

Furchgott Sourdiffe Gallery/Shelburne, VT

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**INTIMATE VIEWS: PAINTINGS OF VERMONT AND CAPE COD
BY JOSEPH SALERNO**



Joseph Salerno, *Elmore, Bright Morning, Early Spring*, oil on canvas, 12 x 4", 2006.

Landscape painters vary widely in their relation to the land and the painting of it. Some approach their subject—nature's rolling hills, stands of wood, snow-tucked valleys—as inspirational source materials to make erratic

expressions of wild interpretation. Their more orthodox brethren paint religiously some detail of the land—ever yearning for the truth of light or color. And then there is Joseph Salerno.

Salerno's paintings are neither wildly expressive nor fervently documentarian. The work shows signs of both extremes. On view were forty-nine paintings, mostly smaller works painted en plein air.

In *Elmore, Bright Morning, Early Spring*, Salerno paints a light, sloppy wash of baby blue sky on white panel, a ridge line of brown, a bar of light and dark green trees, then a golden field of long strokes with a row of lines etched for texture. It is a simple piece and therein lies its brilliance. Salerno captures the breadth and tenor of the landscape; he composes paintings using elements that are expressive and painterly and others that are technical and exact.

The landscapes he chooses are dunes outside of Provincetown, trees in Vermont, and boats at low tide. His best work is that of ridgelines, particularly those in dramatic weather. *Ridgeline 4.9.06* shows a grey-brown mountain under a line of golden sun-catching clouds. Quick blue strokes on a brown panel make up the sky. Salerno renders the clouds with yellow and thick blobs of white paint. The strokes mix and mingle with each other to make a turbulent atmosphere. Salerno's painting comes off as quick gestures—dashes more than marathons. But these are not quick paintings. They are slow meditations on the land. Ric Kasini Kadour