



The Big Sur: Paintings by David Ligare

Inspired by the writings of John Steinbeck and Robinson Jeffers I moved to Monterey County while in my early twenties. I was fortunate to find a small house on Rancho Santa Margarita in the Big Sur where I was surrounded by the wild beauty that Jeffers had described so profoundly. At the same time I was exhibiting my paintings in New York (a contrast I relished) and I was experimenting, as young artists do, with new styles and concepts.

Now, more than forty years later, I am again looking at the landscape of Big Sur. Many styles and fashions in art have bloomed and faded in that time but the landscape of the south coast has remained virtually unchanged. There is an immense power and dignity about Big Sur with its broad, golden shoulders set against the cool sweep of the sea. I believe in the value of recognizing the integrity of the thing seen, that is, in representing every element of nature as carefully and reverently as I can. In certain respects this attention to detail and place is reminiscent of the New Path artists of the mid-nineteenth century or the f64 photographers like Weston, Adams, Cunningham and others. They all

turned away from the artful and the "painterly" to embrace the literal. In both cases the artists/photographers in question approached their subjects with an insistent honesty and deep fidelity to nature.

Finally, there is the light. To see and to present the Big Sur in the intense golden light of the late afternoon is to celebrate the great beauty that burns there. Every hill, copse of trees, ragged stone or spread of sea is bathed, molded and carved by the light. Time stands still and it is that exact timelessness - without the qualifier of human activity or artistic style - that interests me.