

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fairfield Porter

(1907-1975)

June 4 - August 13, 2010

(New York City, June 4, 2010) - Known for his expressive compositions and a color palette influenced by his coastal surroundings in Southampton, New York and Penobscot Bay, Maine, **Fairfield Porter** had an illustrious career as a leading American realist painter. **Michael Rosenfeld Gallery** is pleased to present its second solo exhibition featuring the work of Fairfield Porter (American, 1907-1975). On view from June 4 to August 13, this exhibition consists of twelve paintings, dating from 1959 to 1975. Included are still life, landscape and portrait paintings.

Over the years, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery has championed the work of Fairfield Porter. In 1995, the Gallery presented *Fairfield Porter: Drawings and Poetry*, an exhibition that paired the poetry of the artist with his spontaneous line drawings.

Fairfield Porter was born in 1907 in Winnetka, Illinois; Porter grew up in a wealthy, socially progressive home with two parents who supported the arts. In 1912, his father, who was an architect, purchased Great Spruce Head Island in Maine, and later, designed and built a retreat for the family. In 1913, Porter spent the first of a life time of his summers on the island. Porter traveled extensively with his family throughout his youth. On a 1921 trip to Europe, he discovered a love for Renaissance painting. Four years later, he entered the fine arts program at Harvard University, which at the time emphasized art history over practice. In 1928, Porter completed his degree and moved to New York, where he studied at the Art Students League with Thomas Hart Benton and Boardman Robinson. In 1931, he traveled through Italy, and in 1932, he returned to the United States and married poet Anne Channing, settling in New York City. They had five children.

Although Porter remained financially unaffected by the Depression of the 1930s, he was moved politically by the hardship he saw all around him. He supported the publication *Living Marxism* with personal funds, and he also illustrated and wrote for *Arise*, another Marxist publication. In 1936 after the death of his grandmother, Porter returned to Winnetka, where he showed locally and became a member of the Chicago Society of Artists. Returning to New York in 1942, Porter befriended New York School poets and painters John Ashberry, Robert Dash, Elaine and Willem de Kooning, Alex Katz, Frank O'Hara, Neil Welliver, and Jane Wilson. In 1949, he moved to Southampton, where many of the abstract expressionist painters lived and painted. In 1951, Elaine de Kooning suggested he take over her monthly column at *Art News*. Porter stayed there for seven years, and in 1959, he began writing art criticism for *The Nation*.

Porter's favorite statement about painting came from Henri Matisse: "Every corner of the canvas should be alive," and his work adheres to this idea, whether the painting is a still life, a landscape, a portrait, or a scene from everyday life. Porter's dynamic compositions of vibrant color were held in high regard by his artist contemporaries, and in the 1950s, through the recommendation of the de Koonings, Larry Rivers and Jane Freilicher, he begins to exhibit regularly through the 1960s in New York at Tibor de Nagy Gallery. His first exhibition there, in 1952, was warmly received by New



Anemone and Daffodil, 1965, oil on Masonite, 20" x 16 1/8", signed and dated

York painters, but fellow critics were considerably less open-minded about his figurative expressionistic painting. It was not until the mid-1960s that Porter's work began to get the attention it so deserved. In 1966, the Cleveland Institute of Art mounted his first retrospective exhibition, and in 1969-70, he spent a year at Amherst College as a teaching artist-in-residence. Solo exhibitions followed almost yearly at Hirschl & Adler Galleries until his death on September 18, 1975.

Today Fairfield Porter is recognized as one of the great American artists of the postwar period. His work is in the collection of over hundred public collections including The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, The Museum of Modern Art, and The Whitney Museum of American Art. His work has been the subject of several monographs including *Fairfield Porter: An American Classic* by John T. Spike (1992: Harry N. Abrams) and *Fairfield Porter: A Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings, Watercolors and Pastels* by Joan Ludman (2001, Hudson Hills Press). Currently, in addition to the show at Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, Porter is also the subject of an exhibition at the Parrish Art Museum in Southampton.

Visuals available upon request. To view this exhibition in its entirety, please visit www.michaelrosenfeldart.com.

Founded in 1989, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery specializes in twentieth century American art.

Michael Rosenfeld Gallery is located at 24 West 57th Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY. Gallery hours are in June are Tuesday-Saturday, 10AM-6PM. In July and August, Monday-Friday, 10AM-6PM. For additional information, please contact Marjorie Van Cura at 212.247.0082 or mv@michaelrosenfeldart.com

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