



Frank Galuszka *Winter Light* 2003  
oil on panel, 16 x 28 inches

These paintings were produced on a particular stretch of coastline where isolated cliffs mark the edge of the continent. A grey-green border of artichoke fields fans out to the sheer drop of several hundred feet, where the cliffs crumble into the surf below.

Fog wraps the sharp edges of sandstone bluffs and natural bridges in a soft, impossibly thick grey veil. The veil dissolves as the morning warms up and soon the rocks appear against the sea and sky. Grey turns to color.

The pale yellow cliffs are patrolled by pelicans and inspected daily by a pair of ravens, who share ledges and crevices in the walls of crumbling golden rock with gulls and cormorants. Rabbits and quail forage the vast network of artichokes, whose giant thistle tops reach heights over seven feet.

In the moist mornings the herbal perfume of sweet alyssum, wild radish and Queen Anne's lace takes over. These aromas intensify in the sun's warmth.

From this perch a narrow cove beach is visible, and the swirl of incoming tide probing caves erotically carved by wind and wave. This tiny beach is simply the final sandy iteration of canyons born high in the mountains to the north. The thunder of surf hammering these rocks and echoing through the underground caves sends shockwaves up to the top of the bluffs.

The easel is placed in sight of this, near a forlorn railroad track that follows the slender farm trails up and down the coast. A half mile to the north cottages of a 19th century whaling village climb partway up the canyons of manzanita and poison oak. Higher up are ranchlands and meadows, and above these loom dark crowns of ancient redwoods.

Each shift in luminosity is registered upon an eccentric rock a hundred feet off-shore. The rocky pyramid leans slightly toward the east. Bringing a curious and jagged history to each day, its facets measure and refract the details of the light: glittering pinks, saturated gold, bronze, slate greys and murky indigos, as each moment, changing, eludes any single description.