

# DAVID LIGARE



THE BIG SUR  
PAINTINGS



# 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.

## HISTORICAL RELEVANCE OF DAVID LIGARE'S BIG SUR PAINTINGS

Although many painters have explored and mined the richness of the Monterey Peninsula, far fewer have traveled farther south to find inspiration in the region around Big Sur.

Historically, this had much to do with the remoteness of the area and its lack of easy accessibility. But, once roads made travel there easier, many artists had abandoned landscape painting in favor of abstraction, minimalism, and conceptually based art.

Today, now that so many artists have made a firm return to representational painting, perhaps this magnificent bit of California coast will finally get its due.

Scott A. Shields, Ph.D.  
*Associate Director & Chief Curator  
Crocker Art Museum*



“THERE IS AN IMMENSE POWER AND DIGNITY ABOUT BIG SUR WITH ITS BROAD, GOLDEN SHOULDERS SET AGAINST THE COOL SWEEP OF THE SEA.”

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.

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2012

W I N F I E L D  
G A L L E R Y

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