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Moving Toward the Light: Joseph Raffael

Lanie Goodman, Betsy Dillard Stroud, David Pagel

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There will be a traveling exhibits of Joseph Raffael's work:

- Nancy Hoffman Gallery, NYC - September 10 through October 31, 2015
- Canton Museum, Canton Ohio - December 2015 through early March 2016
- Southern Ohio Museum, Portsmouth, Ohio - March through June 2016
- Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, Michigan - June through August, 2016

Extraordinary in scale, infinitesimal in detail, and sumptuous in color, the paintings of master watercolorist Joseph Raffael plumb the depths of nature's beauty. Eighty-eight works of deep reflection, awe, and joy selected for this volume were created in his home and garden in Cap D'Antibes, France, overlooking the sparkling Mediterranean Sea.

Raffael's radiant vision of the natural world, including flowers, fish and water, has garnered critical praise throughout his long career. "Despite their iconic serenity when seen from a distance," wrote art critic Robert Hughes, "Raffael's paintings disclose a bejeweled profusion of incident close up," concluding that the artist's color-drenched canvases display "a tender virtuosity without parallel in other American figurative painting today."

It might be said that water, a symbol of life and constant change, is both Raffael's muse and teacher. The artist becomes its conduit as his colour-saturated brush glides along the surface of the white paper. "Watercolors have a mind of their own. I just need to show up and be present," he tells Betsy Dillard Stroud in her interview with the 81-year old artist.

Lanie Goodman, a fellow resident in the South of France, visits Raffael at work in his light- filled studio, which she describes, in her biographical profile of the artist, as his haven and heaven. With tables of brushes and glass dishes of paint, the carefully cultivated garden by his wife Lannis, and the blue sea beyond, Raffael joins the long legacy of artists - Cezanne, Matisse, Leger among them - nourished by this life and vista.

Raffael's home, where artist and nature are in constant dialogue, accounts for the artist's luminous painting, their symphonic color, and the splendour we behold in them. In his essay "A Walk in Beauty," David Pagel identifies Raphael's worlds within worlds as profound instances of big-picture thinking - the best possible experience of both Nature and Art.

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