



ALISON RECTOR

COURTHOUSE GALLERY
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ALISON RECTOR

MAY 1 – MAY 28, 2025

Silkscreen Season on a Maine Farm

Essay by Carl Little



Winter Tractor, 1995, silkscreen, 4 x 5 inches

FRONT COVER *Cows In A Snowy Field*, detail, 2001, silkscreen, 3.5 x 8.5 inches

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“The sun goes down early as winter solstice arrives. By 4pm it’s dark. Illuminated windows cast a glow onto the bleak winter landscape. We prepare for the longest night.” — Alison Rector

November Evening Thompson Ridge, 1992, silkscreen, 3.25 x 6 inches



Puppy and Stray Cat, 2005, silkscreen, 3.5 x 5.25 inches



Winter Walk, 2002, silkscreen, 5.25 x 4.5 inches



Winter Orchard, 2010, silkscreen, 3.75 x 5.5 inches



Solstice Junction, 2018, silkscreen, 4.25 x 6.25 inches



Night Driving, 1991, silkscreen, 2.75 x 6.75 inches



First Milking, 2003, silkscreen, 6.5 x 4.75 inches



Thanksgiving, 2011, silkscreen, 4 x 5.75 inches



Cows In A Snowy Field, 2001, silkscreen, 3.5 x 8.5 inches

“My husband Eric acquired a herd of Dexter Irish cows, a hearty breed who were happy on our pastured fields. Eric became a cheesemaker, produced handmade gouda and blue cheese as the Monroe Cheese Studio. I was lucky enough to be a taste tester.”

— Alison Rector

ALISON RECTOR

SILKSCREEN SEASON ON A MAINE FARM

by Carl Little

“Rector and her husband Eric moved from Boston to Monroe in Waldo County, Maine, in the summer of 1990, exchanging urban life for rural. . . . Over the next thirty years they embraced the homesteading life, raising sheep, cows and chickens, growing hay, and making apple cider and cheese.”



Nativity, 2017, silkscreen, 4 x 5 inches

The approach of the winter solstice has been marked with a limited edition silkscreen print by Alison Rector every year since 1990. This annual ritual of recognizing the change of light and season began as a way to connect with family and friends during the holidays “in a personal handmade way.”¹ “Silkscreen Season on a Maine Farm” is the first exhibition to highlight Rector’s entire collection of silkscreens, placing them in context with Maine’s long-standing tradition of printmaking, and as a remarkable record of the back-to-the-land experience.

The subjects are autobiographical, the artist notes, many of them inspired by an occurrence or encounter in her life on a Maine farm. Rector



Monroe Community Church, 1997, silkscreen, 3.25 x 5 inches



Woodstove, 2000, silkscreen, 4.75 x 5 inches



Winter Tractor, 1995, silkscreen, 4 x 5 inches

and her husband Eric moved from Boston to Monroe in Waldo County, Maine, in the summer of 1990, exchanging urban life for rural. They wanted, she says, “access to land and to grow things and have animals.” Over the next thirty years they embraced the homesteading life, raising sheep, cows and chickens, growing hay, and making apple cider and cheese. “We did a little of everything in a back-to-the-lander kind of way,” Rector recalled in a 2019 interview.²

Farm life was very novel at the time, so the silkscreens were a way for Rector to document this new experience. The subjects provide an inventory of farm activities, from milking a cow to chopping wood. A 1949 Ford 8N tractor bought from Uncle Henry’s by Eric got its due, as does an array of beehive boxes a friend installed on the farm. “We enjoyed having the bees nearby,” she recalls. Her print captures the last light of the day as it illuminates the hives “moments before sunset.”

Several prints offer a mid-winter glow, be it from a wood stove, a fireplace, or a bonfire. The latter image, *New Year’s Eve*, was inspired by an annual “rockin’ party” hosted by a neighbor—the photographer Peggy McKenna (1947–2014). “We bundled into layers of coats,” recalled Rector, “and braved the subzero chill outdoors with friends,

a wonderful mix of farmer/homesteaders and creative thinkers.” The blazing fire sent sparks into the night air.

And there is snow falling. You can see the flakes drift by the window of Rector’s Waterfall Arts studio, swirl around the ghostly limbs of apple trees, gently land on the backs of Dexter Irish cows, and accent the façade of a red barn. Rector has noticed a lessening of the snowfall since arriving in Maine, and she fears a time when there will be none. In *Remembering Snow*, Rector reworked a summer painting of Double Beach on Great Spruce Head Island into a snow scene.

The couple cared for three miniature Sicilian donkeys for a few years. The donkeys were owned by a local summer camp, “delighting kids in the summer,” Rector relates, then moving to their barn in winter. Known for the cross-shaped markings on their backs, the donkeys liked searching for snacks in her coat pocket.

Other creatures appear throughout. There’s a stray cat and a puppy sharing a pillow by the fireplace and two dogs exploring a country road. An orange fox prowls a moonlit field while a monarch butterflies migrate across Cliff Island in Casco Bay. In *Chalky Sea*, seagulls wing over the water near Eastbourne, on England’s southeast coast. “The color of the sea which is made milky



Donkeys, 1994, silkscreen, 6.5 x 3 inches



4:30PM Thompson Ridge, 1990, silkscreen, 5 x 7.25 inches

green by the chalk cliffs fascinates me,” writes Rector, noting how different a palette it is from Maine’s waters.

One of Rector’s rare large prints captures an agricultural relic: a cluster of abandoned chicken barns from the days when poultry processing was a major industry in Belfast. These remnants, which the locals refer to as “The Plantation,” caught her eye, “the symmetry of the large barn buildings with huge exhaust fans, now empty.”

Rector’s buildings include a classic Maine cottage “with a terrific porch” and a “parade of columns” on Little Diamond Island in Casco Bay; the humble community church in Monroe; a mobile home along a back road; and the couple’s farmhouse. The print *Farewell Farmhouse* was her way of honoring the place she and Eric called home for twenty years.

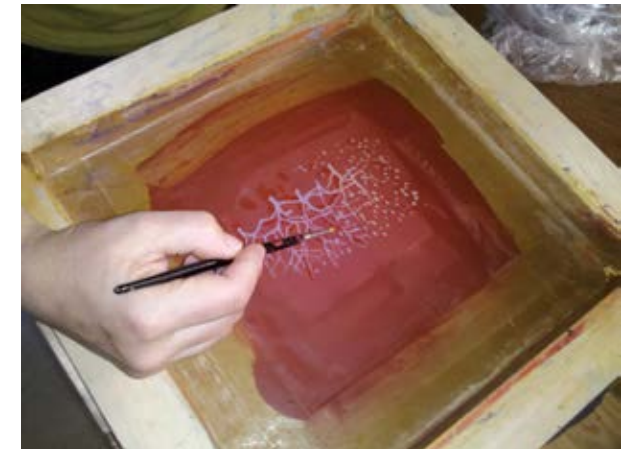
SILKSCREEN: PROCESS & POETRY

Rector learned the silkscreen technique in the public high school she attended in Bethesda, Maryland. John Bledsoe (1938–2022), the art teacher, introduced her to the process. She loved that it was low-tech: “You didn’t need a printing press,” she notes, “you didn’t need a litho stone.”³

Is there a connection between Rector’s silkscreen prints and her paintings? The stenciling



Alison Rector working on *Winter Orchard* in her Belfast studio, 2010.





Museum, 2016, silkscreen, 2.75 x 4.75 inches

process, she explains, is similar in that she thinks of an image and then breaks it apart into flat areas of color and composition. That said, the way she applies the colors is very different. After coming up with the idea and making some preliminary drawings she considers the order of the hues. In some cases, a bit of hand drawing or painting happens at the very end.

Her husband used to joke that when Rector started "silkscreen season," she would swear a lot as she battled with the printing screen and ink flew everywhere. "I don't seem to be swearing as much anymore," she reports, adding, "I've gotten more comfortable with the process."

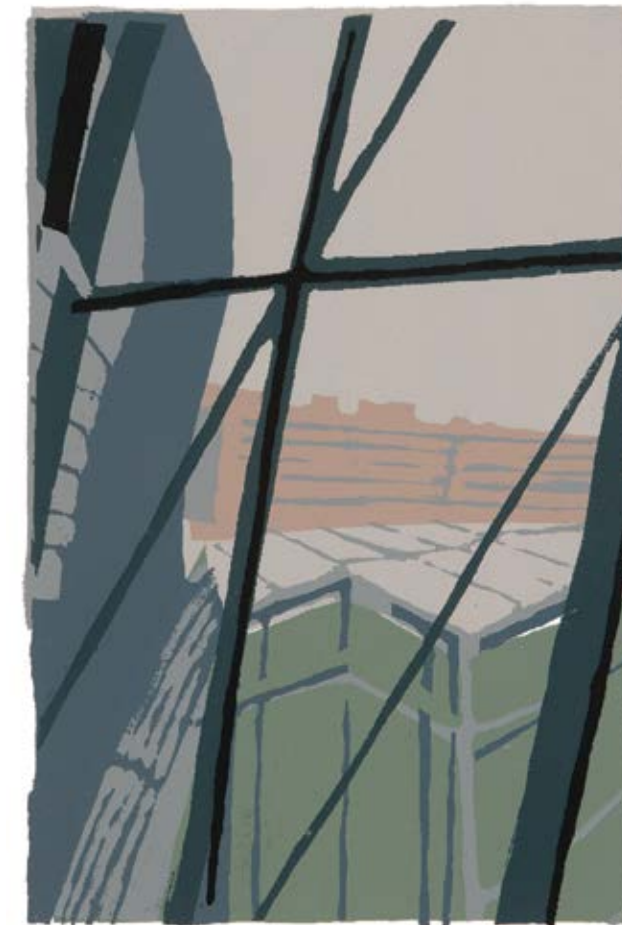
Rector likes to change the dimensions of the print each year, believing she'd get bored

if it was the same shape. "If I haven't done a super horizontal one or a very vertical one," she relates, "I'll say, 'This is the year.'" Others formats are "purely compositional decisions," she notes, "just like a painting would be." One size requirement: the ones she mails to family and friends during the holidays must fit into a number ten business envelope.

In the case of *Queen Anne's Lace*, Rector worked with a single color, a dark blue ink printed on white paper.⁴ Another singular piece, *New Leaf*, heralded the arrival of the year 2000 and Y2K, "turning over a new leaf."

Sometimes a print begins with Rector asking herself, "What special event happened to me this year?" In 2016, her exhibition "The Value of Thought" at the Ogunquit Museum of American Art inspired a view of its central gallery looking out on Perkins Cove. Another print invokes a visit to the Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. It's a wonderful abstract study of an abridged cityscape.

Occasionally a subject will align between silkscreen and painting. Rector created *Solstice Junction* the year she was working on a series of canvases celebrating trains. The print depicts a crossing near Unity, Maine, on the former Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad line. *Shadow Train*



Guggenheim, Bilbao, Spain, 2007, silkscreen, 6 x 4 inches



New Leaf, 1999, silkscreen, 2.5 x 5 inches

served as a souvenir of a trip across China, the train casting a shadow on the high desert landscape of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Rector's pantheon of silkscreen artists includes such well-known art-world figures as Andy Warhol, Richard Estes, and Shepard Fairey. She marvels at the white-line woodcuts of Blanche Lazzell, a founding member of the Provincetown Printers, a group of artists who experimented with a white-line woodcut technique based on the Japanese

ukiyo-e woodblock prints. In all these cases, the layering of color and imagery fascinate Rector.

Closer to home, Rector has been inspired by Susan Balch (1945–2013), the long-time artist at Liberty Graphics who won the poster design for the Common Ground Fair in Unity, Maine, on several occasions. Rector also admires the work of Belfast-based wood engraver Tony Kulik.

Rector has collaborated with poets Bruce Pratt and Martin Steingesser. It makes sense: her prints

have a lyric quality that calls for poetry, whether it's a deep winter night sky covered by an "indigo blanket of stars," a "supermoon" eclipse, or a bird's nest uncovered one day while scything grass on the farm. Whatever the inspiration, Rector has the ways and means, and the eye and heart, to bring it to life.

Looking back on thirty-five years of making silkscreen prints, Rector notes that when she was in the act of creating them, she didn't necessarily see the whole progression. This exhibition and the documentation of her silkscreen collection in this catalog has given Rector the opportunity to revisit her silkscreens as "a wonderful record of a life lived and things seen." As she noted near the end of our conversation, "It makes me feel very lucky that I've lived the life I've had in Maine."

NOTES

1. Most of the quotes in this essay are from notes the artist shared with the author and from a phone interview on March 13, 2025.
2. Carl Little, "Artist Alison Rector," *Maine Boats, Homes & Harbors*, March 2019. The couple passed their enterprise onto some young farmers through Maine Farmland Trust's Farmlink program.
3. A few years ago Rector reconnected with Bledsoe through Facebook. He came to Maine in 2021, and they spent the day together in Portland where she was able to thank him for his early encouragement and show him some of her work at Greenhut Galleries.
4. Harborside Graphics in Belfast, Maine, printed the image on t-shirts.



Queen Anne's Lace, 1998, silkscreen, 5 x 3.5 inches



Shadow Train, 2009, silkscreen, 2.25 x 5 inches



Dawn Driving, 1994, silkscreen, 9 x 12 inches



Bee Hives, 2012, silkscreen, 3 x 6.25 inches



Migration, 2021, silkscreen, 4.25 x 6.25 inches



Farewell Farmhouse, 2014, silkscreen, 3 x 4.75 inches



Chopping Wood, 2004, silkscreen, 4.5 x 3.5 inches



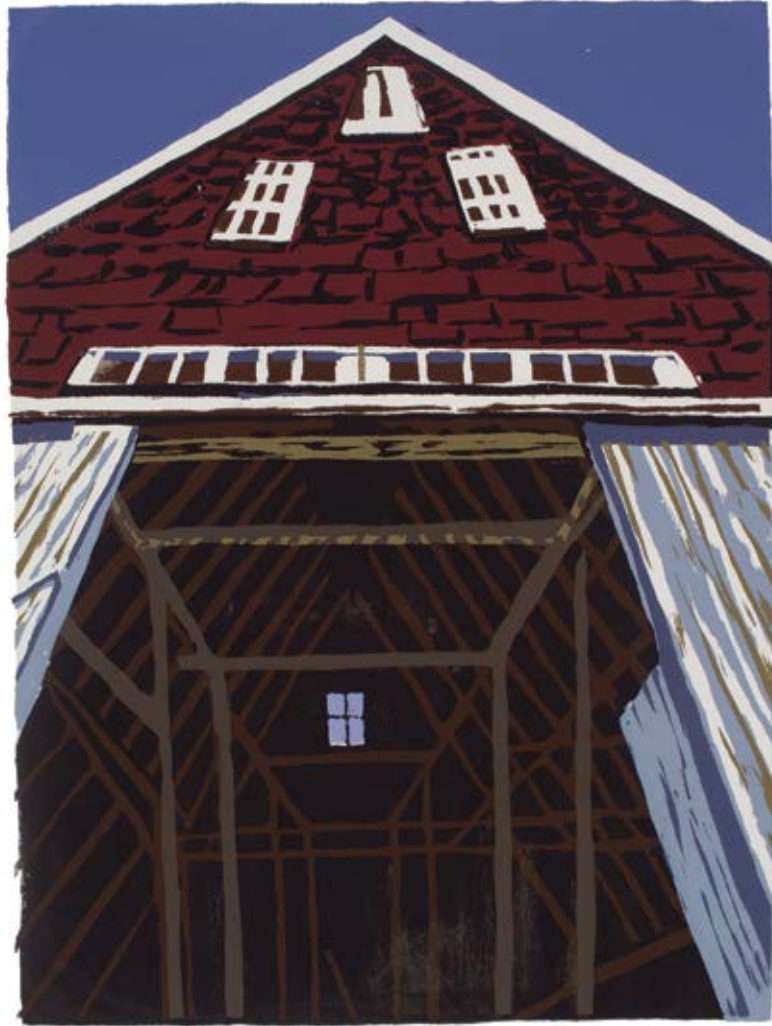
“At the annual rockin’ New Year’s Eve bonfire hosted by a neighbor and photographer Peggy McKenna, we bundled into layers of coats and braved the subzero chill with friends, a wonderful mix of farmer/home-steaders and creative thinkers. Peggy’s partner at the time was a woodsman and logger, who cut plenty of wood for the fire.”

— Alison Rector



Blood Eclipse
2015, silkscreen
4.75 x 3.75 inches

OPPOSITE
New Year's Eve
1996, silkscreen
7.5 x 4.5 inches



Barn Interior, 1995, silkscreen, 12 x 9 inches



The Spell of the Orange Fox, 2024, silkscreen, 3.75 x 6 inches



The Barn, 1993, silk screen, 5 x 7.5 inches

“In 1993, Eric and I bought an old farmhouse with a barn in Monroe. I love looking up into the night sky, the red of the barn against the indigo blanket of stars.”

— Alison Rector

A Wish
2013, silk screen
6 x 4 inches





Ice Fishing, 1993, silkscreen, 7 x 10 inches



The Plantation, 1993, silkscreen, 16 x 17 inches



Remembering Snow, 2022, silkscreen, 4 x 6.5 inches

“The rocky shoreline in Surry, Maine, inspired the silkscreen *New Day Dawning*. Because of our farm partnership, Eric and I have a new freedom to step away from farm life, to explore Maine islands and coastline.”

— Alison Rector

New Day Dawning
2020, silkscreen
8 x 3.5 inches





On Little Diamond Island, 1996, silkscreen, 11 x 17 inches



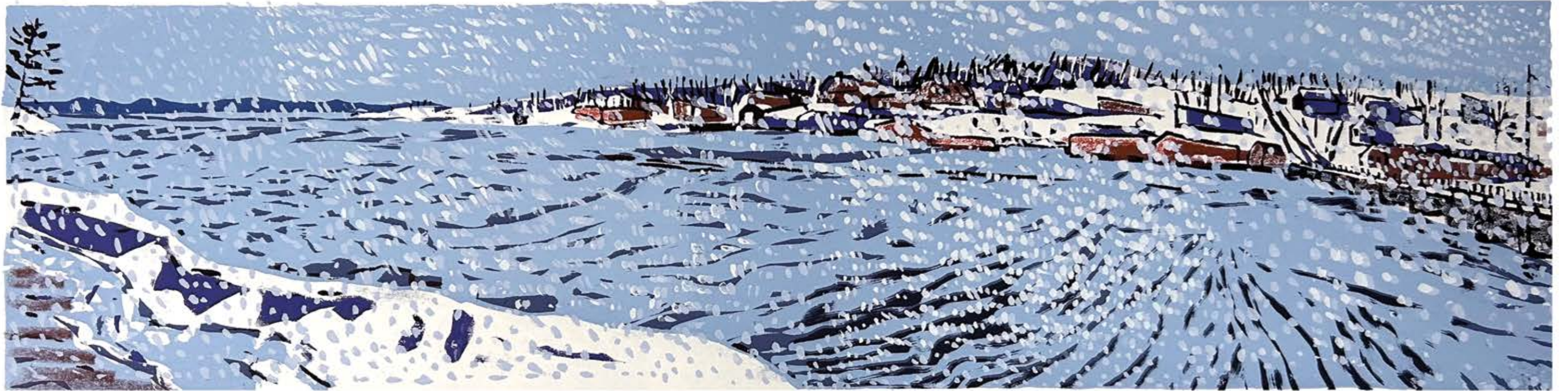
February Moon Rising, 1995, silkscreen, 18 x 23 inches



Chalky Sea, 2023, silkscreen, 4.5 x 6.5 inches



*Spring Rain Over Camden
1994, silkscreen
12 x 9 inches*



Belfast Equinox, 1993, silk screen, 6 x 24 inches



ALISON RECTOR

Alison Rector is a representational painter and silkscreen printmaker, best known for her luminous oil paintings of interiors. Light often falls across objects or filters through windows and doors to create a sense of atmosphere and allure. Rector holds a BA in Art from Brown University. She has been featured in *Art New England*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Maine Home + Design*, and Carl Little's book *More Paintings of Maine*. Her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions, including several biennials at the Center for Maine Contemporary Art, and the 2003 biennial at the Portland Museum of Art. Rector maintains studios in Monroe and Portland, Maine.

BORN 1960 Rochester, New York

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Silkscreen Season on a Maine Farm, Ellsworth, ME 2025

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Island Refuge, Ellsworth, ME 2023

Greenhut Galleries, Studio Daze, Portland, ME 2022

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Hours of the Day, Ellsworth, ME 2020

Greenhut Galleries, Train Journey, Portland, ME 2019

Ogunquit Museum of American Art, The value of Thought, Ogunquit, ME 2017

Greenhut Galleries, Shared Quiet, Portland, ME 2016

Kramer Gallery, In Celebration of Libraries, Belfast Free Library, Belfast, ME 2015

Courthouse Gallery Fine Shared Quiet, Ellsworth, ME 2014

Greenhut Galleries, Remembering Summer Camp, Portland, ME 2010

Greenhut Galleries, Inside Portland, Portland, ME 2007

Ten High Street, Summer Shelter, Camden, ME 2005

Ten High Street, Interiors, Camden, ME 2003

Diane Nelson Fine Art, Introducing Alison Rector, Laguna Beach, CA 2001

GROUP AND TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2011–2025

Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME 2024

Cove Street Arts, Portland, ME 2022, 2023

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

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, How the Light Gets In (Two-Person Exhibition), Ellsworth, ME 2017

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

Creative Arts Workshop, Painting as Presence, New Haven, CT 2008

Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Maine Printmakers, Rockport, ME 2006

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

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Little, Carl. *Silkscreen Season on a Maine Farm* (catalog), Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, 2025

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

Little, Carl, and David Little. "Art of Acadia," Rowman and Littlefield, 2016

Artist's Talk (YouTube), Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME, 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

Maine Arts Commission, "Artist Conversations," *MaineArts Mag*, Summer 2005

HONORS AND AWARDS

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

COLLECTIONS

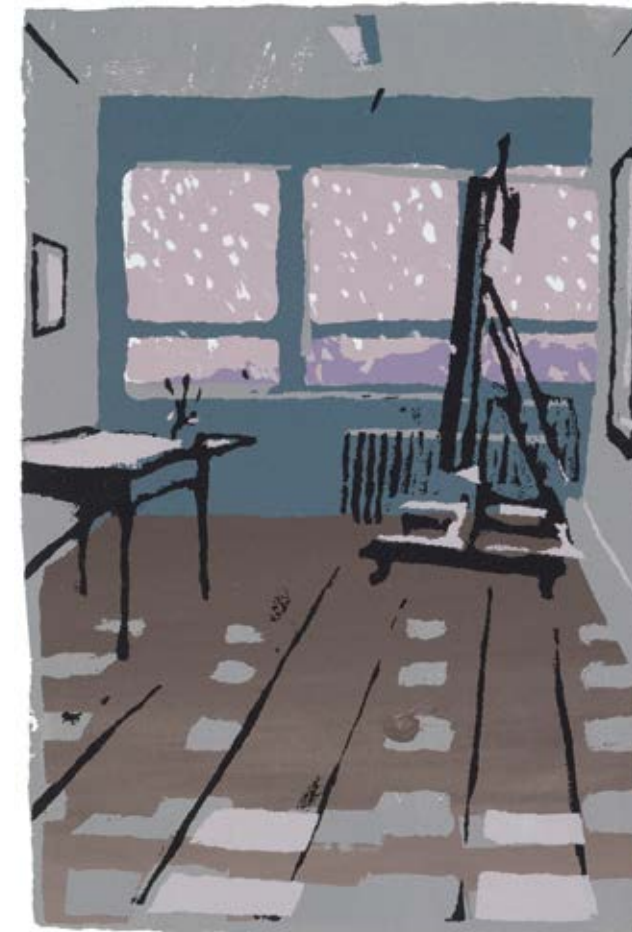
Ogunquit Museum of American Art, Ogunquit, ME 2017

Maine Supreme Court, Judicial Branch, State of Maine, Portland, ME 2017

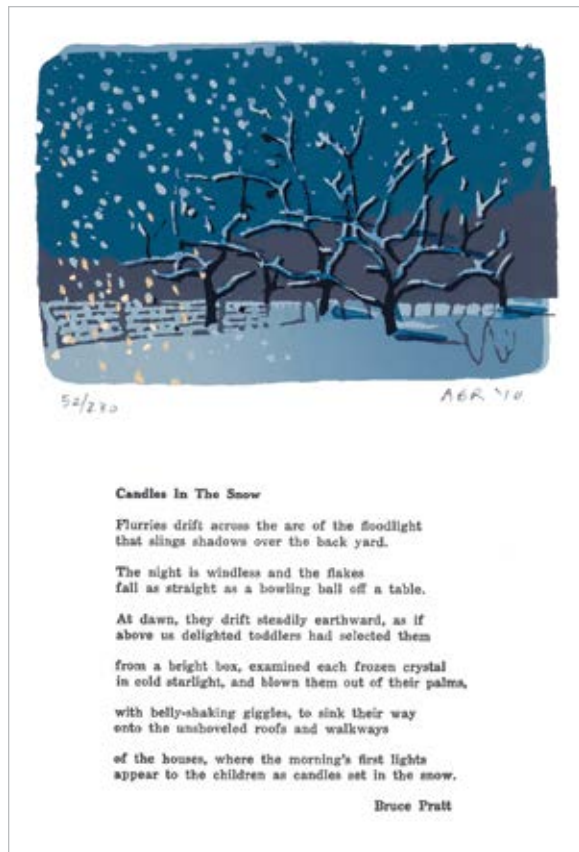
EDUCATION

Brown University, BA in Art, Providence, RI, 1982

Rhode Island School of Design (course work while at Brown University)



Snowy Day In The Studio, 2006, silkscreen, 4.5 x 3 inches



Candles In The Snow

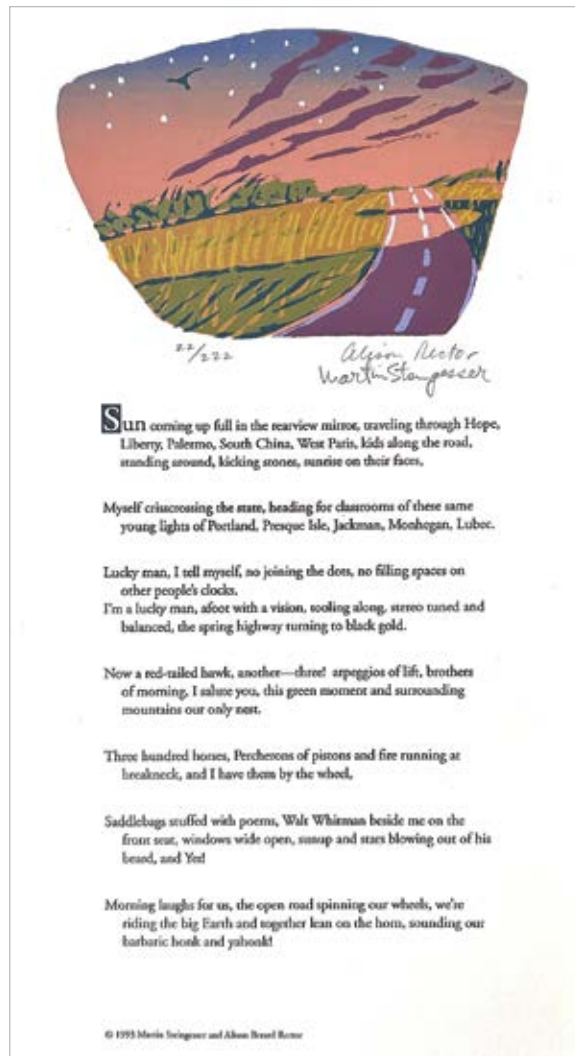
Flurries drift across the arc of the floodlight
that slings shadows over the back yard.
The night is windless and the flakes
fall as straight as a bowling ball off a table.
At dawn, they drift steadily earthward, as if
above us delighted toddlers had selected them
from a bright box, examined each frozen crystal
in cold starlight, and blown them out of their palms,
with belly-shaking giggles, to sink their way
onto the unshoveled roofs and walkways
of the houses, where the morning's first lights
appear to the children as candles set in the snow.

Bruce Pratt

Candles In The Snow, 2010, silkscreen, 10 x 7 inches
with Poem by Bruce Pratt

CATALOG CREDITS

Essay Carl Little
Catalog Design Katherine Wilkes
Silkscreen Photography Ken Woisard and Jay York



SUN coming up full in the rearview mirror, traveling through Hope,
Liberty, Palermo, South China, West Paris, kids along the road,
standing around, kicking stones, sunrise on their faces.

Myself crisscrossing the state, heading for classrooms of these same
young lights of Portland, Presque Isle, Jackman, Mooshegan, Lubec.

Lucky man, I tell myself, no joining the dots, no filling spaces on
other people's clocks.
I'm a lucky man, afoot with a vision, strolling along, stereo tuned and
balanced, the spring highway turning to black gold.

Now a red-tailed hawk, another—three! aspeggios of lift, brothers
of morning, I salute you, this green moment and surrounding
mountains our only nest.

Three hundred horses, Percherons of pinons and fire running at
breakneck, and I have them by the wheel.

Saddlebags stuffed with poems, Walt Whitman beside me on the
front seat, windows wide open, sunup and stars blowing out of his
beard, and Yes!

Morning laughs for us, the open road spinning our wheels, we're
riding the big Earth and together lean on the horn, sounding our
barbaric hooak and yahook!

© 1993 Martin Steingesser and Algon Brent Romer

Sun Coming Up, 1993, silkscreen, 15.5 x 8.5 inches
with Poem by Martin Steingesser



Looking Forward, 2008, silkscreen, 3.5 x 5 inches

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