

jim holland

BREWSTER

by susan spencer

Necessity may have launched former advertising executive and graphic designer Jim Holland's career as a landscape painter, but Cape Cod's beauty inspired it. Holland was the number-two man in an agency in upstate New York, edging towards his growing passion for painting, when the agency folded in the mid-1990s. He moved to the Cape permanently and never looked back.

"My artwork almost exploded from my encounters with Cape Cod," Holland says. "I'm continually amazed at what a beautiful place this is. You have this long, convoluted peninsula surrounded by water in every direction."

Holland's work, primarily rendered in oil and watercolor, has a vivid, catch-your-breath quality, capturing the essential Cape Cod. In *Sailboats and Sandbars*, the approaching dusk softly colors boats that rest on the shallow tide. A classic Cape Cod summer memory is evoked in *Summer Bungalow*, in which the late-day sun peeks over trees, casting shadows on a cottage. There is a certain bare-bones solitude and an elegant spareness of line and texture in Holland's paintings that reflect his admiration for Edward Hopper.

A high-school interest in photography led Holland to develop an eye for composition and clarity. He says, "I started composing through the viewfinder a lot. I think that might be why there's a lot of stillness in my painting."

Holland, who lives in Brewster with filmmaker Allison Argo, admits to being particularly enchanted with the bay. He is drawn to the estuaries and little coves, which offer dramatic compositions. He says that he spends hours

Lifeguards Only, oil on canvas, 30" x 40"

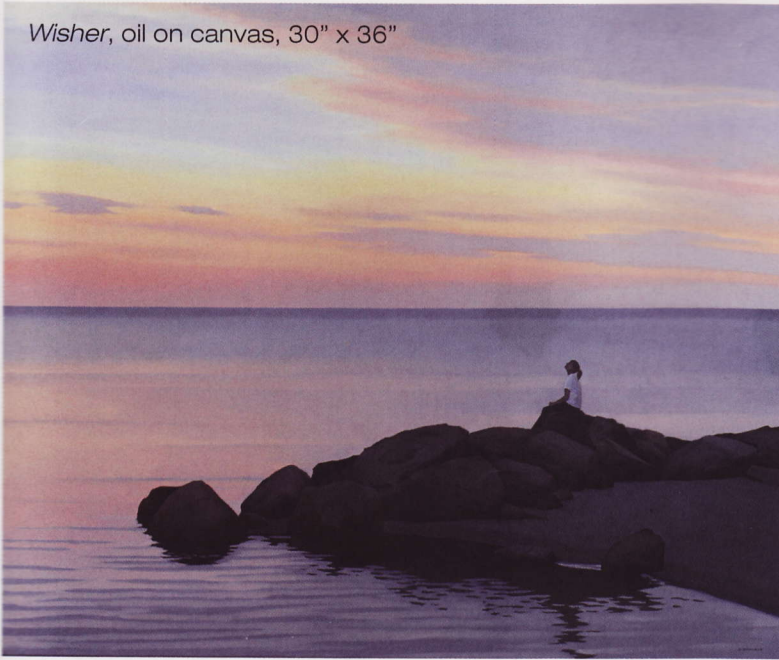


Aquinnah Afternoon, oil on canvas, 36" x 36"

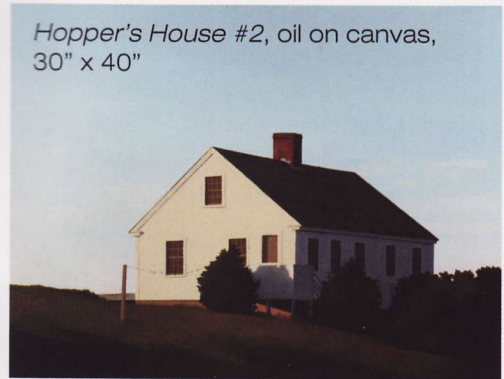


Holding light and space in his hands

Wisher, oil on canvas, 30" x 36"



Hopper's House #2, oil on canvas, 30" x 40"



UPCOMING SHOW

New paintings ~ Jim Holland
Left Bank Gallery
25 Commercial Street, Wellfleet
July 4 to July 17
Opening reception, July 4, 6 to 8 p.m.

walking Brewster's flats, soaking in the nuances of light and color. Days' Cottages in Truro are another of his favorite subjects; he has stayed in the famed summer cottages on the edge of Provincetown, energized by near-direct contact with Cape Cod Bay. "The bay really captured me," he says. "I felt like it was a bowl of light."

The challenge for Holland is to keep looking at things with fresh eyes. He returns to his favorite spots repeatedly and explores them from different perspectives, with new appreciation for how light hits the world around him. As it was with Hopper, painting for Holland is all about holding light and space close.

Cape Cod skies are always changing and Holland's fascination with these variations in shade and texture shows up in the significant space occupied by the sky on his canvases. In *Mist in the Provincelands*, a dune-scape apparition appears through an enveloping, opalescent fog. *Marsh Dock* details a delicate tidal marsh and footbridge in the bottom third of a painting dominated by complex clouds and pale blue. Holland spends a lot of time mixing paint on the palette to get just the right color, and then paints it on the canvas in one shot. He laughs, and says that he should more rightfully be called a colorist, rather than an artist.

Left Bank Gallery in Wellfleet is the exclusive representative of Holland's work on Cape Cod, although he also works with galleries off-Cape, including Nantucket's Quidley & Co. Audrey Sherwin Parent, owner of Left Bank Gallery, says, "Jim's got quite a following. We have a show for him every year. People line up outside for a 10 a.m. opening and by noon, he's sold many paintings." Holland says it's the feeling of peace his paintings evoke that makes them so popular.

While Holland has traveled worldwide and spends time in Costa Rica, he says he's still not inspired to paint much outside of Cape Cod. "There's something about where the land meets the ocean on the East Coast—it's what I love," he says. "It's one of those things where I pinch myself: to do what I do and live where I live—it's a pretty charmed life."

Jim Holland's work can be seen on his Web site, www.jimholland-art.com, or at The Left Bank Gallery, Wellfleet, Quidley & Co., Nantucket and Boston, and North Water Gallery, Edgartown.

Susan Spencer is a freelance writer and photographer who lives in Brewster and Whitinsville, MA.