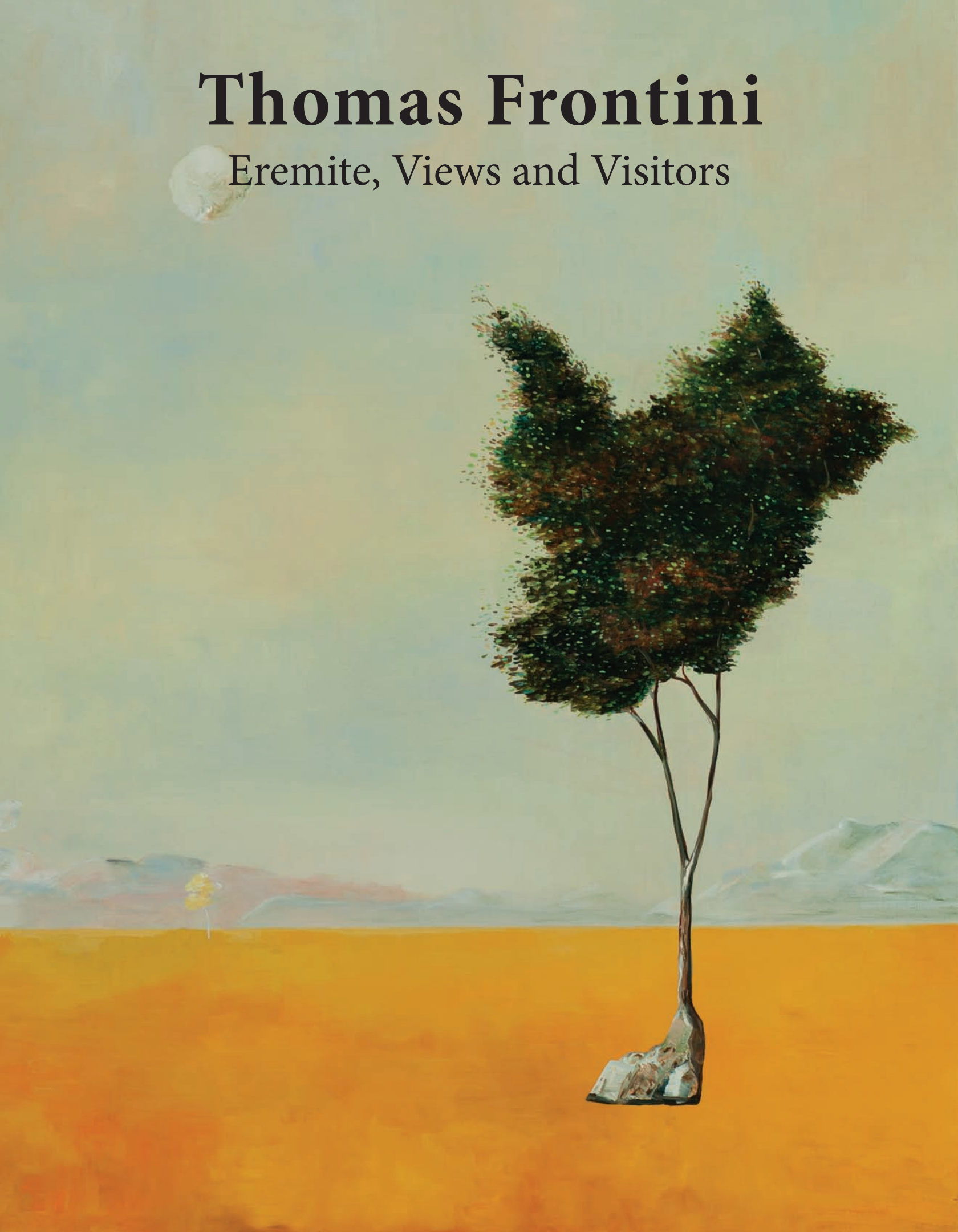


# Thomas Frontini

Eremit, Views and Visitors



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Eremite, Views and Vistas

Exhibition Catalogue

December 7, 2012

William Busta Gallery

Cleveland



Hermit's Ruin, 2012, oil on panel, 7"x 5"

Front Cover: Yellow, Tree, 2012, oil on linen, 24"x18"

Back Cover: Lone Rabbit, Dream House, 2012, oil on panel, 44"x 88"

## *“Slow Mirror”*

By Douglas Max Utter

There is a moment, in the history of Western painting but also in the development of many individual talents, when observation and technique take a quiet but startling leap forward. And whether it is in the Proto-Renaissance images of Duccio and Giotto, or on the page of a student's sketch pad, something beyond magic has happened. A new reality has entered into what was merely pictorial space, and a new psychological dimension. It's partly a matter of simple resemblance, composed from careful attention to perceptual data, yet meaning, also, rushes into the new pictures. In the context of Christian conceptualization this pivotal moment has to do with incarnation: It's as if the artist's materials are transmuted, extending beyond depiction toward a formal eternity. The works become examples of becoming and being, and on an intimate level there is a feeling that something has been added to the sum of existence, a new presence.

Thomas Frontini paints that moment, when a new sort of self is born, with new generative capabilities, pushing toward ever greater articulation, full of silent, swelling questions. The mystery of first impressions and the bottomless antiquity of human vision are the real subjects of Frontini's search as he moves back, getting as close to the beginning as he can. It is not so much his own childhood or even the primitivism of child-like folk vision that he interrogates (though these are subjects that may come into play, along with the sacred simplicity invoked by painters like Duccio), but the eternal childhood of human perception, which is recapitulated in everything we see, in the latent newness of each moment.

Frontini has compared his images to postcards, and if that holds true at the exhibit “Eremite,” these latest souvenirs have been mailed from the caves of Judaea or some equally storied place. By way of the gallery wall he sends us pictures of animals and plants and sometimes a house or a mirage-like village, so subtly improbable that they can only be read as dreams, or as carefully rendered hallucinations. As the artist notes the depth of his solitude and spreads this condition, mixed delicately into oil paint, across panel or canvas, he remembers St. Jerome or St. Anthony – any of the tribe of desert-based Christian gurus known for the demons and the angels who came to visit them. Frontini's elephant, and the doe, the horse, the mouse, and most poignantly the whale are anything but demons, and the opposite of invasive species. For one thing, all are social animals most commonly encountered in groups or herds, and they seem to come as



The Gift, Lone Cloud, 2012, oil on linen, 28"x 24"





The Other Shore, 2012, oil on linen, 43"x 77"

comforters, paracletes stranded or delivered at the mouth of the painter's cave, as if to keep him company. At once muses and subjects, they obligingly stand, or lie down, usually on a kind of pedestal, waiting to be painted.

Titled "The Other Shore," a picture of a whale, flopped up on a pile of rocks separating a patch of blue sea from a lower, lagoon-like stretch of green, is particularly good. Frontini says that Leonardo's recipe for mountain depiction was to "pile up some rocks," and that is more or less what we see here, a step-like pile that divides the landscape into alternate dimensions. But it also highlights the pathos and desperation of the animal's position. The only way it's going to get back to the water is by a series of strenuous jerks and flops. We feel his limbless state acutely – but of course it's also very clear that a whale just doesn't belong here, couldn't be here. Whatever else this image may intend, surely it is a parable about the difficulties of painting. How can one hope to render any part of the infinite subtlety and complexity of our reality? Yet however it may happen, it does happen, and the strangeness of human presence in the world leaks out around the outlines of Frontini's animals like a slow mirror.





Narwhale, 2012, oil on linen, 33"x 45"



Shore Line #2, 2012, oil on linen, 20"x 24"









Lone Horse,, Ther Hermits Muse, 2012, oil on panel, 38"x 48"



New Homes, 2012, oil on panel, 48"x33"



A God Appears Before the Temple, 2012, oil on panel 45"x 33"



Mysterious Cloud, 2012, oil on linen, 43"x77"









Ripe on the Vine, 2012, oil on linen, 77"x 43"



The Blossom, 2012, oil on linen, 28"x 24"





The Summers End, 2012, oil on linen, 24"x 18"





Industrial Dream, 2012, oil on linen, 29"x 20"







Of This Only, Solitary Beast, 2012, oil on panel, 38"x 44"



Hermit's Ruin, 2012, oil on panel, 7"x 5"

# Thomas Frontini

Born: 1967  
Kingston, Ontario Canada

[thomasfrontini.com](http://thomasfrontini.com)

## Education:

The Ohio State University- M.F.A. Painting Degree-  
Columbus, Ohio 1992

Cleveland Institute of Art- B.F.A. Painting Degree-  
Cleveland, Ohio 1990

The Institute for Art and Restoration- Florence, Italy 1989

## Select Solo Exhibitions:

William Busta Gallery- Cleveland, Ohio 2012

Cat Street Gallery- Hong Kong, China 2007

Lawrence Asher Gallery- Los Angeles, California 2006

Josaphat Arts Hall Convivium33 Gallery-  
Cleveland, Ohio 2005

Space 700, New York, NY 1995



## Select Group Exhibitions:

2012

The Quantum Effect- Brooklyn, NY

Launch LA Gallery- Los Angeles, CA

Los Angeles Artist Association- Los Angeles, CA

Lagrange National- LaGrange, GA

Cat Street Gallery- Hong Kong

2011

Cat Street Gallery- Hong Kong, China

Cross Gate Gallery- Lexington, Kentucky

2010

Cat Street Gallery- Hong Kong, China

Cross Gate Gallery- Lexington, Kentucky

Wall Gallery- Cleveland, Ohio

MOCA- Cleveland, Ohio

2008

Cat Street Gallery- Hong Kong, China

The Ohio State University- Ohio

Tatar Gallery- Toronto, Ontario Canada

2007

Cat Street Gallery- Hong Kong, China

Spaces Gallery- Cleveland, Ohio

MOCA- Cleveland, Ohio

Tatar Gallery- Toronto, Ontario Canada

Ballard and Fetherston Gallery- Seattle, Washington

Lawrence Asher Gallery- Los Angeles, California



Thomas Frontini, in front of his studio with his two dogs, Gilligan and Lulu



