



PAUL SCHULENBURG

Cape's call

A delicate variety of works can be found in Paul Schulenburg's Cape Cod paintings. He effortlessly depicts scenes of recently evacuated tidal flats, scenes of fisherman working amid the clutter of their boats, and room interiors that often feature soft light streaming through hallways and human figures that bear witness to that light with gentle poses and quiet resolve. Schulenburg's brush is so adept that each genre he paints has its own language.

"A musician might play a song softly and slowly in a minor key and the next song might be loud and fast, played in a major key. The way I handle the paint can be dependent on the subject matter. If I am painting a setting such as an interior that is all about subtle colors and stillness, my paint will reflect that," he says. "A painting of fishermen working at the pier will have more active strokes, brighter colors and chunkier paint, to better convey the feeling of that environment."

A new show of Schulenburg's work opens July 8 at Addison Art Gallery in Orleans, Massachusetts. The artist's Cape Cod themes link in nicely with the *After Hopper* series of events on the Cape, which examine the influence of Edward Hopper, who summured in the area and painted many locations that are now art destinations for many area artists.

Works in the show include *Out on the Flats*, which depicts a number of beach



- 1
Out on the Flats, oil on canvas, 30 x 40"
- 2
Paul Schulenburg in his studio.
- 3
First Light of Day, oil on panel, 16 x 12"
- 4
Wellfleet Morning, oil on canvas, 30 x 40"



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combers arranged on the horizon as they walk the tidal flats under a brilliant blue sky. “My house is a half mile from Cape Cod Bay. The Atlantic side of the Cape has big waves, but the bay side has smaller waves and is shallower, more like a lake. At low tide the water recedes and there are vast areas of flat sand exposed. If you walk out to where the water begins, you can keep going way out and the water will be barely over your knees. When the tide is out, there are tidal pools between sand bars going out for several hundred yards,” Schulenburg says. “Walking at low tide is one of my favorite things to do. It’s fun to walk in this big open area looking for shells and hermit crabs. I have often thought of painting this type of scene but was not sure how to capture the feeling of the vast open space. Having figures in the scene helps to give the viewer a sense of depth and open space. I did this painting at 30 by 40 inches, but it easily could have been larger. I wanted people standing in front of the painting to feel that sense of depth and open air.”

In *Wellfleet Morning*, the artist depicts a similar scene, but instead of people he paints a truck and a small boat in the wet sand. “*Wellfleet Morning* is also a painting done at low tide, but this one is of Wellfleet Harbor, about 10 miles away from where I live. I like these old, classic catboats, and I like the way sailboats will rest on the sand. Typically I paint a boat like this alone on the flats, waiting for the tide to come in with no one around,” he says. “I got up at 4:30 a.m. to be down at the harbor for low tide at 5 a.m. The first rays of sunlight were hitting the hull of the boat while the gray morning mist was just beginning to clear. The oyster farmers beat me to the spot and one truck was parked nearby. You can see the lines of oyster cages out behind the boat. It seemed to me a quintessential Wellfleet morning, with the fishermen working out on the flats at sunrise and the boat waiting for the tide to come in so it might be off on another adventure. Work and play. Life by the seashore.”

Schulenburg’s relationship with the ocean began early in his life, when he was

5 or 6 years old and he and his family would spend two weeks in a camper trailer near the beach every summer. “When I got into my teens I started to feel like I was coming home for two weeks, then I would go back to that place where I lived the other 50 weeks of the year,” he says, adding that he bought a house on the Cape in 1991, and later moved to coastal Maine in 2004 for a year. “That was very nice but I missed the soft sand and warmer water of Cape Cod...I love the sound of the surf, the waves crashing on the beach. My wife and I often go for long walks along the beaches of the National Seashore, just 2 miles away. The beaches here are less spoiled than other places along the coast. You can go to the Cape Cod beaches and find nature, not boardwalks, hotels and condos. Here on the outer cape we are surrounded by water, which gives the area a special quality of light. It’s a very popular place for artists, so there is a lot of creative energy in the air. Sometimes we talk about moving, but it’s hard to find a better place.” ●