

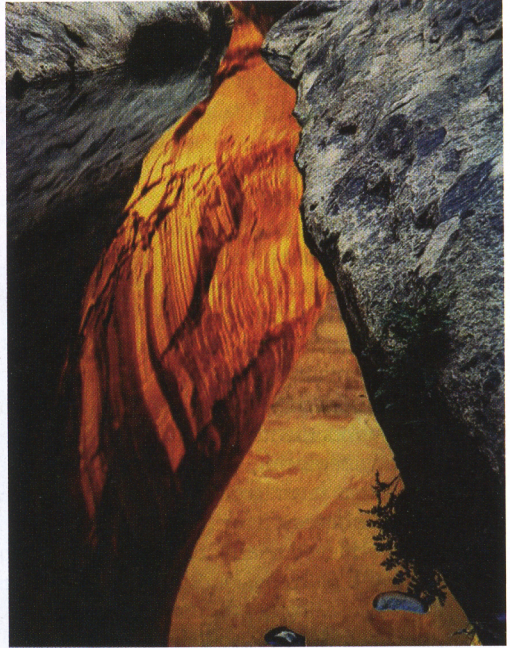
Eliot Porter

**Scheinbaum & Russek LTD
Santa Fe**

A pioneer in color photography whose talent was recognized early by Ansel Adams and Alfred Stieglitz, the late Eliot Porter enjoyed a long and successful career. He is perhaps most celebrated for popularizing the dye-transfer process, and for a hugely successful book, *In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World*, which was published by the Sierra Club in 1962.

This small but smart selection of his photographs from the 1930s to the early '60s gave a succinct overview of his abilities

and interests, beginning with a spooky and austere portrait of Georgia O'Keeffe that suggested how his work might have developed if he had pursued portraiture. Porter was a keen observer of birds, and



Eliot Porter, *Hidden Passage*, 1961, dye transfer print, 17½" x 14". Scheinbaum & Russek LTD.

there are two stunning bird shots here—one of goldfinches in black and white, and another of a jewel-toned purple gallinule about to take flight.

The artist's images of trees have often seemed to flirt dangerously with sentimentality, but a close look at works like *Yellow Aspens, September* (1951) or *Maple and Beeches, N.H.* (1957) reveals surprising subtleties of color and line that Porter brought to his woody subjects, evidence of a sensibility almost Japanese in its simplicity. Some wonderful close-ups of rocks and lichen showed Porter's eye for nature's quirky abstractions, but the real tours de force were works like *Hidden Passage* and *Hidden Passage, Glen Canyon, Utah* (both 1961), where topsy-turvy visions of water, rocks, and reflections leave the viewer pleasurable off balance.

With all the innovations and photographic experimentation of the last 20 years, Porter's work may seem a bit old-fashioned, or even stuffy. But what comes through loud and clear is his intelligent passion for the wild places he so dearly loved—and that, surely, never goes out of style.

—Ann Landi