fischbach Gallery, New York City.

Dunes, Pond, Marsh, 1976, oil on canvas, 66" x 50".
Courtesy of Fischbach Gallery, New York City.

I can't think consciously at the beginning about organizing a painting. Sometimes I plunge into a picture and it seems impossible that any organization will result, but if you don't start with a preconceived arrangement you get a fresher view of things.

In realist painting it is hard to convey a feeling of intoxication. Who else [beside Courbet] has done it? Titian? Rembrandt? Some Impressionists? When this feeling is conveyed, the subject has usually faded to an abstract rendering of sensation. If the essence of good painting is vitality, then, in painting nature, one should try to get nature's vitality.

Jane Freilicher, 1956

In my own mind I think this atmosphere almost of elevation which pervaded the art scene in the hay-day of Abstract-Expressionism while contributing a sense of esprit-de-corps and purposefulness, a kind of group spirit which was pleasant and no longer exists, made me want to stand a little to one side, where I was anyway, and go on with what I was doing.

Jane Freilicher, 1967

Selected one-woman exhibitions:
Tibor de Nagy Gallery, NYC '52
(first)-'70 twelve exhibitions;
Cord Gallery, Southampton, NY
'68; John Bernard Myers Gallery,
NYC '71; Benson Gallery, Bridge-
hampton, NY '72, '74; Fischbach
Gallery, NYC '75.

Selected group exhibitions:
Whitney Museum of American Art,
NYC, Annual '55; Rhode Island
School of Design, Providence,
Four Young Americans '55; Museum
of Modern Art, NYC, Recent Draw-
ings, U.S.A. '59 and Eight
Landscape Painters '64; Wadsworth
Atheneum, Hartford, Contemporary
American Figure Painting '64;
Vassar College Art Gallery,
Poughkeepsie, NY, Figurative
Painting '68; Philadelphia Civic
center, Focus: Woman's Work
American Art '74; The Queens
Museum of Art, NY, New Images
in American Painting '74;
De Cordova and Dana Museum and
Park, Lincoln, MA, Candid
Painting: American Genre 1950-
1975 '75; America 1976, Bi-
centennial Exhibition sponsored
by the U.S. Department of
Interior. Seen at the Wadsworth
Atheneum '76 and travelling
extensively.

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