

CASCO BAY ARTISANS

INTERNATIONAL FINE ART GALLERY

Robin Swennes: For the Love of the Blues



Robin Swennes 'Cordon Bleu' Acrylic on Panel 30"x30" \$3,700

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I must have a thousand photos of blueberries that I use for reference when I paint. They can look so different—whether it's that frosty periwinkle blue color that is almost a dust that can be swept off the berry by the touch of a human hand, or when they are bruised, with deep purple indents, or when some of the skin is peeled back and a rust color comes peeking through. It's because of those different appearances that each painting I do becomes a one-off that I can never exactly recreate. Light or lack of it can create highlight tones we take for granted, but I try to exploit and expand upon them. Our brains know the berries are blue, but when you really start looking, there really are numerous other colors dancing around.

Years ago, somebody mentioned the idea of fractals in nature to me and it opened my eyes to start looking for examples. They are everywhere if you just look. Blueberries are perfect, little, tasty orbs that keep repeating on the bush—for a limited time in Maine—so they are precious. I find myself wanting to slow time down to capture them for a bit longer. A painting can do that and will remind you that nature will gift you with these gems again in the coming year when the days get hot and sunset comes late.

I have never had much of a sense of smell, so I rely more on my other senses. I may not know how blueberries smell, but I can tell you that they're divine when heated up with a brownie from Standard Baking Co in Portland, ME or paired with a fresh, still warm, homemade chocolate chip cookie. It probably goes without saying that every time I start another blueberry painting, I end up making more than a few trips to the kitchen to get some good chocolate and sprinkle some berries over it. How precious the short blueberry season in Maine is to me!

- Robin Swennes

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Robin Swennes 'When the Blues Come Callin' Acrylic on Panel 14"x14" \$550

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Robin Swennes 'Blue Bloods' Acrylic on Panel 16"x16" \$660

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Robin Swennes 'The Gang's All Here' Acrylic on Panel 16"x20" \$950

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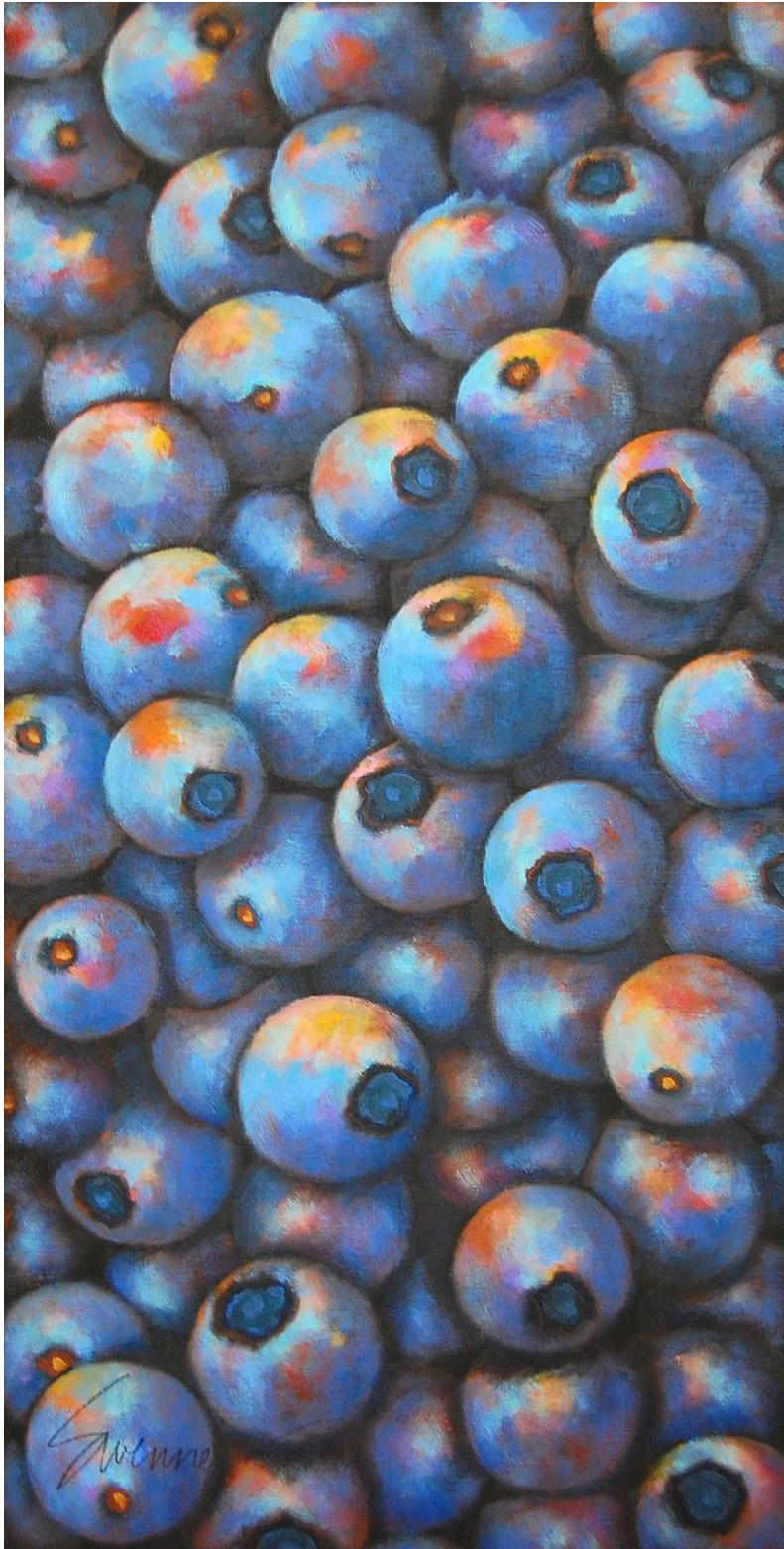
Robin Swennes 'Old Blue Eyes' Acrylic on Panel 16"x20" \$950

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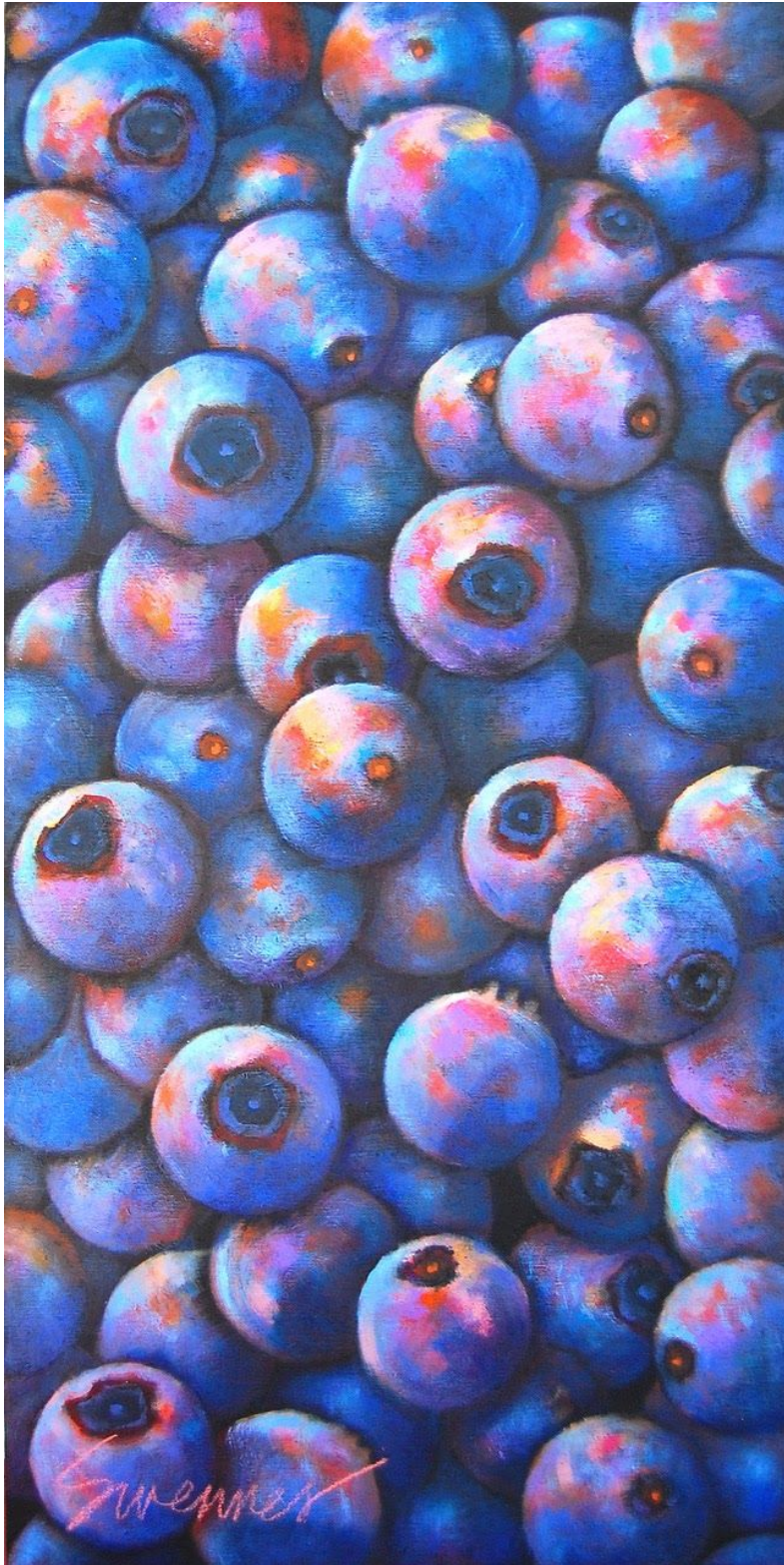
Robin Swennes 'Every Which Way But Loose' Acrylic on Panel 12"x24" \$775

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Robin Swennes 'The Blue Period' Acrylic on Panel 12"x24" \$775

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Robin Swennes 'Sacre Bleu' Acrylic on Panel 12"x24" \$750

I think I painted my first blueberries sometime around 2012. I started with them in those green containers you get for picking your own. As I painted more, my focus moved in and out, from side view containers of berries, to close up aerial views. For as many as I have painted, somehow they all look different and each one brings me closer to warm summer days when the little treats are in season. My mind goes back to being a kid, and finding wild raspberries growing at the end of our street, undiscovered. Or sneaking over to the local golf course, where the black berries were plentiful but we had to go pick them at night so we wouldn't get in trouble for trespassing. And then there were the Maine blueberries I found on many a mountain hike, as I summited a local ski slope. Even though I'm not a kid anymore, it's still akin to finding a small treasure when you come across wild berries in nature, ready for the picking.

- Robin Swennes