

# OIL PAINTERS OF AMERICA

2021 NATIONAL SALON SHOW | JUNE 10 THROUGH AUGUST 7

AT THE QUINLAN VISUAL ARTS CENTER



## JOSHUA CUNNINGHAM OPA

Joshua Cunningham lives in St. Paul, with his wife Shannon, their children, Greta, William, and a sheepdog. He is a member of the Outdoor Painters of Minnesota, Oil Painters of America, and the American Impressionist Society. His work has garnered national attention by Plein Air Magazine and Informed Collector. The University of St Thomas commissioned him to commemorate their 125th Anniversary, and the Science Museum of Minnesota selected him to be an artist in residence for the St Croix Watershed Research Station at the historic Pine Needles Cabin. Joshua joined Groveland Gallery of Minneapolis in 2017.

Joshua grew up the third of five boys, on 60 acres of woods, wetlands, and pastures in Isanti, Minnesota. His path to becoming a professional artist was as winding as the country roads and nameless creeks from his hometown. It began in the abstract art departments of St. Cloud State and St. John's University. The summer break offered a unique opportunity to apprentice with Minnesota fresco painter Mark Balma. Joshua chose to continue his training with Mark and later at The Atelier in Minneapolis, focusing on figure and portrait drawing for two years. He spent the next five years at Hurinenko and Paquet Studio in St. Paul, studying portraiture, still life, figure drawing, and Plein air landscape painting. Landscape painting began as an afterthought, but that changed under Joe Paquet's tutelage. For Joshua, few experiences are as challenging or enriching as painting on location. Landscapes bring him back to his rural roots.

**Artist Statement** We are here, just for a time. Barns are here, just for a time. Cities are here, just for a time. The practice of painting on location deepens this understanding. It isn't long before I find myself defending my work against mercurial skies and the constant march of the sun. Shadows move, and colors change, leaving me to paint from memory. Oil Painting is the way I seek to understand what interests me, stirs my faith, and awakens memories. I paint what I see because I feel representational painting offers a human expression of the world around us in a language we all hold in common. My understanding and empathy for what can constitute a 'subject' continues to grow. As an artist, my primary goal is to keep getting better, so that I may do better by my subjects. If I have done right by them, the paintings have a chance to stir you as the scene has stirred me. The field studies are finished work, in their own right. They hold in them the intense experience of their creation. In the studio, these paintings return me to the scene, bringing back not only what I saw, but also the sounds, smells, and stories shared by the passing stranger. It is all in the paint — along with dust from the fields and grit from the road. The work reflects the visual and visceral experiences of a vibrant and spontaneous exploration of our connection to the natural world.