

Genius and Madness

ON NOVEMBER 11, Questroyal Fine Art in New York will open a historic exhibition of museum-level quality and scope, “Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius Returns.” On view through December 10, the show will feature 125 works by

American artists” by the *Times* of London. His *Brook by Moonlight* had set the auction record for any work by a living American artist when it sold for \$20,000 in 1916. The irony was that at the time, Blakelock was a mental patient in a homeopathic hospital

his own way, including developing a technique of layering paint and scraping and re-scraping until he achieved the desired, dense texture and color. He also insisted on selling his own work rather than going through a dealer.

Born and raised in New York and mainly self-taught as a painter, Blakelock traveled in the West during the late 1860s and early '70s, taking inspiration from the vast landscapes and American Indian culture.

When he returned East, he turned inward, painting purely visionary landscapes. His specialty was moonlit nocturnes, and the light that emanates from these canvases is only partly of this world. Many of Blakelock’s moonlight paintings will be on view at Questroyal, including the great *Eternal Orb*.

the visionary painter—more than the landmark 1947 retrospective at the Whitney or the 2008 show at the National Academy of Design, and all of the works at Questroyal will be for sale.

When he died in 1919 at 71, Blakelock was famous, called “one of the greatest of

in upstate New York and had been institutionalized since a breakdown in 1899. Some of the works in the show are from his late years in the hospital, where, lacking proper art materials, he improvised his own. Throughout his long and financially unsuccessful career, Blakelock had done things

