



GASPÉ GUIDE—Oil On Canvas—16" x 19"—2003



Galen MERCER

ABOUT SEVEN YEARS AGO I was assigned to do a series of photographic portraits of Catskill fly fishermen for *Fish & Fly Magazine*. I had the good fortune to meet some really interesting fly fishermen all dedicated to the history, the culture, and “the scene” that is the Catskills. One of those portraits was of the painter Galen Mercer. Since that portrait, and to a degree initially because of that portrait, Galen and I have become friends. The portrait shows Galen as a Catskill landscape. It remains one of my favorites.

www.gmercerstudio.com


As a fly fisherman, he's a flat out pristinely pure dry fly fanatic. He'll tug on his tweed hat and harrumph and claim less, but he'll be wrong. Short of his friend Mike Kimball, I don't know anyone who even comes close. This is a guy who would ever so politely apologize profusely, and then walk right over his grandmother to get to a Hendrickson hatch in a quiet spot on the Delaware. Nothing gets in the way.

In a sense Galen is the Catskills, or the Catskills are Galen or it's just hard to understand where one leaves off and the other begins. It's all a lovely confusion of facts and distortions, realities and illusions, hints and allegations, colored light and colored shadow, contrast and muted tone. On the canvas surface, Galen paints, but deeper still it's more a life well lived than it is paintings hanging on walls.

He's the grandson of two painters and the son of another. He paints in locations around the world, but his artistic homes are the rivers of the New York Catskills from Roscoe to Hancock. He paints food, landscapes, portraits, hunting and fishing. Part of his heritage would include the Hudson River school, whose members started painting the Catskills in the 1800's. He would be most at home having a "Noonday Roast" on the banks of the Beaverkill with Thaddeus Norris and the Houseless

Anglers in 1860. As such he was born in the right place at both the right and the wrong time.

In his own words "I am always mindful of the internal force of whatever subject I paint, its amplitude and precise shadings. This critical but unquantifiable essence is a visceral thing, pitched to emotion, then translated to color and tone. Most of all, I seek to make each of my paintings emphatic." Marcel Proust said "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." Galen's eyes remain new and fixed on the horizon of what might be possible. He wants to find out and he wants to show us what he's found.

We've attached a few samples of his work. You can reach him at Galen Mercer Studio. His paintings are represented by a number of dealers, among them J.N. Bartfield and Peter Villa Fine Art of Manhattan, and Stephen O'Brien Fine Art of Boston. 

—Walter Hodges

On the canvas surface, Galen paints, but deeper still it's more a life well lived than it is paintings hanging on walls.



LOWER BEAVERKILL, AUTUMN—Oil On Canvas—22" x 28"—2007



TWO PHEASANTS—Oil On Canvas—18.5" x 26"—2007



CLEARING STORM, CATSKILLS—Oil On Panel—12" x 16"—2010



HEADING UP—Oil On Panel—12" x 16"—2010



WEST BRANCH, EVENING LIGHT—Oil On Canvas—22" x 28"—2007



FISH MARKET—Oil On Canvas—18" x 18"—2010



STILL LIFE WITH GAMEBIRDS & CALVADOS—Oil On Canvas—22" x 28"—2010