CHRIS HUNTINGTON PRESS RELEASE

*“When I returned to Corea with my paints after a mere 40 years, I wondered whether I might be able to take a fresh look at coastal subject matter and make something of it that was not a cliché.”* Chris Huntington

Chris Huntington was born in Gloucester, Massachusetts, in 1938 to artist parents who had met at the Columbus School of Art. He moved with his parents to Walpole, Maine, at the age of eight months and spent further formative years in a sea captain’s house at the Head of Pemaquid Harbor. Later, he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where he curated a series of exhibitions of well-known artists and began his career as a landscape painter working directly from the motif. In 1963 he was hired as the first curator of the Colby College Art Museum, which brought him to inland Maine, beginning a lifelong association with that terrain. After deciding not to make a career in the museum world, where he could see he would have little time for his art, he left Colby and plunged headfirst with his first wife Ellen into the antiques business in Mt. Vernon, Maine. That venture turned out to be extremely successful but, after eight years it became so demanding, that they decided to sell out, in a 1974 landmark auction of American antiques, and subsequently emigrated to the quietude of Nova Scotia.

In 1988, while planning to remove 3-400 paintings that had been painted in Maine and were stored at Noyes in Portland, he decided to call Tom Crotty of Frost Gully gallery and ask him if he would be interested in looking through them, as he was familiar with Chris’ work. After Crotty took a number of paintings to his gallery, he managed to sell 84 in the next 16 months. Suddenly, Huntington was on the Maine art map, big-time.

In 1989, Edgar Allen Beem wrote in *The Maine Times*: “After 15 years of self-exile in Nova Scotia, his one-artist gallery show in Portland places Huntington among the finest landscape painters of the last quarter century. The work is there to be seen and not to be denied. How to say it? These paintings look RIGHT. Anyone, whether artist or audience, who responds to deft, sensuous paint handling will love Huntington.”

Starting in the 1990s, Huntington returned to a realm that he had painted during many years in his early career. He began concentrating his artistic efforts in Northern and Western Maine, around Mt. Katahdin and the Shin Pond area, working with several other painters.

In 1997 Chris and Charlotte bought a 100-year-old schoolhouse in the Patten area, overlooking the entire Katahdin Range which had been recently renovated, including the construction of a separate studio with the same view. There they established the Carl Sprinchorn Admiration Society, home of their extensive research into the lives of Sprinchorn and his 28-year friend Marsden Hartley. Around this time Chris exhibited very successfully with Tom Veilleux.

Ken Greenleaf, in the *Maine Sunday Telegram*, September 13, 1992, wrote: “These paintings are a virtuoso performance. Huntington has become one of the strongest landscape painters I know of. He has found ways to produce original work in a field that is so crowded that it would seem impossible that new work could be done. His voice has become clear and individual and the work he is making would hold its own in the company of any made anywhere.”

Huntington is represented in several Museum collections, including the Portland Museum of Art and the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland, Maine. His work also comes up with some frequency in Maine auctions and brings solid prices. Chris and Charlotte are also known as serious art collectors and ran The New O’Farrell Gallery in Brunswick, Maine 1999-2002.

“*I believe the work I have done in the last decade is a culmination of 50 years of informed art making. Most of my paintings from this time are more challeng for the art public than my earlier work. I think that the current exhibition of the Corea paintings will seem familiar to the people who know my earlier work, but I hope that they find there is an interesting extra edge this time around.”*