

**Fairfield Porter**  
*Amherst and Other Places*  
April 20 – May 24, 2019



*Untitled [Amherst College building in snow], 1969-70, Oil on panel, 12 x 9 in.*

On Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, Betty Cuningham Gallery will open an exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Fairfield Porter [1907-1975]. The exhibition will feature eight small oil studies which have never been exhibited. They were completed in 1969-70 while Porter was teaching at Amherst College. Among the oil sketches is a study for the major 1969 painting *Amherst Parking Lot No.1*, now in the collection of the Honolulu Museum of Art, HI. Another study, a view from the artist's studio of campus buildings in the snow, echoes the large Amherst snow paintings in the collection of the Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY. Additionally, the exhibition features a major portrait of the artist's son, *Jerry*, and a painting of a nearby home on South Main Street, in Southampton, NY.

Having exhibited in New York since 1952, Porter quickly rose to prominence both as a painter and as a critic. He insisted that the subject of his work was the painting, not the image, choosing the ordinary view before him: the breakfast table, the screened porch, the driveway or informal portraits of family and friends. His choice to paint what was in front of him led to a sparring relationship with Clement Greenberg. Of their relationship, Porter wrote:

*"We always argued. We always disagreed. Everything that one of us said, the other would say no to it. He told me I was very conceited. I thought my opinions were as good as his or better. And, he once said – I introduced him to de Kooning – he was publicizing Pollock and he said to de Kooning (he was painting the Women), 'You can't paint this way nowadays.' And, I thought, 'Who the hell is he to say that?' He said, 'You can't paint figuratively today.' ... I thought, 'If that's what he says, I think I will do just exactly what he says I can't do! That's all I will do.' I might have become an abstract painter except for that."*

In 1983, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston organized and exhibited a comprehensive retrospective of Porter's work. It traveled to The Greenville County Museum of Art, Greenville, SC; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

Among the several books that have been published on Porter's work and his writings, a few of the most notable are: *Art in its Own Terms, Selected Criticism 1935 – 1975* by Fairfield Porter, edited and with an introduction by Rackstraw Downes; *Fairfield Porter, An American Classic*, edited by John T. Spike; *Fairfield Porter, a Life in Art*, by Justin Spring; *Fairfield Porter, A Catalogue Raisonne of the Paintings, Watercolors and Pastels*, edited by Joan Ludman; and *Material Witness, the Selected Letters of Fairfield Porter*, edited by Ted Leigh.

*For further information, artist biography and/or images, please contact the Gallery.*

**Listing Information:** Betty Cuningham Gallery is located at 15 Rivington Street, b/t Bowery and Chrystie Street, New York, NY 10002  
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**Public Transportation:** F train to Second Ave, 6 Train to Spring Street, RW trains to Prince Street, JZ trains to Bowery  
**Gallery Hours:** Wed – Sat, 10am – 6pm; Sun 12-6pm; Tue by appointment