

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 25, 2021**

## **Contemporary Realist Painter Scott Prior at the Cahoon Museum of American Art**

(Cotuit, Massachusetts) Opening March 18, 2021, at the Cahoon Museum of Art American Art, *Scott Prior: Illuminations* features more than 35 paintings, prints, and drawings by contemporary artist Scott Prior. Spanning five decades of Prior's artistic career, the exhibition features the artist's portraiture, still life, and landscape, including new work and scenes of Cape Cod. On view through May 29, this will be Prior's first solo exhibition on Cape Cod.

A celebrated contemporary realist painter, Prior incorporates fine detail and striking colors into his compellingly arranged compositions. His virtuoso artworks capture the beauty of everyday settings and moments, with an emphasis on the transformative effects of light. The title of this exhibition, *Illuminations*, refers both to Prior's pursuit of the effects of light in his artwork and the visual elements he uses to clarify the artwork's meaning. His realist style is informed by his admiration for the Flemish and Dutch Old Masters and deeply rooted in a uniquely New England experience of changing seasons, landscapes, and coastal and inland light. Prior finds meaning in ordinary objects, and his compositions are filled with minute details of fabric, jewels, and flowers.

Based in Northampton, Massachusetts, Prior has a long-standing connection to Cape Cod. He first visited to the Cape in 1969 to work a summer job in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Over the years, the Cape has served Prior as both a refuge and as an inspiration—from the landscape and architecture to the quality of light unique to the area. Notions of nostalgia and longing are prevalent in his Cape Cod works. His 2018 painting *Cabin with Towels* depicts a modest beach house at sunset, the sky awash with color somewhat ominous clouds. In this painting, Prior captures the sweet sadness of a summer day coming to an end.

Prior was influenced by Edward Hopper's work after seeing a major exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1980. Hopper also spent time on Cape Cod, beginning in 1930. Hopper's use of light and his sense of melancholic solitude prompted Prior to explore these themes in his own work. *Bedroom in Winter* (1980) can be seen as an early

nod to Hopper. Reminiscent of Hopper's many paintings of interiors, with light streaming through large windows onto seemingly ordinary domestic scenes. Prior explains a critical turning point in his artistic practice: "It wasn't until I saw an Edward Hopper painting that I



recognized the emotional and significant power of light. In the same year I discovered the countless effects of light, I changed from being an ironic observer into an emotional participant.”

“Scott Prior’s paintings offer a reprieve as we slowly recover and rebuild from the global effects of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Sarah Johnson, PhD, Director of the Cahoon Museum of American Art. “His art fits the moment as museumgoing audiences are increasingly looking to art for beauty and meaning, grounding in observable reality, and subtle illumination. As many of us have spent more time close to home, we have renewed perspective on the beauty of everyday moments close at hand, such as those featured in Prior’s art.”

Curated by Johnson, *Scott Prior: Illuminations* includes artworks from the permanent collections of the Cahoon Museum of American Art, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut; Fidelity Investments; and Wellington Management, as well as 10 private collections. The exhibition will be accompanied by a full-color 44-page catalogue with an essay by Joanna Fink, owner of Boston’s Alpha Gallery, which has represented Prior since 1973. The exhibition catalogue is available in the Museum Shop for \$22.

### **About Scott Prior**

Born in Exeter, New Hampshire, Scott Prior (b. 1949) has lived and worked in Northampton, Massachusetts, since 1971. He received a BFA in printmaking from the University of Massachusetts that same year. He is a founding member of a small cohort of painters known as the “Valley Realists.” Prior has shown in solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States and abroad. In 2001, he had a midcareer retrospective at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum. His artwork hangs in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the deCordova; the Danforth Museum, Framingham; the New Britain Museum of American Art; the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University; and other major public and private collections.

### **About the Cahoon Museum of American Art**

The Cahoon Museum of American Art presents historical and contemporary art exhibitions in the landmark Crocker House in Cotuit, MA. The Museum welcomes visitors of all ages to learn about art and art history, to enjoy fun, family friendly events, to delight in creative programming, and to embrace the enduring story of the important folk artists Ralph and Martha Cahoon. The Museum is committed to its mission to celebrate American art in ways that expand knowledge, enrich the spirit, and engage the heart.

The Cahoon Museum of American Art is located at 4676 Falmouth Road (Rt. 28) in Cotuit, MA. The Museum opens for the season on March 18 and hours are Thursday through



Saturday, 10am-4pm. Registration to visit the Museum is requested; drop-ins welcome as gallery space allows. For more information, visit [Cahoonmuseum.org](http://Cahoonmuseum.org) or call (508) 428-7581.

**Sponsor:** *Scott Prior: Illuminations* is sponsored by a Trustee of the Cahoon Museum of American Art.

**Press Images:** High resolution press images available [HERE](#)

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