



Clam Digger, detail, oil on linen, 28 x 30 inches

ALISON RECTOR

COURTHOUSE GALLERY
FINE ART

ALISON RECTOR

Island Refuge

SEPTEMBER 13 – OCTOBER 14, 2023

Essay by Lisa Gibbons



Dinghy, oil on linen, 14 x 14 inches

cover *Clam Digger*, detail, oil on linen, 28 x 30 inches

COURTHOUSE GALLERY
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Checkers, oil on linen, 24 x 40 inches



Island Pantry, oil on linen, 24 x 24 inches

ALISON RECTOR *Island Refuge*

by Lisa Gibbons

Pause and breathe. Time slows down again. Then it starts up as the wind rustles the marsh grass. Rector has inhabited this spot and looked, listened, and smelled the sea air coming across the marsh.

— Lisa Gibbons

In Alison Rector's *Island* paintings, time is anything but still. The moments captured move from past to future and back. For many people, islands themselves are a time apart. Physicists tell us time passes more slowly in some places, more rapidly in others. One might balk to hear this stated as a scientific fact or grow dismayed to learn that modern physics has been dismantling our conventional ideas of how time works. But emotionally we know that already. Time has a way of speeding up and slowing down for us. Rector's powerful art in

this exhibition magnifies how we see time and its movement.

One way Rector does this is by allowing the people in these paintings of interiors or exteriors to remain outside the frame. Their presence is implied. You are invited to imagine the people who just recently left the field of view or those about to enter it.

In *Dinghy*, two times are present standing at the top of the dock, the entrance and the exit to the island. You are bounding up the steep ascent after that windy journey to the island, so happy





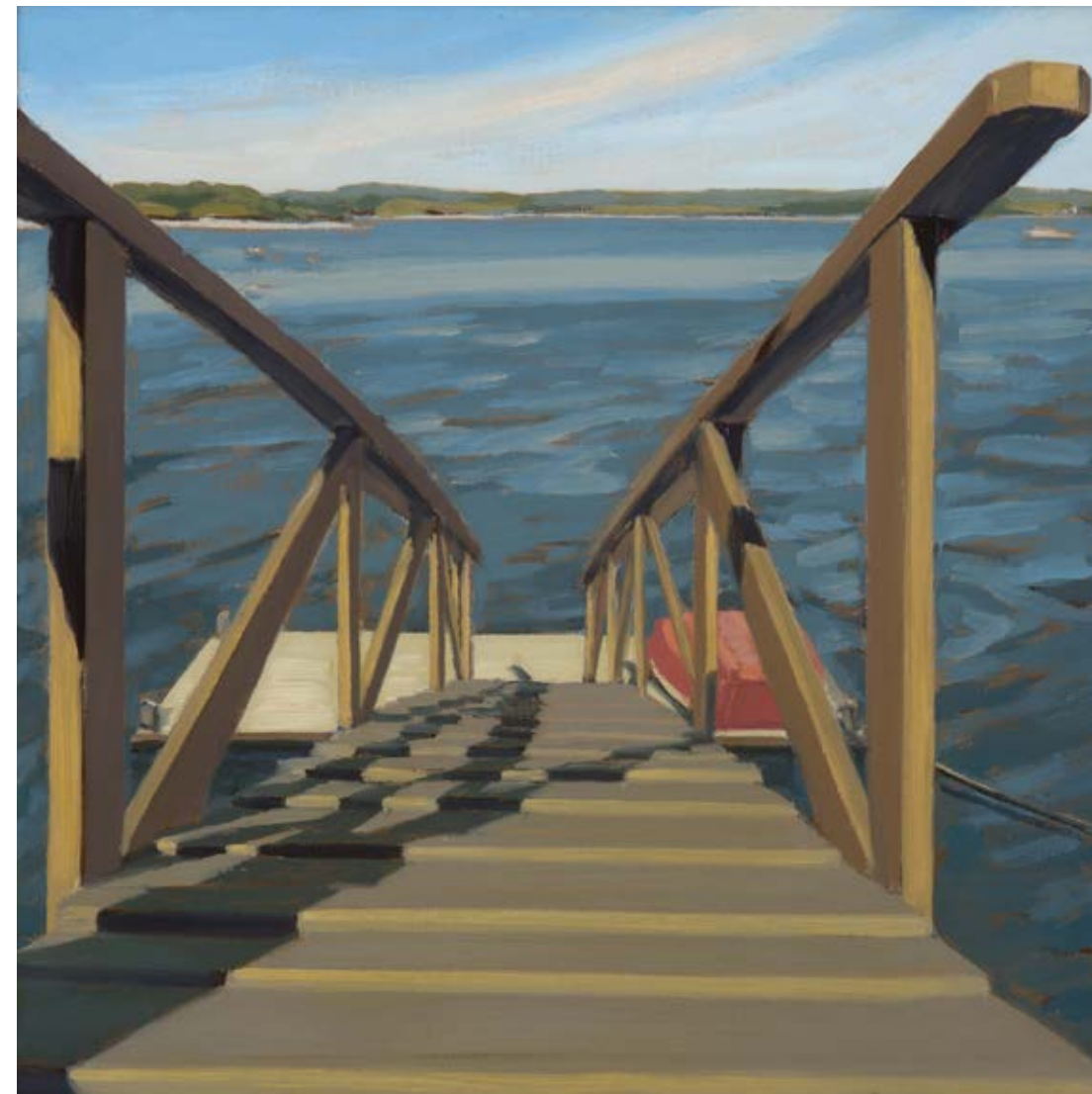
Jazz Break, detail, oil on linen, 15 x 22 inches

to be making the transition to dry land, after the surprise of spray in the face and thump, thump, thumping of the hull against the waves. Or you are poised at the top of the stairs, gathering bravery for the so-cold waters of the sound. *Dinghy* inhabits multiple times simultaneously just as the dock rises and falls with high and low tide.

The strong angles of the railings in *Dinghy* drive you to the moment, focus your attention and show what's there. You know that dock from dreamy days in summers past. But by Rector's choice of perspective, you see more clearly. The painting creates the world differently than how a photographer controls or bounds the view. Rector's skill lies in stripping away some of the details. She doesn't try to create a realistic portrayal and conveyance of the place. Instead, she opens a new way for us to see.

Her choices in composition and perspective are the languages she uses to influence and mold our perception and experience. A specific choice of a more limited color palette allows her to create an intense focus. The red dinghy in *Dinghy* forecasts for us, brightly saying adventure and excitement could be coming.

In *Jazz Break*, the splashes of color across the background burst softly in syncopation, wire brushes on the cymbals in a jazz melody. Here time stops again but only momentarily. The windowpanes capture the activities of the



Dinghy, oil on linen, 14 x 14 inches



Jazz Break, oil on linen, 15 x 22 inches



Misty Morning, oil on linen, 36 x 36 inches



Morning Swim, Salt Marsh, detail, oil on linen, 24 x 36 inches

outside world. Watch the parade of boats go up and down the channel. Sit in the chair for solitary writing under the pine tree. Those outside activities are juxtaposed against the quiet of the inside world. Books to read on a rainy day with lights

and soft cushions for comfort. Who just laid the book down after getting up from the chair?

Form and line are the vocabulary in *Misty Morning*. Rectangles and squares of the window-panes, stove, sink and chair converse with the circles of the pans and plates. Rafters slash across the top of the canvas and the angle of a chair rung and heap of dishpans query the other forms.

Through all her painting, there is a deep sense of reverence in her looking and seeing which imbue the work with intimacy and respect for place. Consider the glow on the horizon in *Morning Swim*, how it suffuses warmth across the canvas. Pause and breathe. Time slows down again. Then it starts up as the wind rustles the marsh grass. Rector has inhabited this spot and looked, listened, and smelled the sea air coming across the marsh. So do you.

Lisa Gibbons and Alison Rector have been friends since childhood. They met growing up in Bethesda, Maryland. Gibbons enjoys exploring islands, and they often do so together.



Morning Swim, Salt Marsh, oil on linen, 24 x 36 inches



Sandbar, oil on linen, 10 x 18 inches



Time Sweep Tide, oil on linen, 24 x 36 inches



Sleeping Porch, oil on linen, 18 x 28 inches



Mooring Song, oil on linen, 21 x 24 inches



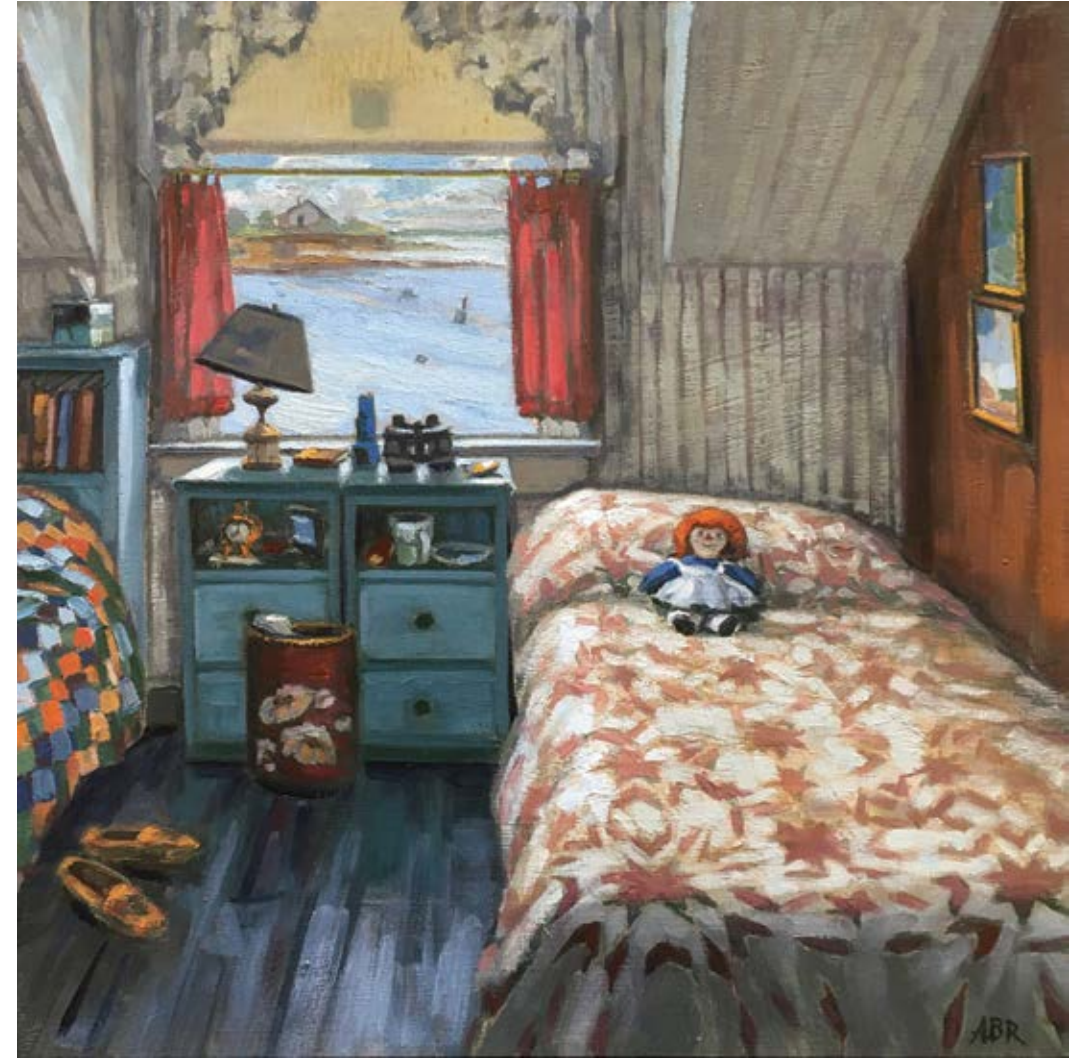
Fogbank, oil on linen, 20 x 24 inches



Bay View, oil on linen, 24 x 28 inches



Bastille Day Bayside, oil on linen, 12 x 18 inches



Old Friends, oil on panel, 14 x 14 inches



Nightshift, oil on linen, 20 x 20 inches



Daybreak Ledge, oil on panel, 10 x 22 inches



ALISON RECTOR

BORN 1960 Rochester, New York

SOLO AND TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2014, 2020, 2023

Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME 2007, '10, '16, '19, '2022

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 2011–2023

Cove Street Arts, Portland, ME 2022, 2022

Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Biennial Juried Show, Rockport, ME
2000, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2018

Waterfall Arts, Belfast, ME 2017

Rogers Gardens Art Gallery, *Inside Out- Interiors*, California 2014

Senator Olympia Snowe's Office, Washington DC 2008–2012

Deer Isle Art Association, Invitational Exhibit, Deer Isle, ME 2012

Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME 2005–2011

Creative Arts Workshop, *Painting as Presence*, Juror: William Bailey,
New Haven, CT 2008

Portland Museum of Art, Biennial Juried Show, Portland, ME 2003

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Little, Carl, and David Little. *Art of Penobscot Bay*, Islandport Press

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, 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)



Alison Rector painting on a dock on Cliff Island. Photo by Eric Rector.

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