



Pleasant Journeys and Good Eats along the Way: The Paintings of John Baeder

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Pleasant Journeys and Good Eats along the Way surveys John Baeder's thirty-five-year obsession with roadside architecture, especially America's diners, and complements Baeder's Morris Museum of Art exhibit of the same name. Originally attracted to classic postcard images of mom-and-pop businesses and old black-and-white photos of downtowns, Baeder (b. 1938) has spent most of his art career depicting these beloved but unpretentious restaurants. Often classified as a photorealist, Baeder has always resisted being labeled. He sees his paintings as a plea for preservation and a way to reveal the psychology behind diners.

Before the era of corporate fast food, Americans on the road looked to diners to provide "meals like mother makes," a descriptive phrase found in Baeder's very first diner painting. Home cooking was especially appealing to weary tourists who took to the American highway in increasing numbers between the 1920s and the 1960s. By the late 1970s Baeder's paintings had become wildly popular.

Baeder's paintings resonate in melodies of color and line and exhibit their personalities through hand-lettered placards and neon signs. They invite the viewer to absorb the everyday simplicity of roadside architecture in new ways and to discover the values of hearth and home in unexpected places.

John Baeder of Nashville is a well-known realist painter. His work is in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, High Museum of Art, and many others. Jay Williams is curator at the Morris Museum of Art in Augusta, Georgia. His previous publications include *Illuminated Literature: The Art of Jerry and Brian Pinkney* and *What Dogs Dream: Paintings and Works on Paper* by William Dunlap. Kevin Grogan is the director of the Morris Museum of Art. Donald Kuspit is professor of art history and philosophy at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

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