



"Origin," oil on canvas by Rick Fleury.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ADDISON ART GALLERY

Fleury paints the minimalist view

If you go

WHAT: Paintings by Rick Fleury
WHERE: Addison Art Gallery, 43 South Orleans Road (Route 28), Orleans
INFORMATION: 508-255-6200; www.addisonart.com; www.rickfleury.com

By Laurie Balliett
 Staff writer

You know you are looking at Cape Cod: A blue sky with a dash of light against a low horizon of olive greens or a yellow marsh, or white sand against water. The details are left out, but the views are universally calming. Rick Fleury's oils on canvas and on copper have the same emotional affect as a walk on the tidal flats or the beach.

His minimalist landscapes, which hang at the Addison Gallery in Orleans, recall a show "The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989," at the Guggenheim in New York, in particular, Georgia O'Keefe's outstanding abstract landscape of blue sky over white sand that stood out against the black and white Zen art on display.

"I haven't been consciously influenced by it, but my outlook and the ways I live are similar to it," says Fleury, a Copley Society member. "I prefer a minimalist environment, monochromatic and uncluttered with an attitude of 'less is more' with a lack of visual noise. It doesn't give you all the answers, it leaves you open for interpretation," he says of his art.

His first solo show was at Cape Cod Museum

of Art in Dennis, where his piece called "Faith, Hope and Happiness," a diptych of three 30-by-30-inch paintings is now part of the permanent collection.

Fleury, a self-taught artist, says abstract artist Mark Rothko was a major influence on his work. He studied his paintings, read everything that the artist wrote, and created a "Dialogue Series" based on Rothko. "I tried to place myself in his studio, and allowed myself to paint," he says.

Fleury grew up in Massachusetts, and after graduating with a degree in journalism from the University of Colorado, he found his way to New York City, where he worked as an account executive and creative director in advertising and public relations. He left that job to work his dream job, as a reporter for the Vineyard Gazette, then moved to Paris to fulfill his vision of "being a writer in my 20s, living in Paris."

He returned to New York, only to leave it again when his mother became ill with cancer. A move to Florida to take care of her followed. He began painting again, when Kennedy Studios began showing and selling his work. After three years of caretaking, he returned to the Northeast to work, "I was free to do what ever I wanted. There was nothing holding me back to take a risk." He chose to move to Provincetown, where he bartended and landscaped to support his painting career.

In 2005, he stopped to paint full



The artist's palette.

STAFF PHOTO BY BARRY DONAHUE

time. "I cut back shifts until I had one shift a week. Finally I took the leap of faith and cut out the last shift four years ago. "Being a full time artist freed me up. I set it up in the nick of time, it was almost like opening up shop. I could say yes to the solo show." He started painting for it in January of 2006, "so everything was current."

At the time the Left Bank Gallery in Wellfleet's small works gallery represented him, and they didn't have room for his new large pieces. So, he opened his own gallery in Provincetown to hang it. "My show sold out by July," he said.

It was during that time when the Copley Society came into review his work, and offered him a membership on site. Within two years, he closed that gallery to focus completely on his painting. "I couldn't do both, manage the gallery and paint. I had to choose."

That's what he is doing, now, as he combines his living space with his art studio in a move soon to a North Eastham house overlooking a marsh where he will live with his dog, Graham.



Rick Fleury at work in his North Eastham studio.

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