

THE DRAWING ROOM



in association with

ERIC BROWN ART GROUP

PRESS RELEASE

JANE FREILICHER & FAIRFIELD PORTER **Between Friends**, Paintings and Works on Paper

November 14 – December 13, 2020



The Drawing Room and Eric Brown Art Group are pleased to announce the launch of a three month pop-up gallery located in East Hampton, directly below The Drawing Room's space at 55 Main Street. The first exhibition **JANE FREILICHER & FAIRFIELD PORTER: BETWEEN FRIENDS** opens Saturday, November 14 and will remain on view through Sunday, December 13.

Notably, this is the first show presented on Long Island to focus on the close friendship and mutual influence Jane Freilicher and Fairfield Porter shared. Comprising paintings and works on paper, selections include iconic East End landscapes and vernacular village street scenes, as well as intimate interiors and still lifes. The exhibition coincides with the Parrish Art Museum's show, *Housebound: Fairfield Porter and his Circle of Poets and Painters*, in which Porter's 1967 portrait of Jane Freilicher and her daughter captures their camaraderie during a legendary era when many New York School artists gravitated to Eastern Long Island.



Porter and his wife moved to Southampton in 1949. His works depict the family's South Main Street home, garden and streetscape, subjects he explored repeatedly over many years. Freilicher first visited the area in the early 1950s, and in 1960, she and her husband, Joe Hazan, built a house on Mecox Bay in Water Mill where she maintained a studio for more than 50 years.

Fairfield Porter *Tree-Lined Street*, 1972

The two artists met in 1952 when Porter reviewed Freilicher's first exhibition at Tibor de Nagy Gallery for *ARTnews*. Over the next two decades, they developed a nourishing friendship that centered on painting and family. Although Porter was seventeen years older, their first solo exhibitions were presented in New York just one year apart. Both remained stubbornly independent in the face of Abstract Expressionism, preferring to paint from observation rather than embracing the tenets of Action painting.

Porter described Freilicher's work as "traditional and radical" and she remarked that his paintings were characterized by "an unfinished" quality, adding: "The same sort of casualness you find in the household, you find in his paintings." Their comments reflect mutual admiration, and might easily be interpreted as musings on their own individual practices. The increasing sensual awareness that evolved later in Porter's career has been credited in part to Freilicher, whose brighter, more highly keyed painting held exciting possibilities.



Jane Freilicher, *Fall Flowers*, 1993



Fairfield Porter, *Zinnias and Milk Carton*, 1963

In juxtaposing the two artists' treatment of related subjects, the show offers a unique opportunity to consider their fruitful exchange of ideas and sensibilities. In Freilicher's small 1967 oil, *Farmland*, tilled fields recede to a country farmhouse on the distant horizon. Porter's *Tree-Lined Street* painted just five years later captures the environs of his Southampton village home a few miles down the road. Likewise, both artists found inspiration in late summer flowers: the blossoms that hold center stage in Porter's *Zinnias and Milk Carton* (1963) are echoed in Freilicher's 1993 still life, *Fall Flowers*, an indication that their "conversation" continued well beyond Fairfield Porter's death in 1975.

A Brooklyn native, Jane Freilicher (1924-2014) attended Brooklyn College and received an MA from Columbia University. She went on to study with the influential teacher and painter Hans Hofmann. Her works are in the permanent collection of museums across the United States including the Whitney Museum of Art, New York, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, SF MoMA, the Cleveland Museum of Art, among others. Fairfield Porter (1907-1975) was born in Winnetka, Illinois and attended Harvard University. His work was the subject of a posthumous retrospective at the Whitney Museum of Art in 1984. A noted art critic, his collected criticism, *Art in its Own Terms: Selected Criticism, 1935-1975* was published by Taplinger in 1979.

**Open Friday, Saturday, Sunday 11 to 5, as well as by appointment and chance.
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**For further information and reproduction quality images
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On view in the The Drawing Room's permanent 2nd floor space November 14 - December 20, 2020
DOROTHY RUDDICK A Decade in Fiber, 1973-1983