

Mixing painting, stories; BPL's community playwright; and immigrant views



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Inspiration in his art

Linden Frederick's paintings speak to small-town evenings. They're atmospheric scenes of dusky quiet — streetlit driveways, a single light golden glowing in a dark house, a crescent moon taking shape over a convenience store. They bring to mind the work of Andrew Wyeth and Edward Hopper for their seething sense of mood. Absent from his paintings are people, but present is a definitive sense of story, of what's just unfolded, or is about to.

Frederick, who has lived in Belfast, Maine, for nearly 30 years, wondered what would happen if he collaborated with a group of writers, each of whom chose one of his paintings as inspiration for a story.

So Frederick teamed up with Maine author and Pulitzer Prize-winner Richard Russo who assembled some big names for the project. The resulting exhibit, "Night Stories," opens Aug. 18 and runs through Nov. 5 at the Center for Maine Contemporary Art. The accompanying book will be available at the center and on Amazon in October. It includes original stories by Anthony Doerr, Louise Erdrich, Andre Dubus III, Lois Lowry, Dennis Lehane, Ann Patchett, Elizabeth Strout, Joshua Ferris, Russo, and others.

Doerr's story, inspired by a painting called "Save-a-Lot," features a woman named Bunny, an old man named Alfred, a girl named Hanako, drugs, rescues, and a raccoon. Dubus chose a painting called "Ice," a scene of stale snow ploughed into uneven ridges in front of an old corner store, dark save for an illuminated front entrance and a lit ceiling fixture visible through the windows of an apartment above. "Somewhere along the way, her husband has gotten scared of the world, then mean," he writes. Linden's paintings proved provocative fodder for these writers.



Linden Frederick's painting "Save-a-Lot," the inspiration for one of the stories in a collection based on the artist's work.

