

## George Van Hook

George Van Hook was born and raised in Abington, Pennsylvania, a northern suburb of Philadelphia. He began painting very early and was able to participate in the vibrant artistic culture of the region. The family owned a farm in Bucks County, home of the Pennsylvania impressionists, and he became heavily influenced by their fine academic training coupled with a love of the prosaic landscape. Another early local influence was the “Brandywine Tradition”, the illustrative work of Howard Pyle and the generations of Wyeths. This was further enhanced by a close association with coastal Maine. George has spent many summers painting in the mid-coast area of Rockland and Rockport Harbor, and on North Haven Island where his wife’s family owned property adjacent to the famous Boston artist Frank Benson.

Van Hook’s love of the European tradition also began early. He spent two summers during high school filmmaking throughout France and England. This allowed him to visit many of the great museums, and further increased his commitment to become a professional artist. Following college, he left for Paris and spent nearly a year copying at the Louvre and travelling through France, Italy and Holland making numerous paintings “en plein air”. He returned to California, where he continued painting the landscape and figure out of doors. After marriage and the start of a family, George returned to the East Coast, eventually settling in Cambridge, NY, a beautiful nineteenth century village in the Hudson Valley. His wife currently teaches at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY. Their three daughters, often models for his paintings when younger, are now grown and successfully independent.

Van Hook thinks of his paintings as primarily a visual response to the selected environment, be it landscape, figure or still life. “I want the color to be beautiful and the drawing firm and secure”, he says. The paintings are a marriage of external and internal forces – what emerges on the canvas should be a reflection of both the beauty of the world and the artist’s most inner response.