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AUGUST 2005

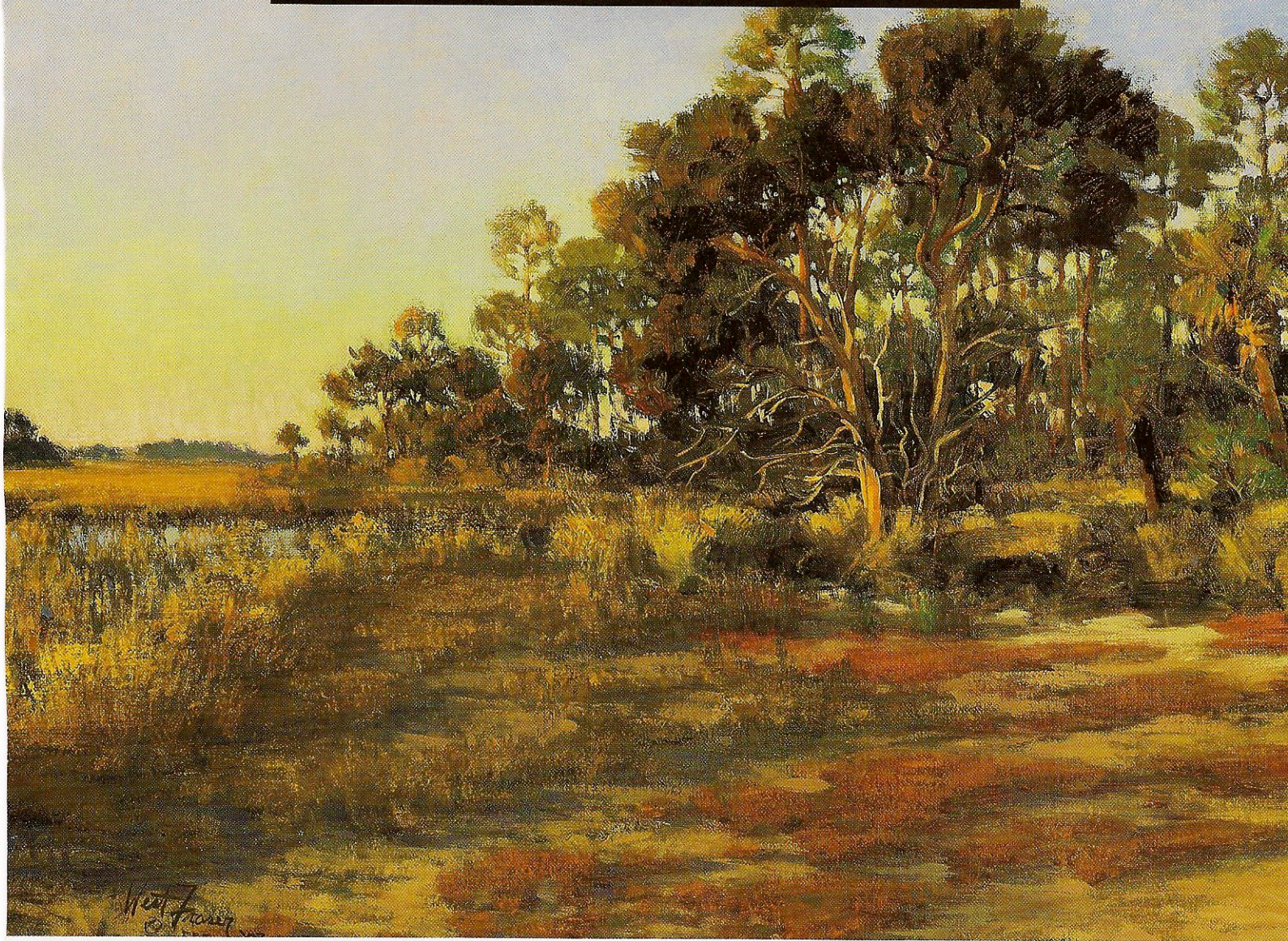
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SALON d'Art

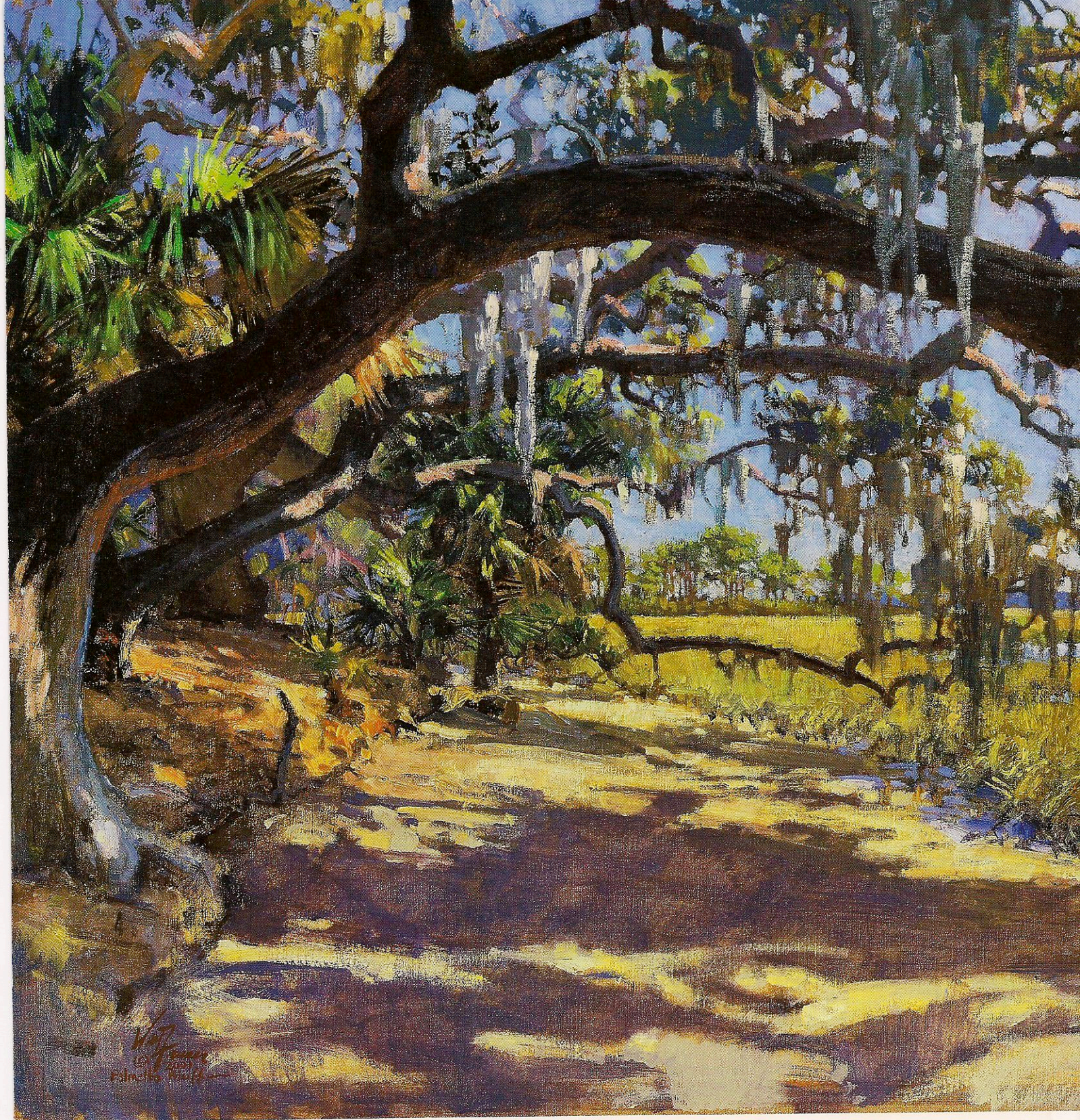
Today's Masters™



DETAIL OF
PETTIGREW FLATS
WEST FRASER
2003, OIL ON LINEN, 30 X 36 IN.

inside

WEST FRASER
GAVIN BROOKS
DANIEL E. GREENE



Wayne Thayer
2002
Palm Beach, Florida

RIISING TIDE ON THE LIGHT DAPPLED BANK

2002, OIL ON LINEN, 32 x 40 IN.

SOUTH CAROLINA

West Fraser

A Dance Of Light

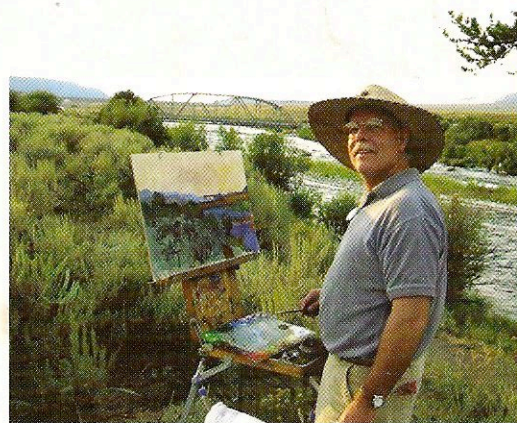
By BÉATRICE AARONSON

*When the brush stroke flirts with life... when art offers joy....
 In a world filled with tensions, violence...
 In a fragmented world hungry for harmony and beauty...
 To re-inhabit words that have lost their innocence...
 Through art and love...*

— West Fraser

FOLLOWING IN THE WAKES of the Barbizon school, French Impressionism and American Impressionism, West Fraser's artistic path leads us into his personal vision and perception. His works reveal his essential attraction to the magic of forests, marshes and seashores untainted by human presence, as well as urban landscapes tamed by that presence. With a sense of place, a sense of time, Fraser captures the ever-changing moods of the world around him, registering like a seismograph the very pulses of life.

A retinal feast, Fraser's art vibrates with the vitality of his artistic lineage, meshing classical, traditional strength in formal composition, with a romantic sense of nature's unfolding moves. His work continues the bursting energy of John Singer Sargent, the vigor of Joaquín Sorolla and the lively sketchiness of Theodore Robinson or Edward Potthast. It shines the alchemical light of Frank Benson. It dances the delicacy of Edward Redfield, and exhales the artistry of Alfred Sisley and Camille Pissarro — all while waving the glorious American flag of Childe Hassam. In short, Fraser's paintings reconcile an academic urge for the stillness of order with an intuitive passion for the bustling movement of life's organic interactions.



WEST FRASER





VILLAGERS AT WORK AND PLAY
1999, OIL ON LINEN, 30 x 36 IN.

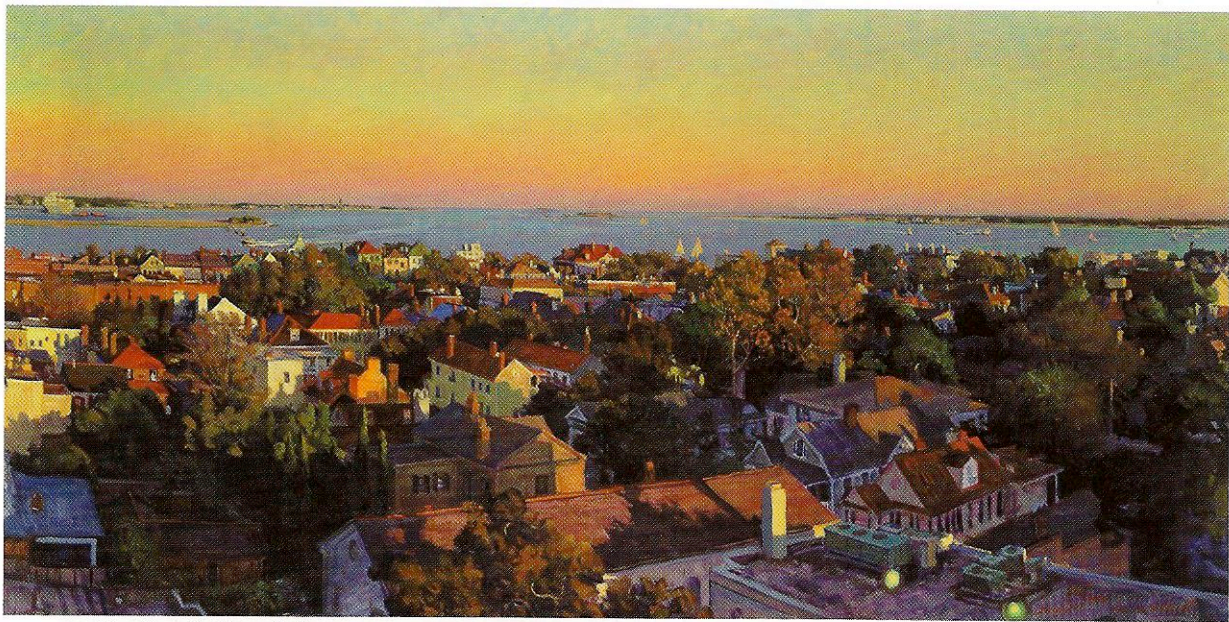
The “unfinished” quality of the transitory subjects captured on Fraser’s canvases projects the very essence of life. Thick impasto or lightly brushed colors, dabs, dots and painterly spaces dance together on the canvas for the artist-turned-choreographer. Lines remember the most common things — trees or lampposts, stop signs or branches, Spanish moss or women’s skirts, beaches or streets. Fraser’s love of painting is contagious, bathed as it is in a dappled light of joy, playing hide and seek with the eye.

“West Fraser paints with light — the radiance of early morning, the glare of high noon, the glow of day’s end, and the mystery of moonlight — to create brilliant works of color and form,” comments Jean Stern, director of The Irvine Museum in California. “He takes what we see every day, something that seems ordinary, and makes it worthy of fine art.”

Destined to be an artist from the start, Fraser studied briefly at Clemson University and the College of

Charleston before earning his BFA at the University of Georgia. Throughout the 1980s, he worked independently as an illustrator while earning recognition as a painter of watercolors. The early ’90s saw him turn to oils and to painting *en plein air*, which further loosened his lyrical style. A traveling 2002-2003 exhibition that accompanied the publication of a major monograph, *Charleston In My Time: The Paintings of West Fraser*, brought Fraser to national prominence. In 1995, *The Color of Light*, a one-man exhibition at the Springfield Museum of Art in Ohio, cemented his reputation.

Beyond a deep reverence for nature, what fuels Fraser’s art is passion, inspiration, life itself. Not worried about ephemeral, trendy fads, Fraser paints what he loves. He penetrates nature’s generous design, searching for compositions, giving life to his works. “Each new painting presents a new challenge,” says Fraser. “Each new challenge



VIEW FROM ST. MICHAEL'S STEEPLE
1999, OIL ON LINEN, 32 x 64 IN.

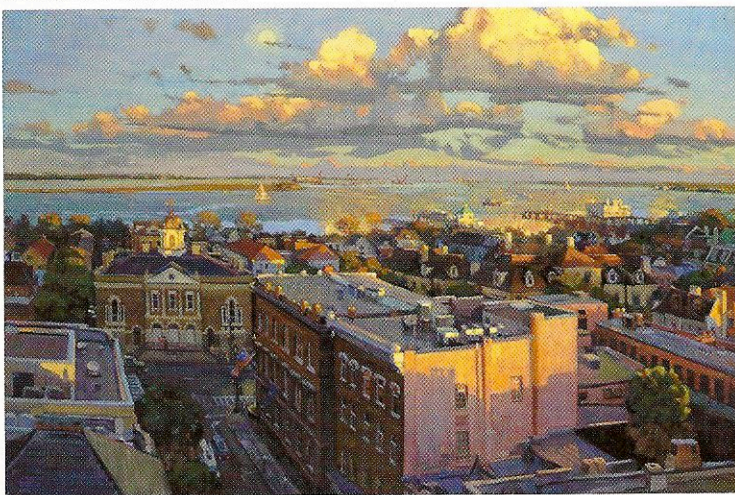
ON THE EDGE OF TWILIGHT
2004, OIL ON LINEN, 25 x 30 IN.





RAINY NIGHT LIGHTS ON CHURCH STREET
1997, OIL ON LINEN, 30 x 50 IN.

SUNSET OVER THE PENINSULA
2004, OIL ON LINEN, 20 x 30 IN.



is a goad to growth.” Strolling through his hometown of Charleston or walking through Low Country marshes, Fraser has become “a curious beauty detective searching for found compositions he can distill into art.”¹ There is no formula for this distillation. In Fraser’s words: “I cannot remember how I did it. I just did it.” This sincerity suffuses all his art.

Described as “South Carolina’s best known, most widely collected contemporary artist, an impressionist who captures the magic of place,”² Fraser communicates a message of life and joy within the simplicity of a world that still offers harmony when one is ready to experience it. Birthed in solitude, Fraser’s synesthetic paintings unfurl a visceral quality of paint, “luscious, quirkily fresh.”³ His oils capture the “movement of air and light, color sensation by color sensation, suggesting the passage of time, moment by moment, stroke by stroke.”⁴



PETTIGREW FLATS
2003, OIL ON LINEN, 30 x 36 IN.

We, his viewers, become voyagers without luggage, stepping into the paintings to reach a symbiotic world, a little paradise of poetic naturalism that soothes our tired souls. That may be why collectors buy West Fraser's work: to regain this delicious sense of a paradise lost, helping us breathe better in a society that kills simple pleasures and forgets to smell the flowers. ■

BÉATRICE AARONSON, Ph.D., is an artist, performer, award-winning poet, lecturer, art historian and independent scholar. Author of numerous essays and articles on art and literature for literary and interdisciplinary reviews

and magazines, she has contributed to *Found Object*, *Deus Loci*, *Sirena*, *Tessera*, *The Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Jewish Writers* and *The Post and Courier* (Charleston). She also published and illustrated *Baudelaire-Miller: Sexual Squalor in Paris*, a monograph on Baudelaire and Henri Miller.

¹ Phillips, Ted. "West Fraser: A Friend's Perspective." *Charleston In My Time: The Paintings of West Fraser*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2001. xvii-xxiv.

² Sully, Suzan. "Points of View: West Fraser tells Scenic Stories en plein air." *Art and Antiques*, May 2005. 61-2.

³ O'Rear, Rosie. "West Fraser's Southern Art." *Sandlapper*, Spring 2004. 10-13.

⁴ Flam, Jack. "The New Painting." *The New York Review of Books*, Volume XLI, Number 19, Nov. 1994. 48-53.

ARTIST DATA

Name:	West Fraser
Birthdate:	February 3, 1955
Birthplace:	Savannah, GA
Home:	Mt. Pleasant, Charleston, SC
Influences:	Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, Robert Henri, William Merritt Chase, Edward Redfield, Joaquin Sorolla, Anders Zorn, Joseph Bowler, Coby Whitmore
Values:	\$4,800-\$100,000
Galleries:	Fraser Fox Fine Art, Charleston, SC, and J. Russell Jinishian Gallery, Fairfield, CT
Website:	www.fraserfoxfineart.com