



FINDLAY GALLERIES

THREE CENTURIES IN ART

Hugo Grenville

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH
ROMANTIC PAINTER

165 WORTH AVENUE, PALM BEACH, FLORIDA 33480 • (561) 655-2090
32 EAST 57TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022 • (212) 421-5390

WWW.FINDLAYGALLERIES.COM

Hugo Grenville

(b.1958)

Recognized today as one of Britain's leading artists, Hugo Grenville passed through careers as a soldier and then an art dealer before turning full-time to painting in 1989. He has had many solo exhibitions since his first in London in 1974, and his work hangs in many public and private collections internationally.

Grenville refers to himself as a romantic but acknowledges a fascination with pattern and color that places him in the tradition of Henri Matisse. The figure subjects and the everyday objects that surround them in his paintings express joy in life, light and color. Less evident but equally important is a feeling of intimacy that recalls Matisse's contemporaries, Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard. Here, we see Grenville being influenced by the principles of "Les Nabis" - a group of young post-impressionists, avant-garde Parisian artists of the 1890s who influenced the fine arts at the turn of the century. Bonnard, Vuillard and Maurice Denis became the best-known members of the group. One of "Les Nabis'" goals was to integrate daily life into their paintings, as Grenville does with grace and sensitivity. Another principle Grenville follows is the Nabis approach to cover a flat surface with colors assembled in a certain order. Layers of feeling peel back to disclose a spiritual intensity.

Grenville says, "My paintings are an unashamed and joyous celebration of life, a passionate defense of beauty and domestic harmony, steeped in the English Romantic tradition. I would like the work to stand as a symbol of promise and to express our sense of existence through the recognition of the transforming power of color and light.

Through the arrangement of shape, line, pattern, and color, I try to conjure the lyrical and the dreamlike, a place at peace with itself. The still life and figure paintings do not generally represent a moment in time but rather the result of reflection, recollection, and reinvention, a distillation of human experience."

The Valentine Card
oil on canvas | 46 x 38 in.
FG© 141604



Artist Statement

This collection is an exploration of the way in which colour influences our feelings. We live surrounded by colour, in our homes, in the landscape, and perhaps at work too, but seldom do we have time to stop and consider its effect upon us. Why does a room observed in the blue-violet light of a summer dawn suggest a very different atmosphere to the same room lit by the golden light of a summer evening? As humans, we respond to colour from an early age, preferring a red shirt to a green one or a yellow one to a pink one. Colour works like music: it instantaneously chimes with our feelings and moods. Certain combinations evoke pleasure, others distaste. In this group of new paintings, I have used colour as one might use a key in music, as a way of setting the emotional tone of a composition, of communicating something inner through the arrangement of its harmonies.

As with all my work, the paintings seek to convey a spirit of contemplation, reflection and gentle joy found in the world around us, our houses, the streets of our hometowns, and the countryside. I am much moved by looking through windows, and many of the room interiors are designed to lead the viewer's eye through the careful arrangement of shapes and into the outside world; sometimes, this device has the effect of cloaking the ordinary in a sort of otherworldliness so that the mind can wander freely into the pastures of the imagination. There is a similar effect where a mirror is used to reflect the figure: the interior space presented to the viewer presents an alternative version of reality, a kind of dreamworld, an Alice through the Looking-Glass experience.

The paintings largely fall into two groups: the landscapes composed from the terrace at Old Granary Cottage, my home, and the interiors, some with figures, designed in my studio. Although my vision is rooted in the tradition of English Romanticism, the way in which the paint is deployed is influenced both by a long immersion in European Post-Impressionism and by my more recent fascination with American Post-war painting. In the bigger pictures, the juxtaposition of flat and liquid areas of translucent colour, applied in fluid broad brush marks, with shorter, thicker impasto marks, probably owes more to the technique of de Kooning than it does to Matisse, even if the subject matter remains firmly domestic.

The Last of the Sunlight on Pitchers Hill
oil on canvas | 54 x 48 in.
FG© 141598 (see page 20)

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The Valentine Card (see page 2)

The Valentine card rests upon the stool, sitting on a pattern of chequered squares. If you follow the anemone up into the arrangement of flowers and leaves which dance around the central vase and descend towards the table. The green and turquoise leaves, and the violet vase, are cool colours which provide a vital contrast with the hot pinks of the background material, the orange surface of the table, and the yellow books.

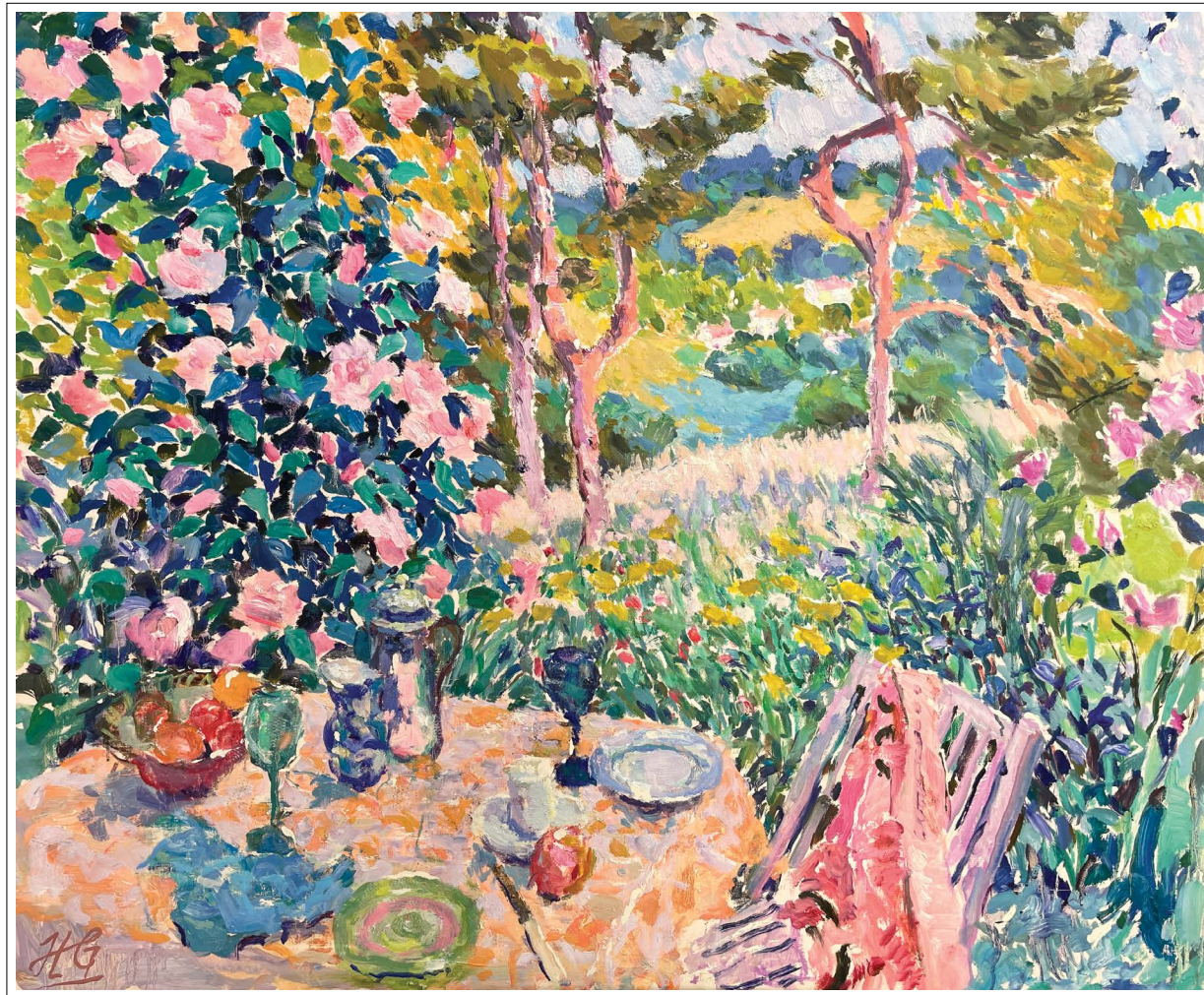
Summer in the Aegean (see opposite page)

I love the Greek islands, and often travel there in the early summer, making small paintings en plein air. Then in the winter, when my unheated chapel studio is chilly and bleak, I set up a still life by the window, and working with my summer sketches all around me, imagine that I am still gazing contentedly onto an Aegean summer.



Summer in the Aegean | oil on canvas | 42 x 42 in. | FG© 141595

Put a living, breathing figure beside a patterned textile or a vase of flowers, and suddenly the inanimate object comes to life, it becomes something new. – Hugo Grenville



Summer Garden II | oil on canvas | 38 x 46 in. | FG© 141593



The Long Day Closes, a Mediterranean Siesta | oil on canvas | 38 x 46 in. | FG© 141599

Dreams and Reflections I & II

(see page 13)

These two large figure subjects both describe the same room setting but at different times and in different ways. In both paintings, the figure reclines on a bed in the center of the composition, and the viewer's eye is drawn along the diagonal from the bottom left corner, past the figure and into the outside world glimpsed through the window. Still, the very different colour palettes evoke different emotions. There is no primary blue in the first version of *Dreams and Reflections* and no primary red in the second.

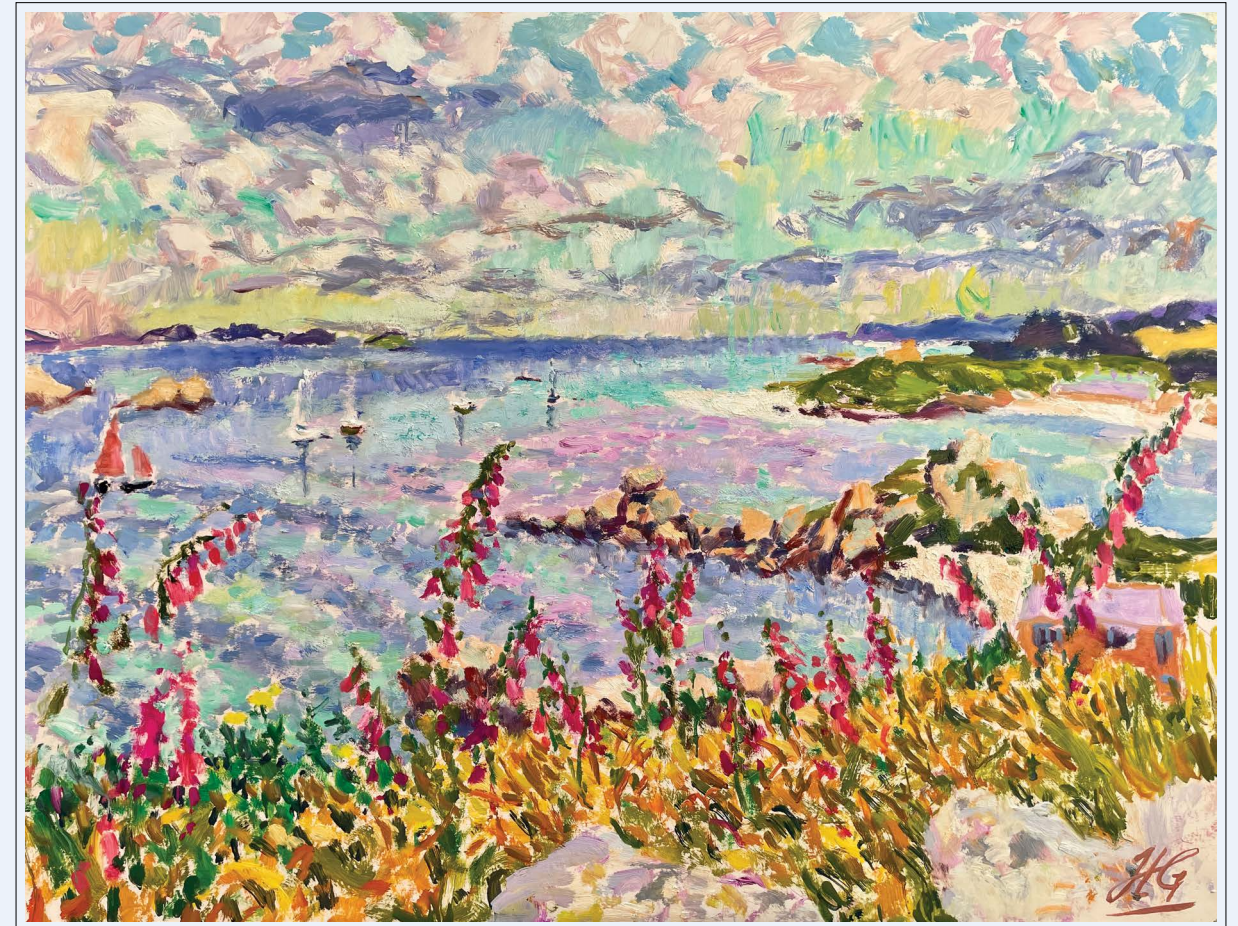
Dreams and Reflections II
oil on canvas | 48 x 54 in.
FG© 141587
(cover image)



Hugo Grenville's work may be informed by centuries of art history, from Botticelli's idealization of beauty, to Patrick Heron's love of textile, or Pollock's celebration of the medium of oil paint, but he transcends all those to find an artistic expression that is entirely his own – canvases that capture the exuberance and timelessness of a romantic English vision. – Helen Rosslyn



The Path to the Sea, Bali | oil on canvas | 32 x 42 in. | FG© 141602



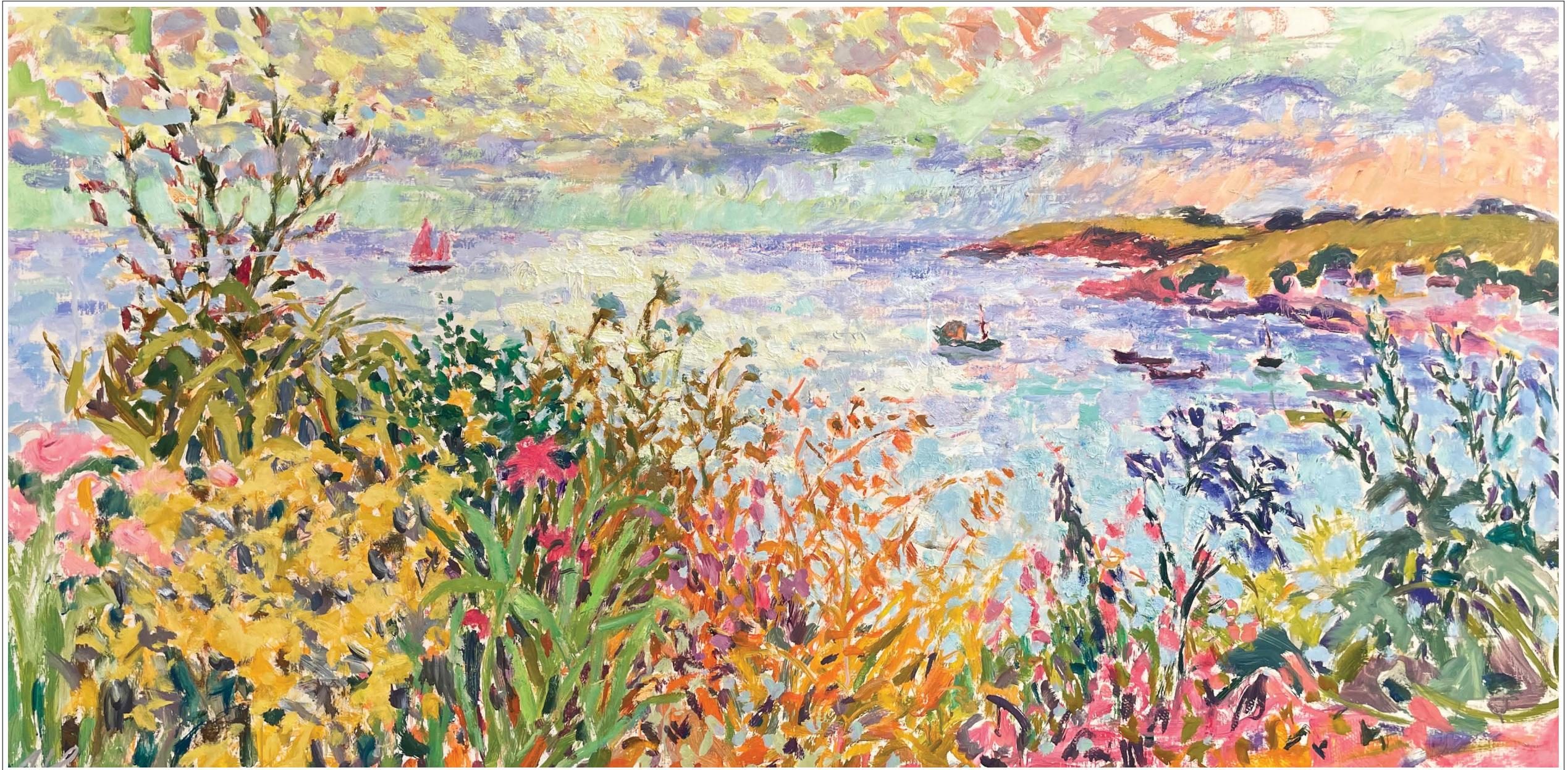
On the Banks of the Deben, June Afternoon | oil on canvas | 38 x 46 in. | FG© 140043

I love looking at the work of the great Post Impressionist painters, and I do often find inspiration in the clarity of their visions. I am indebted to three painters, Vuillard, Bonnard and Gauguin, who set me off on my path, and of course to Matisse for his glorious pattern-making, and to Klimt for his unashamed Romantic sensibility. – Hugo Grenville

Dreams and Reflections I

oil on canvas | 48 x 60 in.
FG© 141586



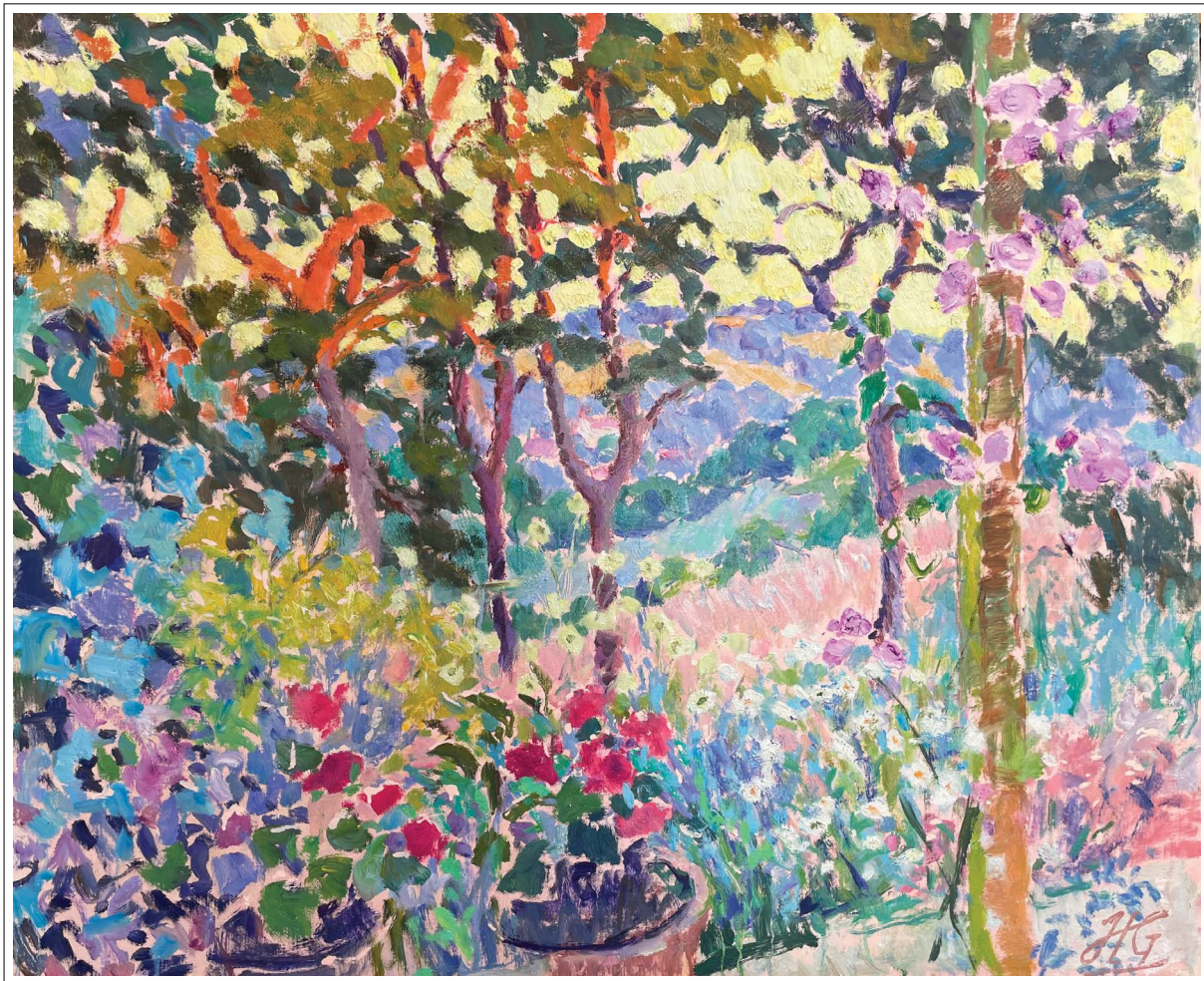


There's a village on the Roseland peninsular, in Cornwall, called Portscatho, and in early summer, the wildflowers grow abundantly upon the cliffs tops. If you have the energy to rise early, and watch the sun come up, you will notice the first boats put out to sea across

the water which is slowly changing colour. I have only been there once, but the image of that sunrise has remained incredibly strong in my mind.

Daybreak on the Roseland
oil on canvas | 30 x 60 in.
FG© 141585

I am constantly fascinated by the view from my garden terrace at home, but it is at the end of the day, in summer, that this rural view seems to take on the hue of somewhere quite magical and other-worldly. The pine trees provide the verticals, shoring up the center of the landscape like scaffolding, and between these trees, on the other side of the valley, the village houses slowly begin to dissolve into the receding hills. The last of the sunlight glows on the tops of the tree trunks, plunging the rest of the scene into a glimmering violet-blue shade.



Now Fades the Glimmering Landscape | oil on canvas | 38 x 46 in. | FG© 141582
(Title references Thomas Grays famous poem: *Elegy Written in Counry Churchyard*)

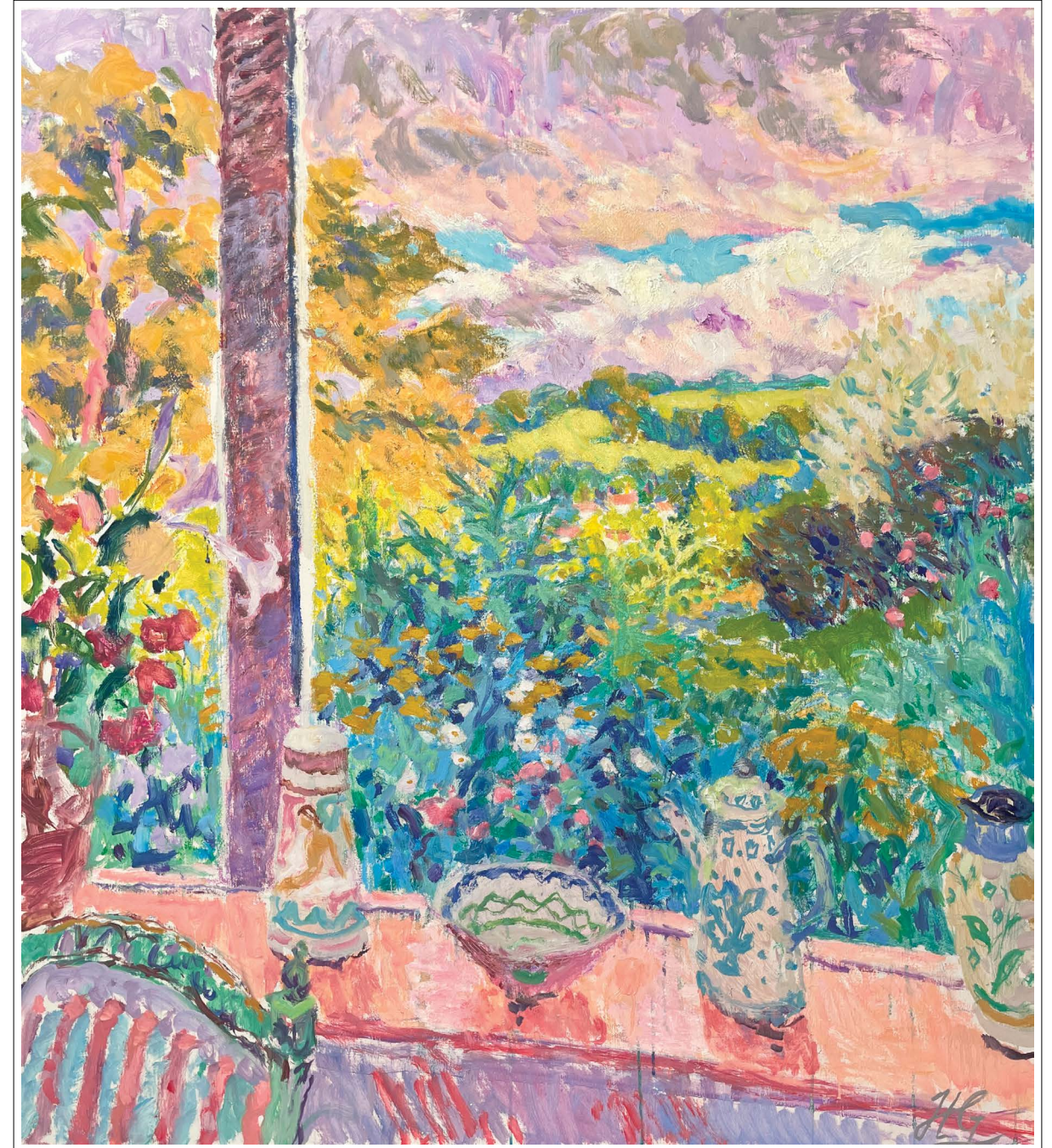


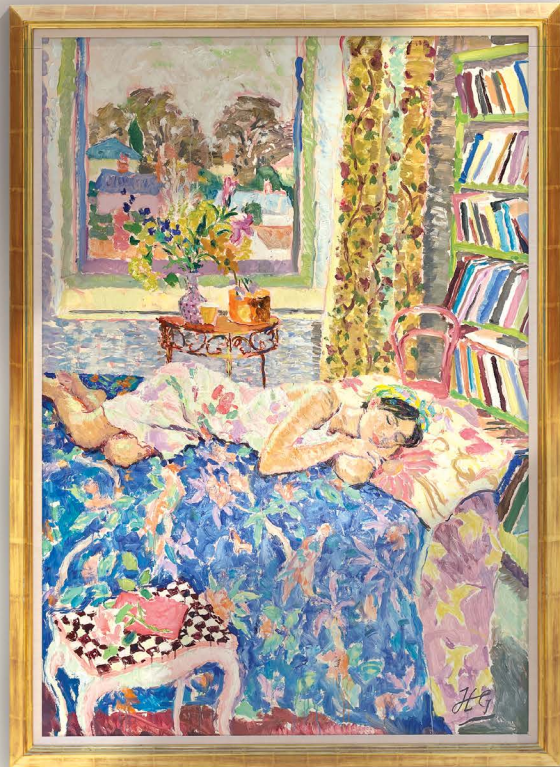
In Contemplation | oil on canvas | 36 x 34 in. | FG© 141583

The Last of the Sunlight on Pitchers Hill

oil on canvas | 54 x 48 in.
FG© 141598

This is the view from my Living Room at the end of a summer evening. The flower bed outside the bay window is in shadow, forming a great pyramid of blue, and it is juxtaposed against the warm sunlight on the far side of the valley, where the roofs of the village house can be glimpsed in the evening light. To the left of the picture, bisected by the mullion of the window, the branches of a tall Scots pine glow with an orange hue, holding the glittering yellows in check and complementing the shadowy blues. On the windowsill, the ceramic objects restrain the advancing landscape and emphasize the sense of looking out into the landscape from inside.





Sleeping Figure, Dreaming I
oil on canvas | 60 x 42 in.
FG© 141591





The Novel | oil on canvas | 36 x 28 in. | FG© 141600



Sarah Through the Looking Glass | oil on canvas | 48 x 48 in. | FG© 141590



The Park in Winter

oil on canvas | 30x 50 in.
FG© 141601



Exhibitions

One Man Shows

1991 New King's Road Gallery
1992 The Newbury: Featured Artist of Newbury Festival
1992 Smith's Gallery, London
1994 Oliver Swann Gallery, London
1995 Oliver Swann Gallery, London
1995 China Club, Hong Kong
1997 Messum's, London
1999 Messum's, London
2000 Messum's, London
2001 Messum's, London
2002 Messum's, London
2003 Messum's, London
2005 Messum's, London
2006 Findlay Galleries, New York
2007 Josie Eastwood Fine Art, London
2009 Findlay Galleries, Palm Beach
2010 Josie Eastwood Fine Art, London
2011 Findlay Galleries Palm Beach
2012 Medici Gallery, London
2013 Morningside Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland
2013 Findlay Galleries, New York
2016 Josie Eastwood Fine Art, Winchester, England
2016 Kunsthandel Studio 2000, Domburg, Holland
2016 Findlay Galleries, Palm Beach
2017 Findlay Galleries, New York
2020 Findlay Galleries, Palm Beach
2021 Findlay Galleries, New York
2024 Findlay Galleries, New York

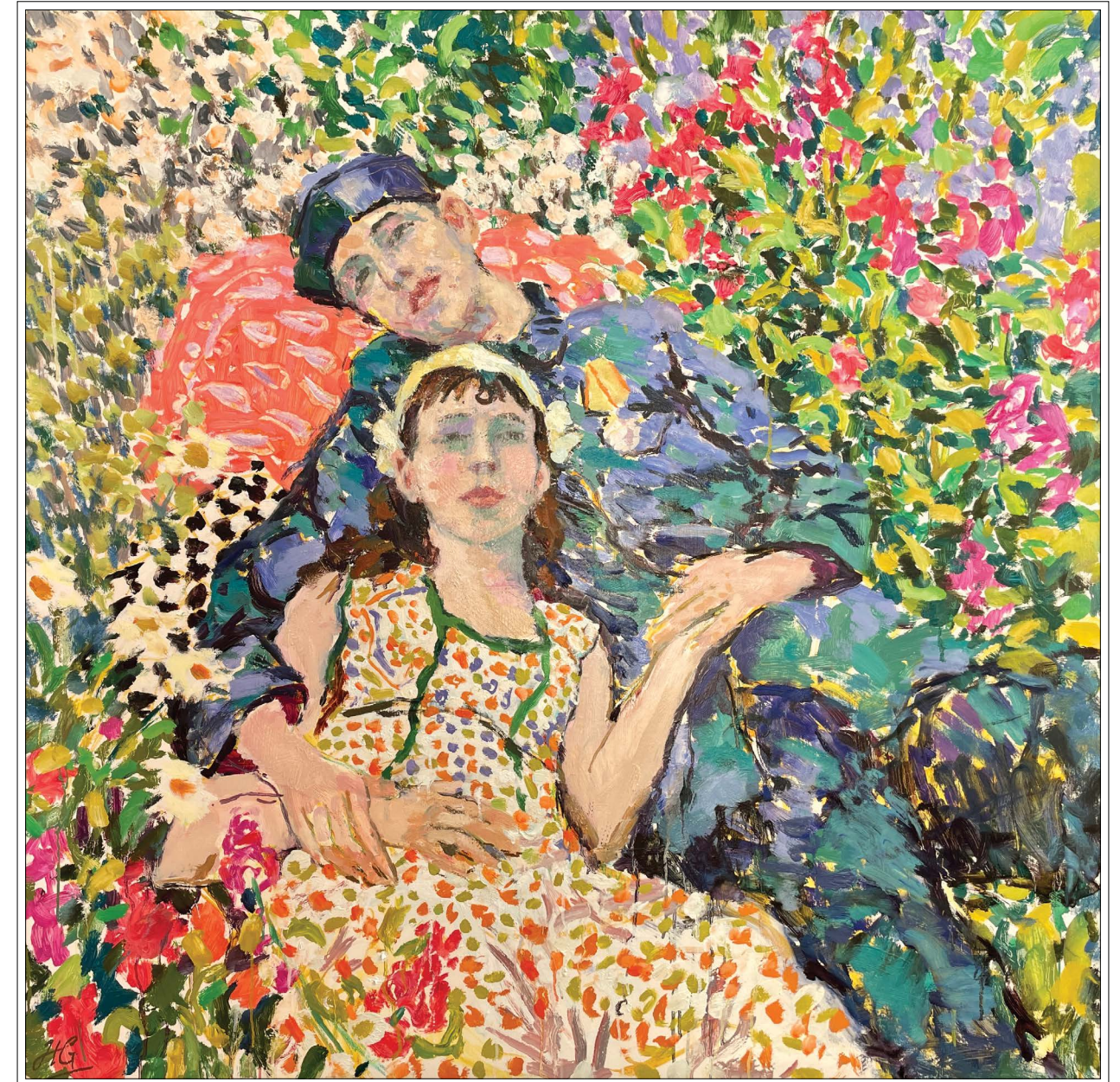
Group Shows

During the past 20 years he has exhibited at the Royal Society of British Artists, Royal Institute of Painters in Oil, Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolor, the Arts Club, the Morningside Gallery, Cricket Fine Art, Josie Eastwood Fine Art and numerous other galleries.

Collections

Grenville's work is represented in corporate, institutional and private collections in UK, USA, Canada, France, Hong Kong, and Australia, including:

Edinburgh City Council
The Worshipful Company of Ironmongers
The Ministry of Defence
The China Club, Hong Kong
The Tresco Estate
Pembroke Management
The Duke of Devonshire
Searcy's
Duke's Hotel, St James's
The Earl of Verulam



Waiting for Tomorrow | oil on canvas | 42 x 42 in. | FG© 141605

Waiting for Tomorrow

(see opposite page)

Perhaps we have always lived in uncertain times. History has often called upon the young to stand up and be counted. Today, in the Ukraine, the Middle East, Myanmar and parts of Africa, there is war, but the young still fall in love, hope for a better future, and believe in tomorrow, however daunting it may seem. This painting celebrates romantic love and the strength that it can afford us.

FINDLAY GALLERIES

EST. 1870



Still-Life with Peonies and Goose Egg | oil on canvas | 38 x 46 in. | FG© 141592

New York

32 E 57th St, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10022
(212) 421-5390
newyork@findlayart.com

Palm Beach

165 Worth Avenue
Palm Beach, FL 33480
(561) 655-2090
palmbeach@findlayart.com

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