

ARTnews

Summer 1994

CHICAGO

John Phillip Osborne

MONGERSON-
WUNDERLICH

Here Osborne combines patches of scrubbed and scumbled paint to evoke a sense of grandeur, ranging from cool blue-grays on the distant horizon to warm magenta shades in the tree-lined middle distance to brilliant whites in the snow-covered foreground. These are works that tap into simple and honest emotion. —Garrett Holz

John Phillip Osborne's poetic landscape paintings offer a refreshing respite from the cynicism that characterizes much contemporary art. Most of his work depicts views of the New England coast and countryside, its clear blue harbors and pale blue mountains, green pastures and sloping valleys with their meandering creeks and grazing cattle. The paintings are ardently traditional in technique and sentiment, with a casual beauty and an air of tranquillity.

Osborne's paintings, which he describes as "small moments of nature," are most notable for their keen handling of light and their attention to atmospheric effects. The artist excels at suggesting the sensation of early morning mist rising from a grassy field, late-afternoon sunlight raking across treetops, or, as in *Light Rays*, an overcast sky streaked with the sun's rays filtered through gray clouds.

The best of these works, such as *Mill in Ringwood*, with its low-slung, cottage-style roof, have the look of another time and place. There is something late 19th century about them, bringing to mind the canvases of George Inness, Camille Corot, or the Barbizon School. Like the work of these artists, Osborne's paintings record specific times of the day, seasons, and weather conditions, with titles such as *End of the Day*, *Spring Buds*, and *Fresh Snow*.

The later work presents a vast, yawning vista. As with all the artist's landscapes, detail is replaced by subtle tonal arrangements.

Finally - someone
who understands!
Last paragraph describes
technique accurately.
J.P.O.



John Phillip Osborne, *Mill in Ringwood*, 1993, oil on canvas, 16 by 20 inches. Mongerson-Wunderlich.