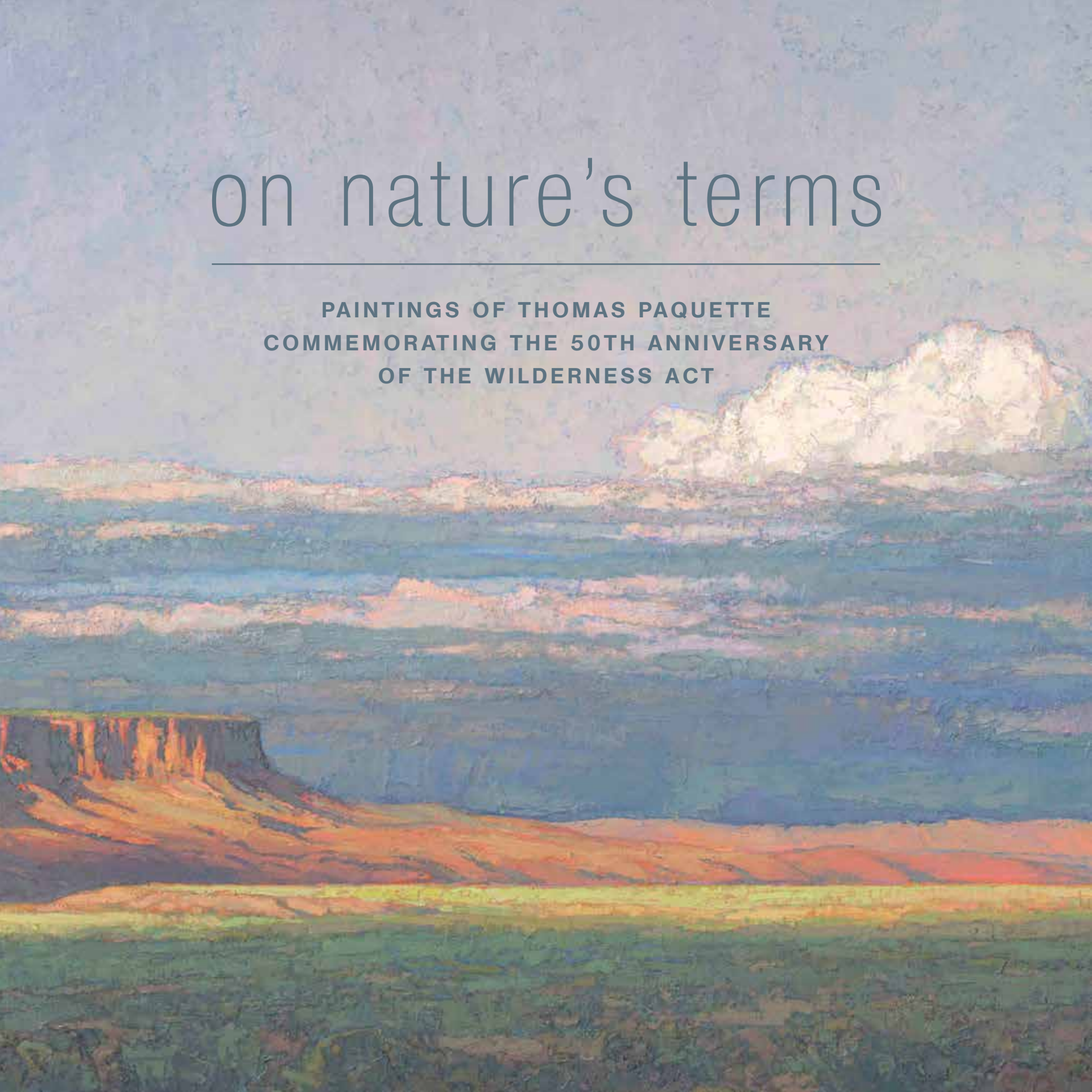


on nature's terms

PAINTINGS OF THOMAS PAQUETTE
COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE WILDERNESS ACT





On Nature's Terms
Paintings of Thomas Paquette commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act

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Introduction by Annelies Mondt, Deputy Director of the Georgia Museum of Art

Note on Wilderness by Jamie Williams, President of The Wilderness Society

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Late Vermilion Light, oil on linen by Thomas Paquette, 36 x 74 inches, 2013 [Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness, AZ]

ThomasPaquette.com



“Wilderness is the original greatest show on Earth.
Painting it is my humble way of bringing some of it home.”

—*Thomas Paquette*

Fifty years have passed since the Wilderness Act of 1964 was signed into law, protecting the wildest remaining lands in the United States. *On Nature's Terms* celebrates the places preserved by that law, places that thrive not by dint of industry and scientific progress but by the forces of nature alone, protected from significant human intrusion.

“Wilderness” aptly defined most of the world from time immemorial. In the last two hundred years, the balance of nature and culture has changed, and instead of dwarfing human-altered landscapes, truly wild lands are now reduced to special areas dotting the map. Still, those large and small oases of wild nature remain vibrant, if smaller, worlds.

The paintings by Thomas Paquette in *On Nature's Terms* were inspired by his journeys to federal wilderness areas all across the country. The great diversity and vitality of environments that comprise the National Wilderness Preservation System — from southwest canyons and high peaks, east and west seashores, to lowland swamps and deserts — are reflected in these gouache and oil paintings. Subjects include Okefenokee Swamp in the south to Boundary Waters Canoe Area in the north, and wilderness areas in Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, New Hampshire, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Wyoming.

Paquette's paintings are contemplations of those special places where nature dominates. *On Nature's Terms* is a tribute to the importance of protecting some lands forever as wild.



Can we truly know wilderness? The word itself defies constraint, and contains multiple meanings. “An uncultivated and uninhabited region,” “an empty or pathless area,” and “a confusing multitude” are but a few definitions of wilderness, all of which indicate humans’ complex and changeable relationship to nature.

The splendor and mystery of the American wilderness has inspired many generations of explorer-artists. In the nineteenth century, artists such as Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt captured the grandeur and awe of the American West and helped motivate the creation of the first national park, Yellowstone, in 1872. Early in the twentieth century, the paintings of Rudolph Ingerle were instrumental in establishing Great Smoky Mountains National Park. These artists are among many who helped fuel and popularize the conservation movement in America. Protection of the wilderness came to be seen as critical to preserve wildlife and topography not only for its own inherent value, but also for the spiritual, creative, and cultural health and sustainability of the citizenry.

Gifted with a keen eye and intellect, Thomas Paquette is a modern heir to these artistic forebears. His paintings present the natural world to us in varying shades, from the intimate to the majestic, and evoke the mood and feeling of a place. But Paquette’s

introduction



paintings do not merely document; they stir our imagination and make us look at our environs anew.

In contemplating Paquette's paintings and our friendship of nearly twenty-five years, I see strong parallels between his approach to painting and his approach to life, as well as between his methodology and the mysteriousness of nature. As his paintings develop, he approaches the subject almost indirectly. Out of an appearance of chaos arises a deliberate beauty.

Paquette's paintings give an exuberant impression of being just barely contained by paper or canvas. Each painting is a journey in and of itself.

He distills the landscape, sometimes to abstraction. Small fields of color abut each other, often in unexpected ways. His process appears to work in concert with nature.

Each of Paquette's paintings evolve from initial sketches in sometimes wildly unnatural colors, such as pinks, bright blues and reds. Next, he layers and scrapes the paint in a process of building, destroying, and rebuilding. He carefully manipulates light and shadow, perhaps changing the time of day or even the entire composition. After forays in various directions, the painting eventually arrives at its destination, which can sometimes be a surprise, given its journey.

Whether portraying the vast expanse of the Vermilion Cliffs of Arizona, the quiet solitude of the Boundary Waters of Minnesota, or the still, dark confines of the Okefenokee Swamp, Thomas Paquette's work evokes the layered nuances and moods of a landscape. The color, light, composition, and even the surface of many of his paintings capture some secret, some clue to the natural world's makeup. While standing before one of his large oil paintings or peering into the smallest of gouache paintings, the viewer has the sense of worlds within.

Paquette's love of nature is superseded only by his drive to create and share with others all that he has observed. How lucky for us that he has chosen to convey his passion for the natural world through the conduit of his brushstrokes. Reviving us from complacency, Paquette's work urges us to appreciate the American wilderness through an adventurer's eyes and be humbled by our discoveries.

Annelies Mond
Deputy Director, Georgia Museum of Art



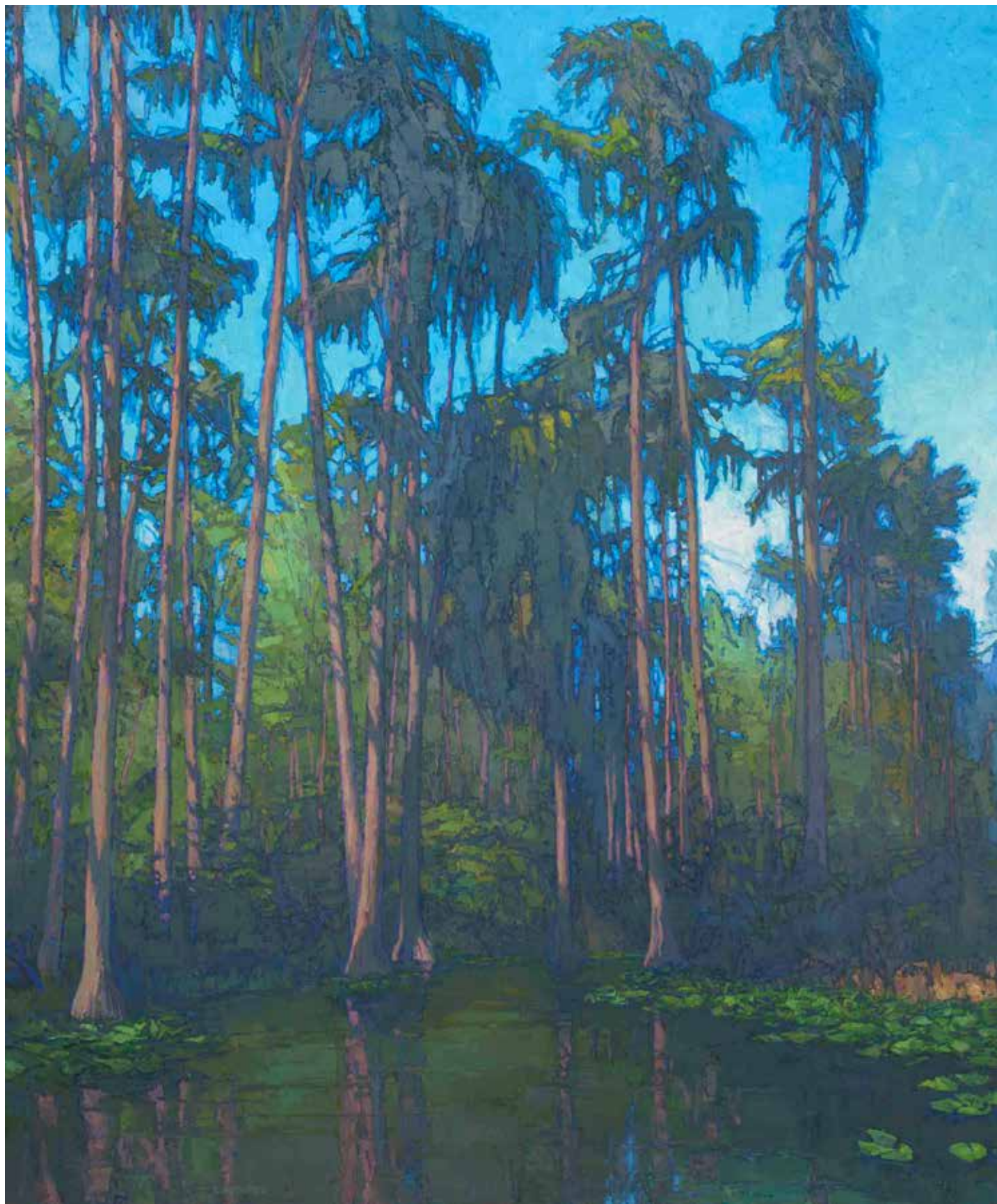
Beyond Mile High
Raggeds Wilderness, CO
oil on linen, 60 x 46







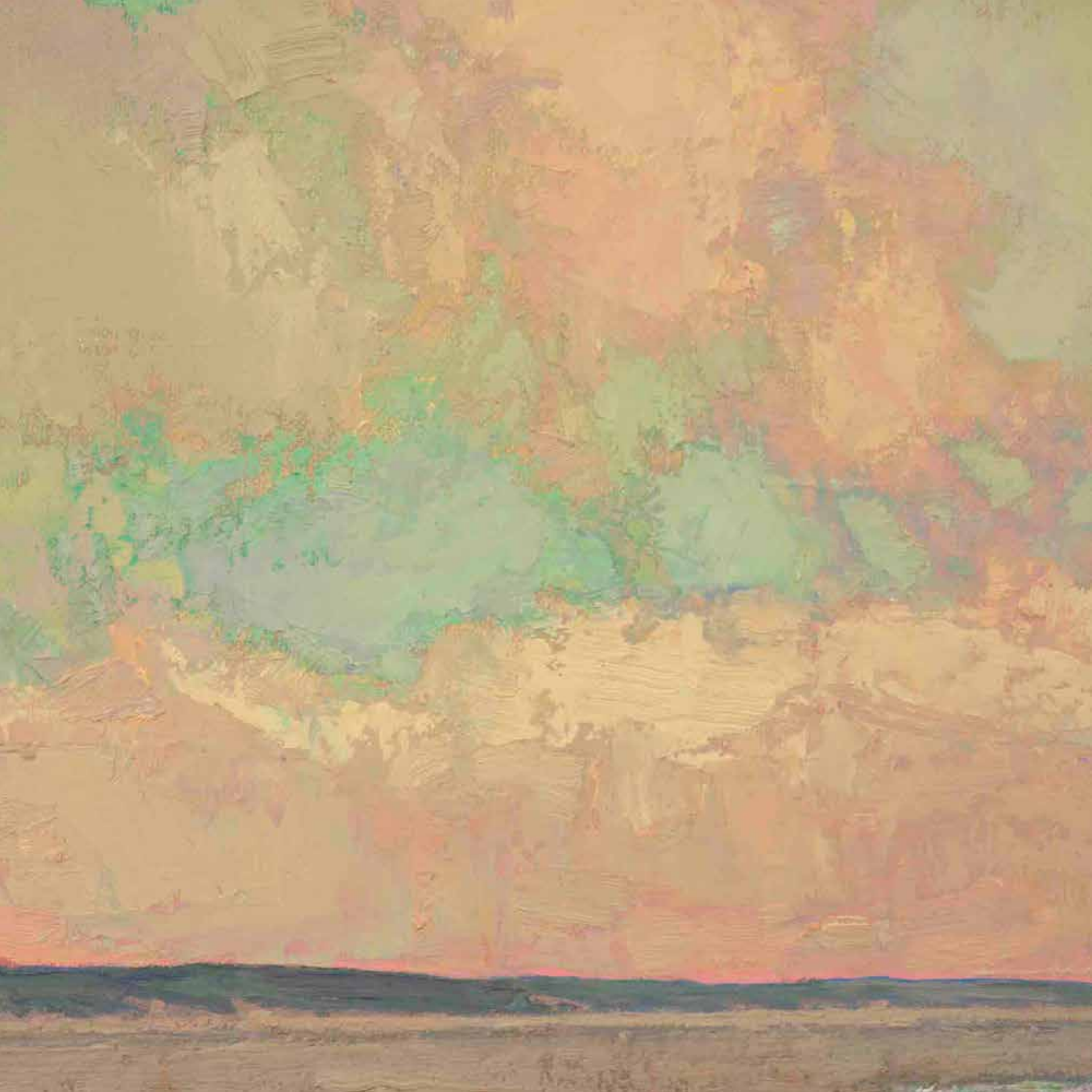
Late Vermilion Light
Vermilion Cliffs, AZ
oil on linen, 36 x 74

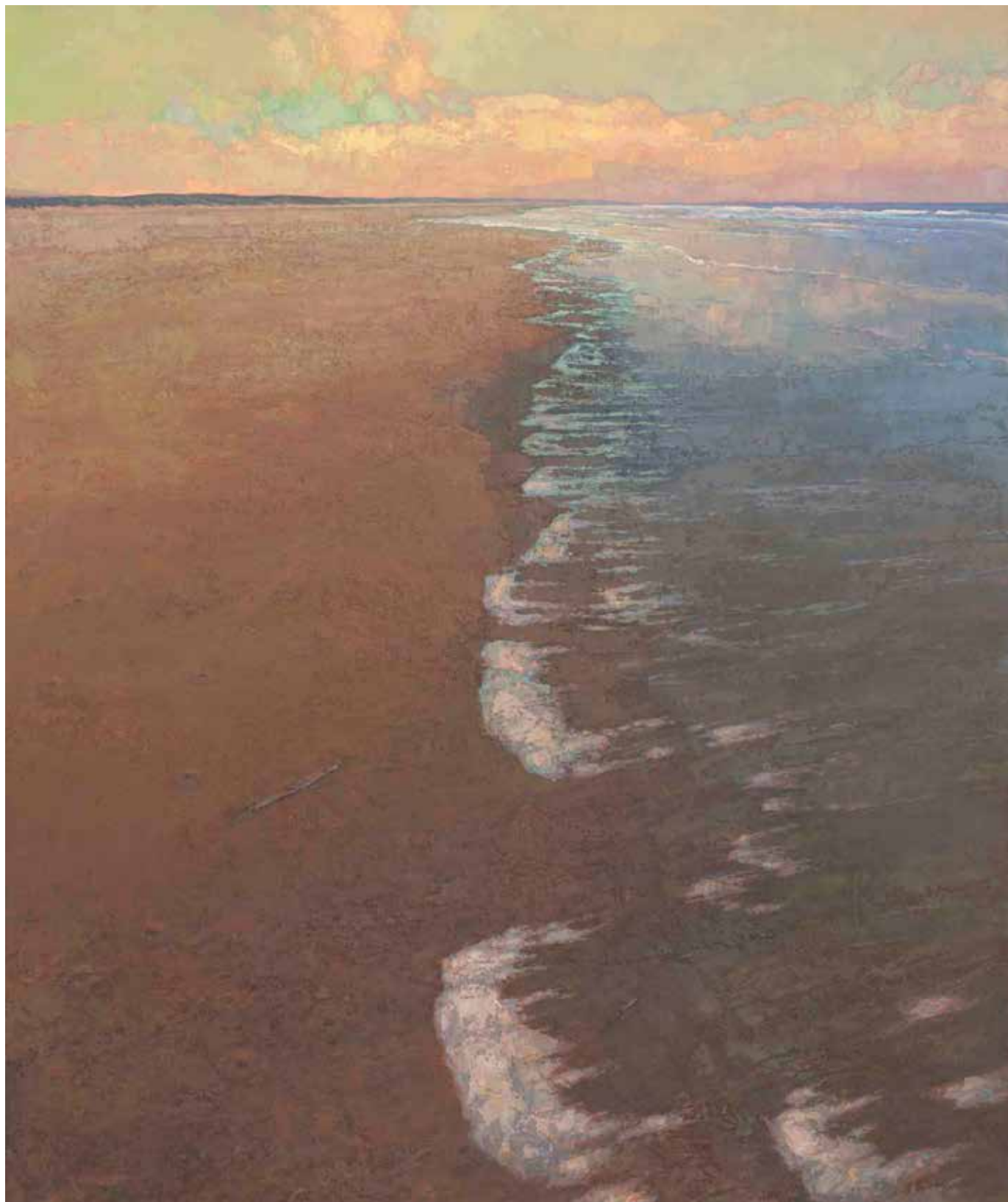




Westward
Theodore Roosevelt Wilderness, ND
oil on linen, 24 x 36

Cloaked Cypress
Okefenokee Wilderness, GA
oil on linen, 48 x 40





Equilibrium
Cumberland Island
Wilderness, GA
oil on linen, 48 x 40



Study - Equilibrium
Cumberland Island Wilderness, GA
oil on linen, 6 x 6



Study - Towering Clouds
Cloud Peak Wilderness, WY
oil on linen, 6 x 6



Shards of Winter
Cloud Peak Wilderness, WY
oil on linen, 40 x 48





Border Aerie
Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, MN
oil on linen, 40 x 60



Study I - Vermilion Light
 Vermilion Cliffs, AZ
 oil on paper mounted on wood panel, 5 x 11



Study I - Border Aerie
 Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, MN
 oil on paper mounted on wood panel, 6 ³/₄ x 10 ¹/₈



Inlet II
Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, MN
oil on linen, 39 x 54

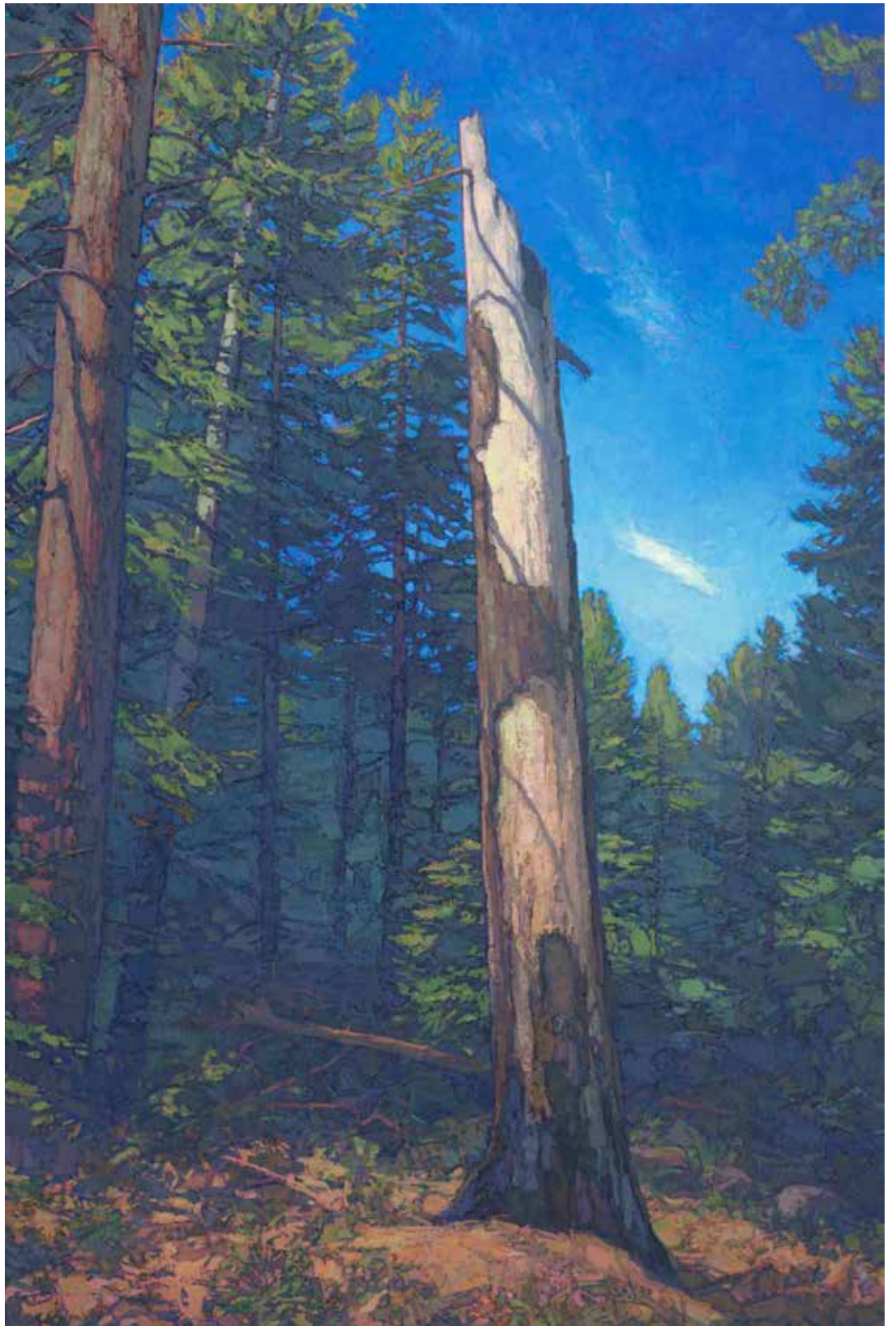
River Island



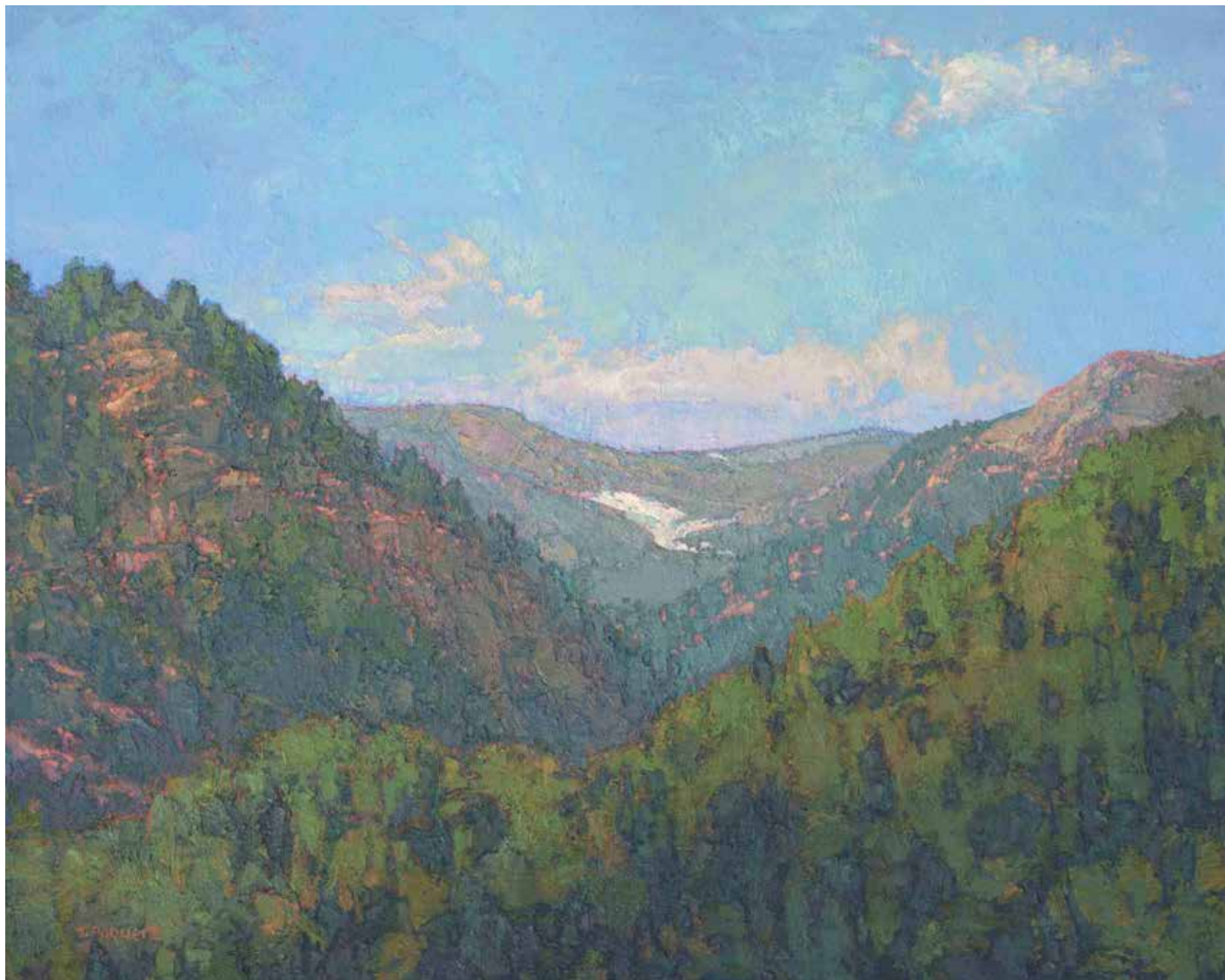




Witness
Desolation Wilderness, CA
oil on linen, 60 x 40







Winter Remnant
Raggeds Wilderness, CO
oil on linen, 24 x 36



Between Voyages
Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, MN
oil on linen, 36 x 46

Threshold
Neota Wilderness, CO
oil on linen, 18 x 13







Rising Tide of Fog
Ventana Wilderness, CA
oil on linen, 40 x 54



1



2

1. *BWCA*, 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 5- $\frac{3}{8}$ 2. *Grasslands*, 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$

a note on wilderness

Wilderness holds a special place in American history; the lure and challenge of our wild frontiers helped shape the independent American character. And the rare beauty of our wild lands has inspired uniquely American works of art and literature. From Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* to Georgia O'Keeffe's haunting southwest landscapes, many of the gems that comprise our cultural heritage are closely tied to our natural heritage. Our wilderness areas continue to inspire artists today, and are the subject of this exhibition of bold new paintings, *"On Nature's Terms: Paintings of Thomas Paquette commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act"*.

In 2014, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act of 1964, which created the framework for protecting our rich bounty of wild lands for future generations. In doing so, it created an extraordinary legacy of shared wild lands that enriches us today.

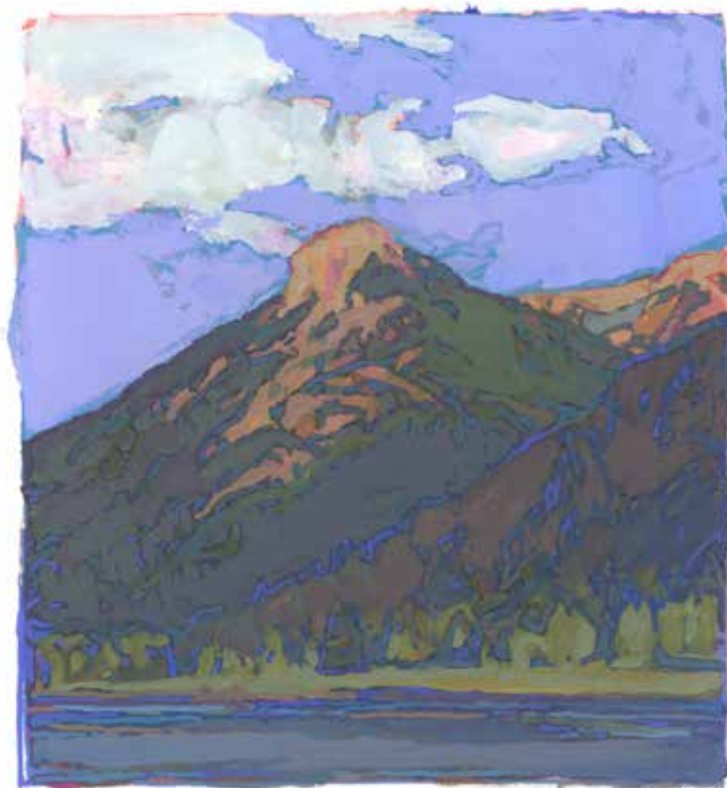
As we spend ever-increasing time in the digital world, wilderness serves a critical role in reconnecting us to the creative American spirit; it inspires the artist, explorer and poet in all of us. Whether we're contemplating the smells and sounds of a thick forest, or gazing upon a stunning mountain vista, wilderness has the rare power to stir our souls and feed our dreams.

The men and women who fought to pass the Wilderness Act could not have predicted the future, but they knew that preserving wilderness was the best gift they could leave us. While we draw strength and inspiration from wilderness, we must honor and protect this natural heritage for future generations. There are 110 million acres of beautiful, irreplaceable wilderness that need safeguarding, and many more wild places that still deserve protection. These lands provide critical services like cleaning our air and water – but they also nourish our spirits and minds. We must continue and amplify this important legacy; it can so easily be lost forever.

Jamie Williams,
President, The Wilderness Society



3



4



5



6

3. *Raggeds I*, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$ 4. *White House Mountain*, $4 \times 3\frac{3}{4}$
 5. *Falls in Raggeds*, $4\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ 6. *78 and 40*, $2\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$



7



3



9



10

7. *Raggeds Trees*, 4 x 3 8. *Gunflint Lake*, 2 ³/₄ x 3 ³/₄
 9. *Blue Trees*, 3 x 4 10. *Raggeds II*, 4 ¹/₄ x 3



11



12



13



14

11. *Theodore Roosevelt Wilderness I*, 3 x 4 12. *High Uintas Wilderness*, 2 ³/₄ x 3
 13. *Collegiate Peaks Wilderness II*, 3 ¹/₄ x 4 14. *Sky Crevasse*, 4 x 2 ³/₄



15



16



17

15. *Forest in Maroon Bells*, 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ 16. *Desolation Trees*, 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 3 17. *Witness Study*, 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{8}$

biography

Untamed nature emerged as a major theme in Thomas Paquette's paintings when he was still an art student. Also trained as a naturalist, he was quick to make trails from his studio to wilder places. By the time he moved to Maine in the 1990s, wild nature had become a predominant subject, as reflected in such honors as being chosen to be artist-in-residence during that decade at three National Parks: Yosemite, Acadia, and Rocky Mountain.

Paquette paints full-time and lives at the edge of the Allegheny National Forest in northwestern Pennsylvania. He was born in Minneapolis in 1958 and holds a BFA in Painting from Bemidji State University (1985), and an MFA in Painting from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (1988), where he was the recipient of a full Graduate Fellowship. Following that, he was the recipient of the three-year Fellowship-Residency in Miami Beach awarded by the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts. He was honored with artist-residencies at – among other institutions – the Aegean Arts and Cultural Exchange (Greece) and the American Academy in Rome. His paintings were selected for exhibition at sixteen U.S. embassies in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South and Central America.

Paquette's landscape paintings have been the subject of more than fifty solo exhibitions at art museums (Erie Art Museum, Georgia Museum of Art, Westmoreland Museum of American Art, and others) and prominent galleries in Chicago, Minneapolis, New York City, Philadelphia, St Louis, Washington DC, Delaware, Maine and Vermont. His paintings are in scores of museum and corporate collections, including some very large commissions, the largest being for the State of Minnesota at two by ten meters, with a similar-sized commission hanging in main board room of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

Study – Towering Clouds
Cloud Peak Wilderness, WY
oil on linen, 6 x 6



