



ALISON RECTOR

COURTHOUSE GALLERY
FINE ART

ALISON RECTOR

Hours of the Day

SEPTEMBER 9 – OCTOBER 30, 2020

Essay by Laurel Davis Huber



Siesta, 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches

COVER *Party of Four at Five*, 2020, oil on linen, 24 x 24 inches

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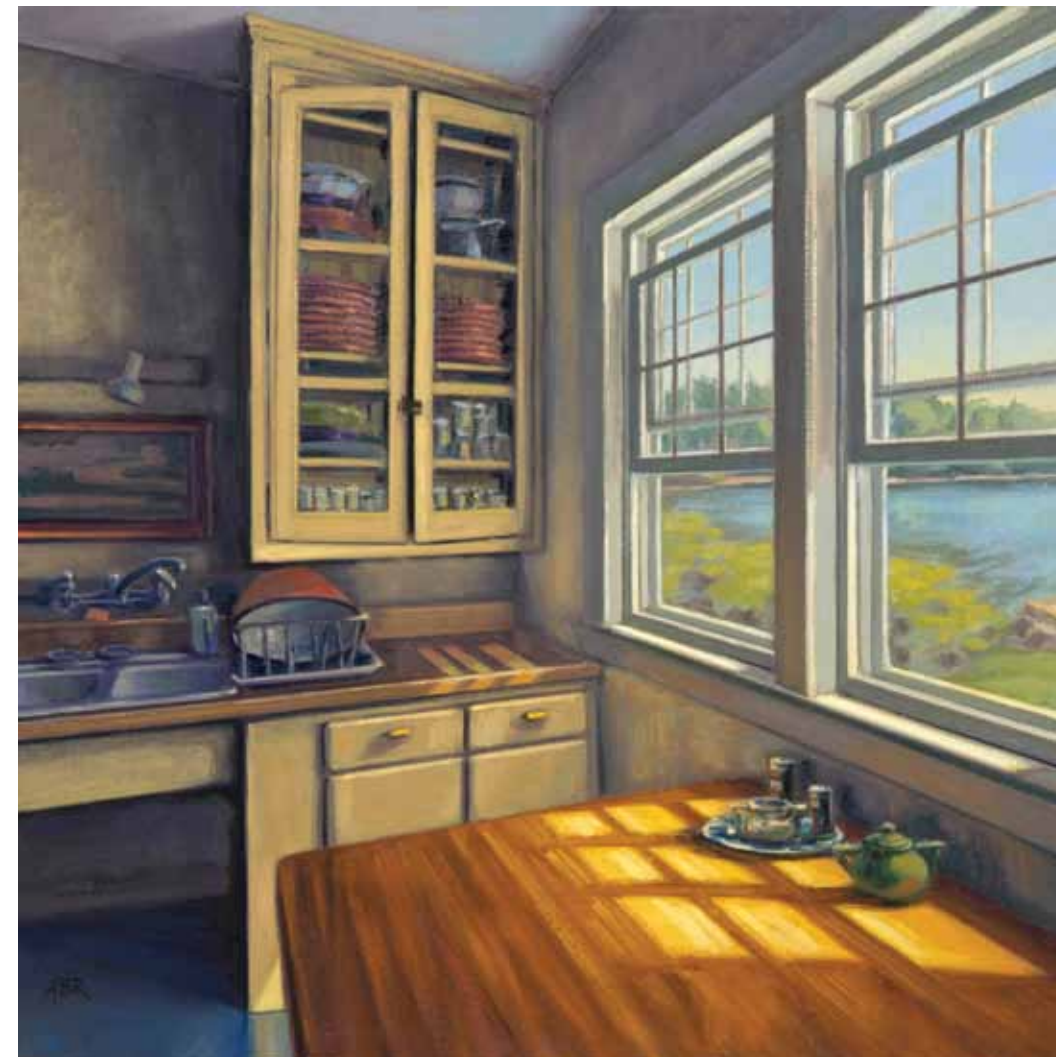
HOURS OF THE DAY

On the longest day of the year, the summer solstice, I spent the day painting and studying light. The sun rises before five o'clock on the solstice and sets well after eight at night on the peak summer day in Maine. I have observed the solstice the past two years on the Blue Hill Peninsula. These paintings are the result of solstice plein air painting.

What makes dawn light differ from dusk? What visual decisions do I make as I capture this light? How does interior light differ from outdoor light? I explore with paint these questions: how the longest day of the year differs from the shortest day, how summer light shifts and changes.

Making these paintings took me to some magical places. "Hours of the Day" depicts locations in Newbury Neck, Eggemoggin Reach, Stonington, Brooksville, Blue Hill, Bayside and as far north as the Bay of Fundy.

— Alison Rector 2020



Shore Breeze, 2020, oil on linen, 20 x 20 inches



High Noon, 2020, oil on linen, 10 x 10 inches



Oak Grove Conversation, 2020, oil on linen, 10 x 10 inches

ALISON RECTOR

HOURS OF THE DAY

by Laurel Davis Huber

On a bright and balmy August day in 2002, just after lunch, I wandered into an art gallery in Castine, Maine. It was an idle activity—what I really had on my mind was the ice cream store nearby and I was about to leave when I saw stairs going down to another level. I decided to descend.

There was a small, dark room, the walls covered in paintings. As I was making a quick, perfunctory tour, I stopped in front of a painting in the back corner. I couldn't seem to move away. I was staring at a fairly large painting of a corridor in what clearly looked like a municipal building of some sort—a checkered floor, a stairwell, a coat hanger and umbrella dangling from a rack, and an *Exit* sign at the end of the hall. The door to the ladies' room was ajar, allowing the light

to spill out. Years evaporated. I was no longer in Castine—I was back in college, lost upstairs in the huge stone administration building. I could hear the faint clack of typewriters, I could smell the old wood of the walls, I could feel a faint homesickness, a pride in my new freedom. The ineffable lightness and happiness of youth.

I could not not have this painting.

The work was titled *Exit*, and it was by Alison Rector. It was the first painting that I ever bought.

I have followed Rector ever since, and her work never fails to evoke a specific time and mood, a story of joy or melancholy, or yearning that is unique to every viewer. This exhibition, “The Hours of the Day,” continues the artist’s quest to find meaning and beauty in everyday

Election Eve, 2020, oil on linen, 41 x 41 inches





Fisherman's Cove, 2019, oil on panel, 8 x 16 inches

places and objects. Precisely how does Rector accomplish what she does? First, she is drawn to a subject—a doorknob or a laundromat, a hallway alcove or a train station. Once that decision is made, she follows a rigorous process: a pencil drawing, a small black and white painting, and the transition to putting color on canvas. Rector chooses her palette assiduously, measuring each hue: a grayer blue for a sky at dawn, say against

her color value strip. Each painting may have five or six layers of paint before the canvas is finished. Rector says that she is eternally fascinated by the miracle of “brushing the opaque emulsion of paint on canvas and creating the illusion of light.”

Light. Light illuminates, that is its job. But it also creates intimacy, startles, warms, awakens the senses. What, for instance, does one feel as one gazes at Rector’s *Election Eve*? The polished,

cool emptiness, the warmth of midday, the hush of anticipation, the hopes and fears of a coming election? All of these things? Or—and this is the wonder—something else entirely?

Rector, working with color and light on canvas, opens the murky mysteries of the heart in much the same the way that the finest authors do with words on the page. In that vein, it can feel as though Rector channeled Virginia Woolf as she worked on some of the paintings in this exhibition. Take, for instance, *Fisherman’s Cove*. Let’s say it is late in the summer and the day is drawing to a close and you stand on your front lawn and look over, for the millionth time, to the house on the corner, the one with the pretty flowers. A place very much like the one in Rector’s *Fisherman’s Cove*. That scene, that precise moment in time, is evoked in Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*, as she describes Mrs. Ramsay’s summer home:

“...it was bright enough, the grass still a soft deep green, the house starred in its greenery with purple passion flowers, and rooks dropping cool

cries from the high blue. But something moved, flashed, turned a silver wing in the air. It was September, after all, the middle of September, and past six in the evening.”

You are lucky. This exhibition offers not just a grouping of paintings, but a transcendent experience. You will find, almost certainly, that at least one of these works carries you to a special place and time, perhaps one long forgotten. And you will walk away with a profound sense of the way our feelings change in subtle and secret ways, depending, though we may not be aware of it, on the changing light through all the hours of the day.

Laurel Davis Huber, author of *The Velveteen Daughter* (a novel about the woman who wrote *The Velveteen Rabbit* and her daughter, a world-famous child prodigy artist). She has a home in Surry, Maine.



The Vote, 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches



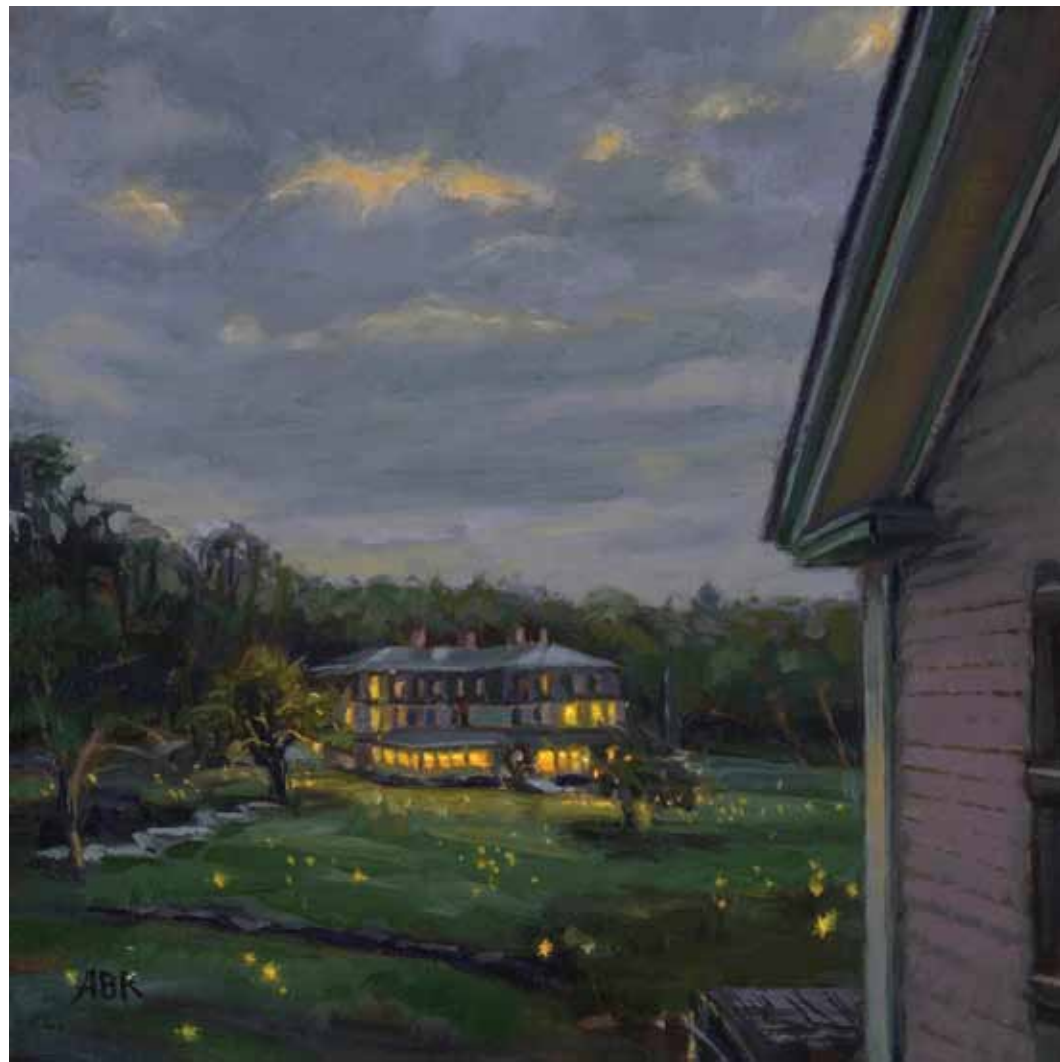
Party of Four at Five, 2020, oil on linen, 24 x 24 inches



Eggmoggin Reach, 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches



The Coming Day (Inn Dawn), 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches



Fireflies (Inn Dusk), 2020, oil on linen, 10 x 10 inches



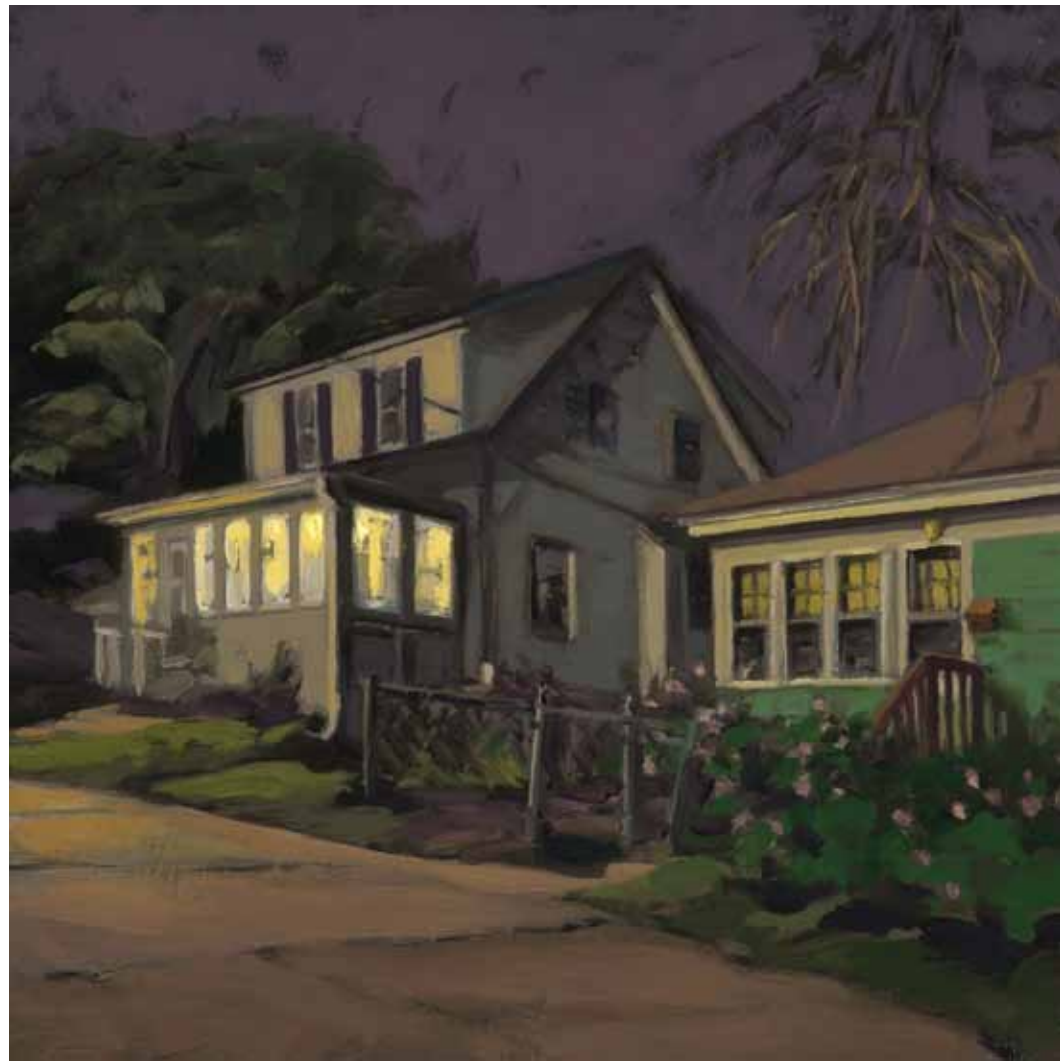
Windbreaker, 2020, oil on linen, 20 x 20 inches



Fundy Rising, 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches



Crickets and Roses, 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches



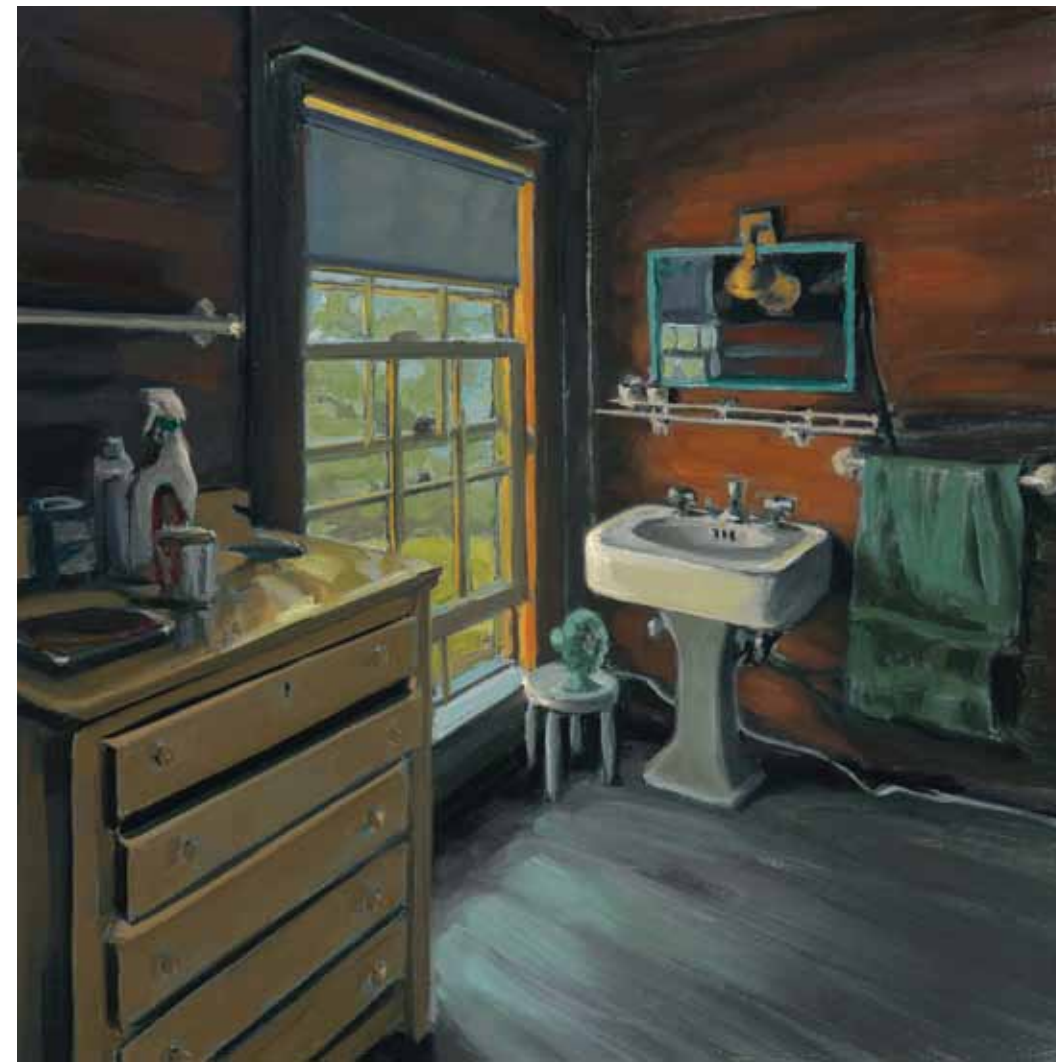
Bedtime Story, 2020, oil on linen, 10 x 10 inches



Elevenses, 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches



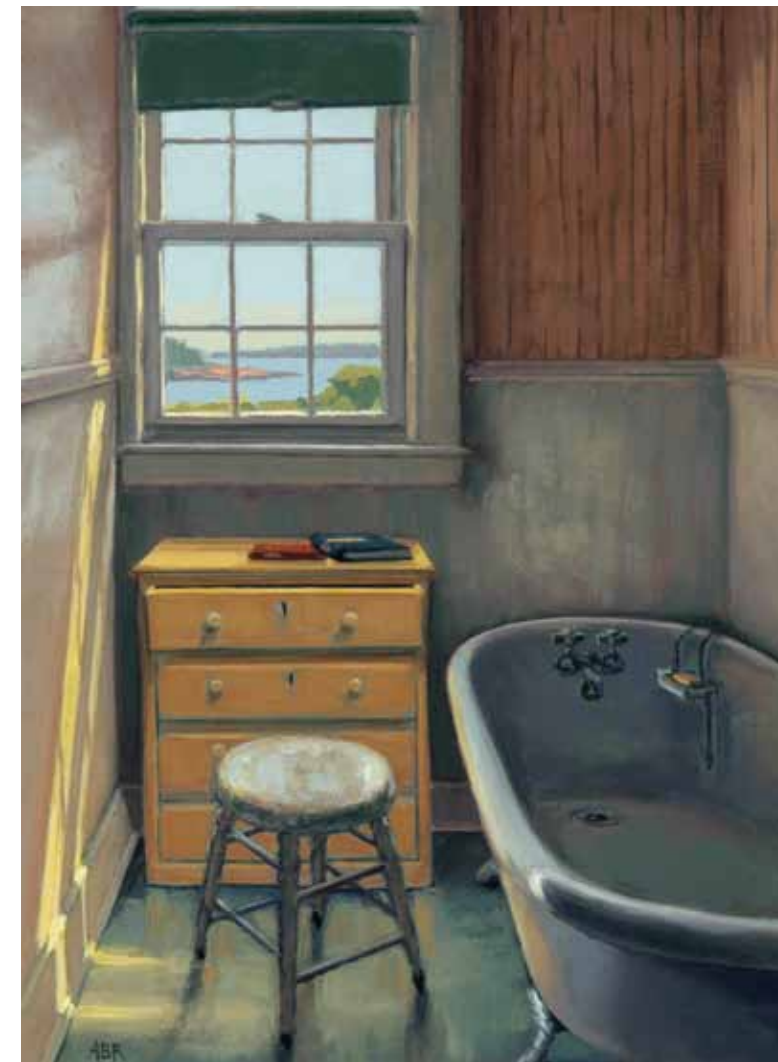
Island Fueling, 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches



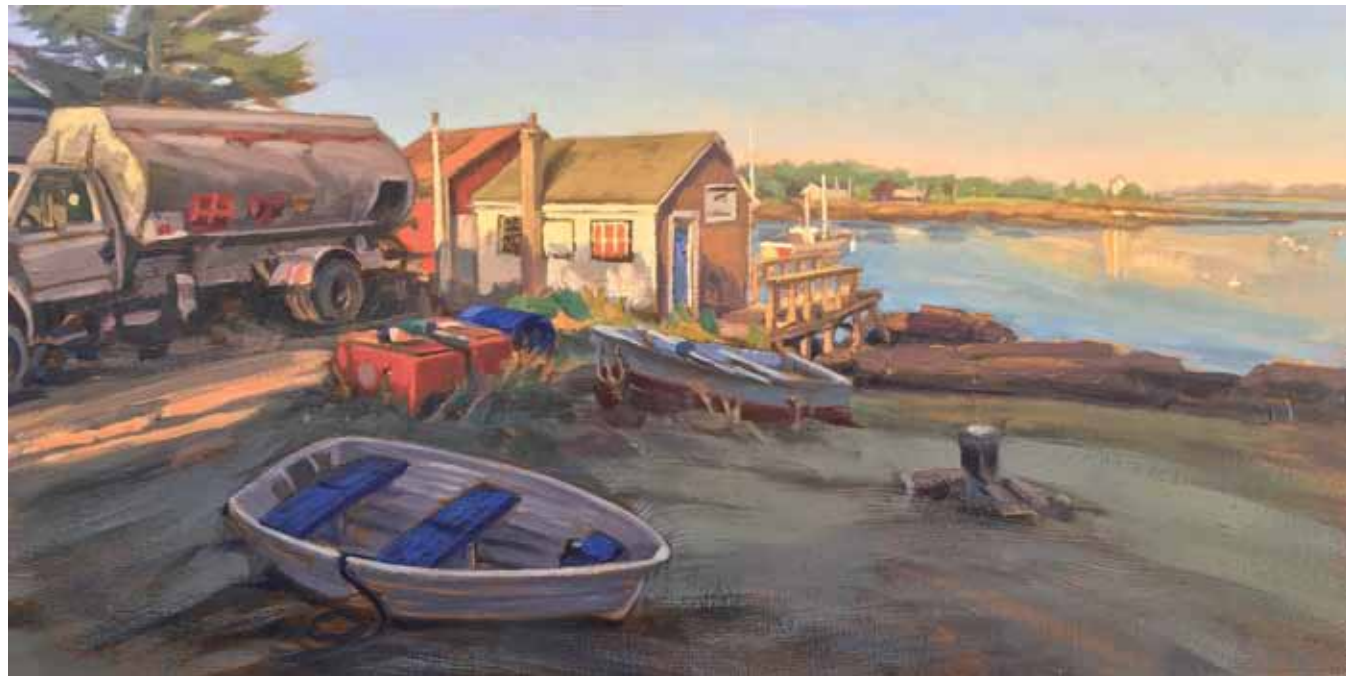
Summer Shave, 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches



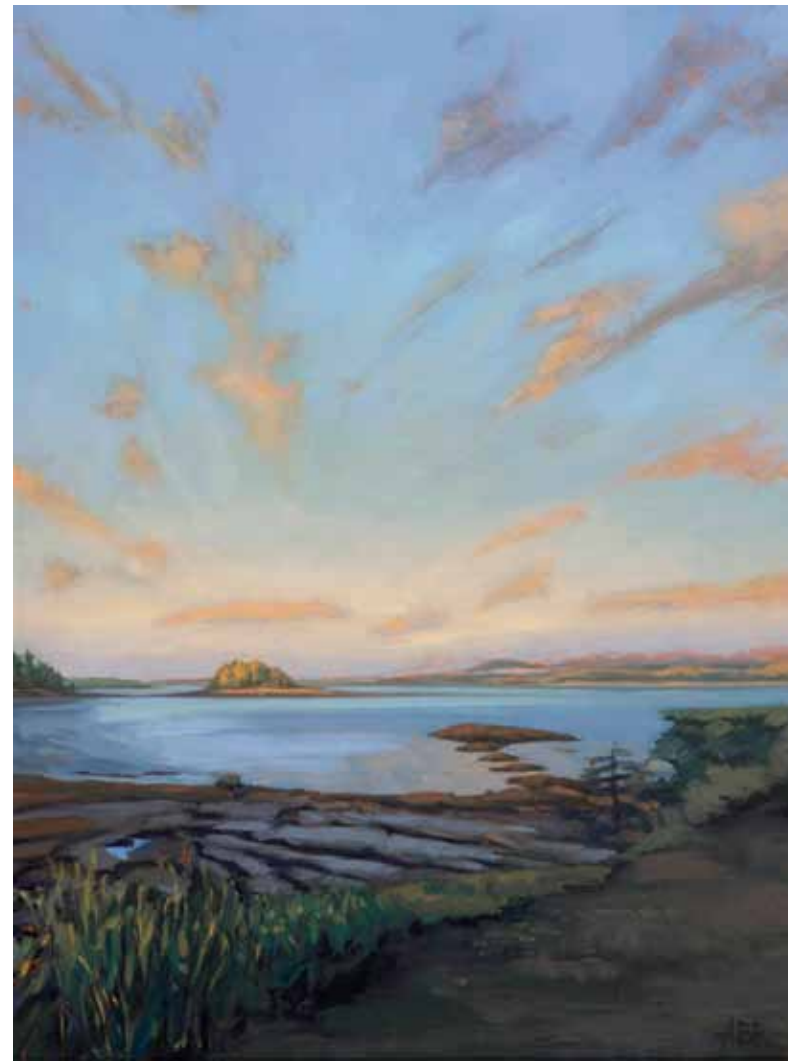
Winter Morning, Portland Studio, 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches



Sea Beam, 2020, oil on panel, 16 x 12 inches



Suzanne's Store, 2019, oil on panel, 8 x 16 inches



Last Light, Newbury Neck, 2020, oil on panel, 16 x 12 inches



ALISON RECTOR

BORN 1960 Rochester, New York

SOLO AND TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2014, 2020
- Greenhut Galleries, *Inside Portland*, Portland, ME 2007, ‘10, ‘16, ‘19
- Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Two-Person Exhibition, Ellsworth, ME 2017
- Ogunquit Museum of American Art, Ogunquit, ME 2017
- Kramer Gallery, Belfast Free Library, Belfast, ME 2015
- Ten High Street, Camden, ME 2003, 2005
- Diane Nelson Fine Art, *Introducing Alison Rector*, Laguna Beach, CA 2001

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2011–2020
- Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Biennial Juried Show, Rockport, ME 2000, ‘02, ‘10, ‘18
- Senator Olympia Snowe’s office in Washington DC 2008, ‘09, ‘10, ‘11
- Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME 2005, ‘06, ‘07, ‘08, ‘09, ‘10, ‘11
- Creative Arts Workshop, *Painting as Presence*, Juror: William Bailey, New Haven, CT 2008

- Center for Maine Contemporary Art, *Maine Printmakers*, Rockport, ME 2006, 2008
- Portland Museum of Art, Biennial Juried Show, Portland, ME 2003

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- “Artist Alison Rector,” *Maine Boats, Homes, & Harbors*, March 2019
- Little, Carl, and David Little. “Paintings of Portland,” Downeast Books, 2018
- Keyes, Bob. “Alison Rector’s Literary Art,” *Portland Press Herald*, 2017
- “Art of Acadia,” Carl Little and David Little, Rowman and Littlefield, 2016
- Artist’s Talk: Alison Rector, YouTube video by Courthouse Gallery 2014
- “Alison Rector: The Eye of the Poet,” *Maine Home + Design Magazine*, November 2008
- “Embodiment and Emptiness: Alison Rector’s Interior Images,” *The Gettysburg Review*, Fall 2008
- Little, Carl. “More Paintings of Maine.” Downeast Books, 2006
- Little, Carl. “Alison Rector at Ten High Street.” *Art New England*, 2006
- “Artist Conversations.” *MaineArts Mag, Maine Arts Commission Magazine*, Summer 2005

AWARDS

- Arts Envoy Program, U.S. State Department, Doha, Qatar 2016

COLLECTIONS

- Ogunquit Museum of American Art, Museum Purchase, Ogunquit, ME, 2017
- Maine Supreme Court, Judicial Branch, State of Maine, Portland, ME 2017

EDUCATION

- Brown University, BA in Painting, Providence, RI, 1982
- Rhode Island School of Design (course work while at Brown University)



Siesta, 2020, oil on panel, 10 x 10 inches

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