



Anne Diggory : Live Streaming
September 7 – October 2, 2021

Blue Mountain Gallery
New York City, NY

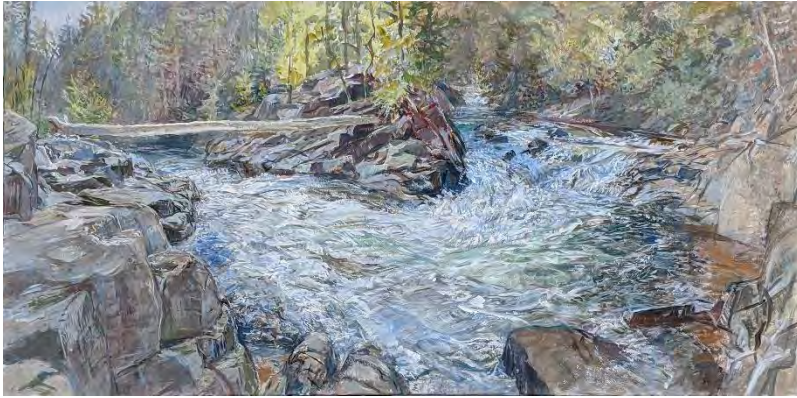
Thoughts and Processes

This booklet includes a selection of the artwork in the exhibition and my thought process and work processes for them. Many of the works were scheduled to be shown in a solo show just as New York shut down for the COVID pandemic in March 2020. Here they are combined with newer works that focus on the suspension of time and a celebration of the moment of painting and seeing. Except for a few pieces, the works are inspired by the Adirondack region of New York State.

I am motivated by my reaction to the dynamic elements of a particular place as well as the colors and shapes of everyday objects as they interact with each other. I then transform the details and relationships to simulate my experience of shifting vision and the nuances of visual truth. That kind of “truth” comes from inventiveness with form and color that is based on close observation but not mimicry. In that search for a two-dimensional expression of the lively, light-filled world, I enjoy playing with varying amounts of detail so that the surface shifts between clarity and mystery. Sometimes I introduce fragments of photography midway in the painting process, have the digital collage printed and then continue painting on the printed surface. The fragments extend the range of approaches to detail and introduce a level of dialogue about frozen moments and the transformation of information.

Anne Diggory

#1 *In Suspension – March to April 2020* 24x48" acrylic on canvas



On March 16th, 2020 I set off for a day of painting in wilderness isolation. I had just made the stressful decision to cancel my upcoming solo show in New York City due to impending closures in response to the COVID-19 crisis. That day I should have been packing paintings for the show, but instead I headed for a waterfall within an easy drive, seeking distraction and solace. I went to a location where I had painted many times before, just north of the Lake George, NY, town of Bolton Landing. Across from the Clay Meadows entrance for the Tongue Mountain trails, there is a sharp turn in Northwest Bay Brook that can be seen after a short scramble through the woods. There are multiple vantage points to set up an easel, although I often find myself in the same location, near stream level, at the dramatic twist in space. There the water churns over boulders and is forced to curve by cliffs whose angles have been gradually softened by the power of the flow. Looking in any direction, I can always find dynamic relationships to portray.

What struck me first that day had little to do with the lively flow. A very long tree trunk bridged the stream at a height that suggested it had been carried there in a flash flood before getting wedged in tightly, perpendicular to the flow. I realized fairly quickly that I would build the composition around that pale linear form. Something about the stranded trunk resonated with my own sense of time suspended by COVID-19. There were reverberations of both sudden catastrophe and the regular flow of natural forces. If the water were to suddenly return to the tree's level, I would have been under water.



The process of finishing the large painting followed a fairly common pattern over the next six weeks -- intense work alternating with days of only making a few slight changes. I started with several days of painting at the site on sunny days and then worked long days in the studio for the next week or so before taking a break while I figured out how to finish it. Eventually I was not able to return to the stream while non-essential travel was curtailed. I worked from memory, photographs, a knowledge of what natural forms look like, and ideas about what makes a compelling image.

March 16 First Step – an exploratory sketch 12x18"



On the first day I painted in monochrome, trying to understand and paint the relationships between the rocks, swirls and log. I experimented with videotaping myself while I worked because I wanted to try sharing what I do on the internet --- as a way of replacing cancelled gallery shows and art talks.



March 21

When the sun came out the next week I returned to start the canvas, concentrating on the far shore and finding angles and shapes that would create the space



March 22, Second day on canvas. Filling out the space. I used lines of ripples to lead both down and across the surface and created curves that would sit on the surface and generate energy.

Then I worked two weeks on and off in the studio. Whole areas were repainted several times without completely eliminating the energy of the underpainting. I wanted the smaller sections to each have relationships



and descriptions that would make the eye linger yet still be part of the whole.

March 27



April 4

April 21-22 A few weeks later I tackled it again. In two days of work I was able to make some important



adjustments to bring emphasis back to the suspended log and the spinning of the whole space, not just the water. I kept adjusting the peripheral elements that had been bothering me, that didn't contribute to the whole painting. The play between clarity and ambiguity has always interested me and as I worked, I kept in mind my desire to express the delicate balance between chaos and order and my increasing interest in reflecting a de-stabilized world. One of the

changes was to reduce the heaviness of the recently darkened cliffs on the left with adjusted angles and lightened tones to merge with the water while leading the eye downstream. As an experiment, on the right I added shapes of light branches a bit closer to the cliffs to make a visual bridge. Suddenly there was a visual spinning in the air above the water. I hadn't known that was what was needed. Some slight changes were made over the ensuing months.

Several video segments about the process can be seen on Vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/user109783554>

Or directly Stages of the painting <https://vimeo.com/413265240>

Painting the water <https://vimeo.com/413250018>

Three works in the exhibition are based on Roaring Brook Falls, near Keene Valley NY. The two smaller ones were painted mainly on site. The large one is a combination of painting and photography. The location has intrigued me over the years because of the drama of the open rock face, spilt by what in summer is a gentle water fall. Top left was painted in 2018 with extremely low water. Bottom left, from the summer of 2019 became the source for the larger work.

20 Afternoon Retreat 20x16" 2018



#3 White Lightning 48x36" mixed media 2019



#12 Fall Lines 14x11" 2019

The full working process for *White Lightning* can be seen on Vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/453495426> , which also has images of other artworks of the location.



White Lightning conveys the energy coming from the intricate relationships within the powerful scene. The outer edges were subdued to keep the focus on the central vertical area as well as to create the sensation that the waterfall was digging into the flat surface of the canvas.

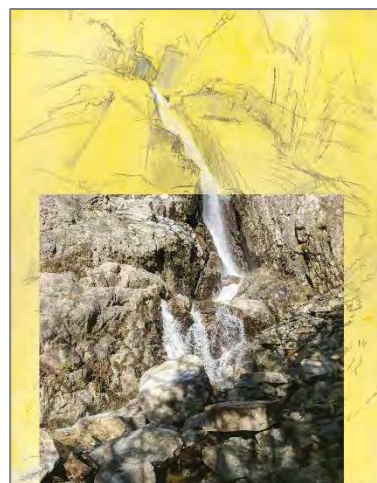


On site I made a small study of the main lines and shapes that establish the structure.

Photographic detail was added in Photoshop by layering a photograph over a photo of the sketch.



Parts of the photographic layer were erased to merge the two kinds of description.



layered



After adding more photographic details, the digital collage was printed on canvas with archival inks:

DIGITAL COLLAGE



I then painted with acrylics to adjust the details, playing with clarity and mystery until I felt the right balance.

Three works are based on Split Rock Falls, south of Elizabethtown.

The two small ones were mainly done on site during the spring of 2019, with the larger one designed and painted in the fall.

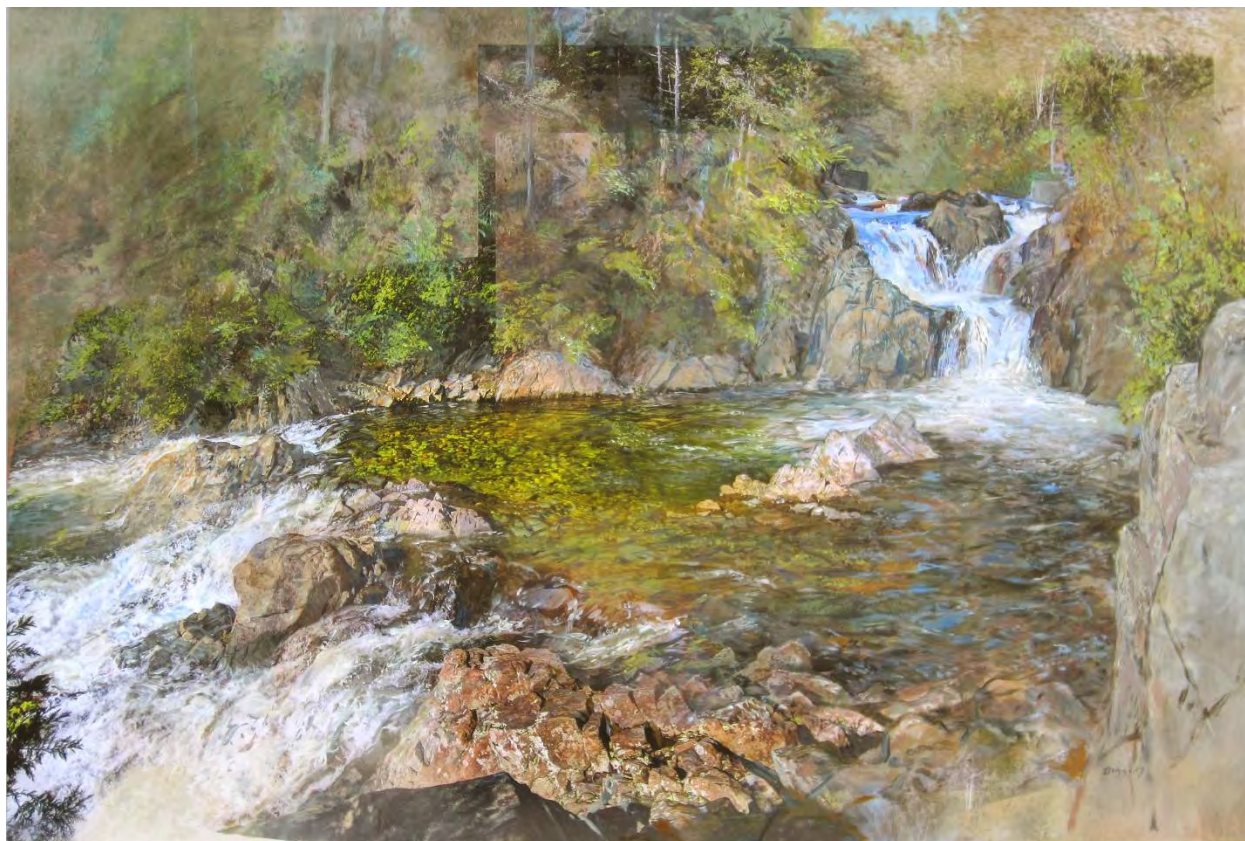
#11 Spring Flow – Spilt Rock Falls 16x20” 2019



#25 Light Falls 11x11.5” 2019



5 Holding Pattern 35x52” mixed media 2019



I had been transfixed by the light coming up the stream and electrifying the pool. The larger version allowed me to focus on the way the pool gathered in all the patterns and colors from around it. I wanted room to play with the multiple framings and the spinning of the space.

In Photoshop I created a large scene with the early, looser version of “Spring Flow” as the first layer (on the upper right at large scale), then photographs layered over that and then the same loose beginnings on top. The print on canvas included a lot of open areas in which to play with textures and forms without losing the sense of the sectioning.

Early version of Spring Flow used
in digital collage



digital collage printed on canvas before more painting.



8-10 Crane Point Series



A series of artworks based on the view from privately-owned Crane Point on Blue Mountain Lake began with three paintings created within 24 hours. In the late afternoon of September 15, 2018, I painted a watercolor of the small island just offshore, beckoning as a visual retreat. I was intrigued by the large boulder perched at a tilt. I chose to sit where the bridge of stepping stones led directly from my perch toward the island. I sketched in the basic shapes, with the island filling the space. The first washes established the cloud pattern and a few defining colors. I simplified some of the

details of the island so that its shape would be clearer – leaving out the fallen tree on the left back side, and leaving out one small tree on the right.

#J *Crane Point 1*, watercolor 7.5x10.5" 2018



I hadn't planned to return to paint at the same spot, but early the next morning the fog beautifully obscured all except the island. I sat further left on the shore so that the reflections were more visible and the stepping stones were off to the side, making the island accessible visually through the water. I painted grey washes over the warm underpainting and then added a few other details.



First stage



I continued to paint the foggy scene after the temporary fog quickly lifted.

Photo by Rebekkah Ziel



#K Crane Point 2, 10x8", acrylic on panel 2018

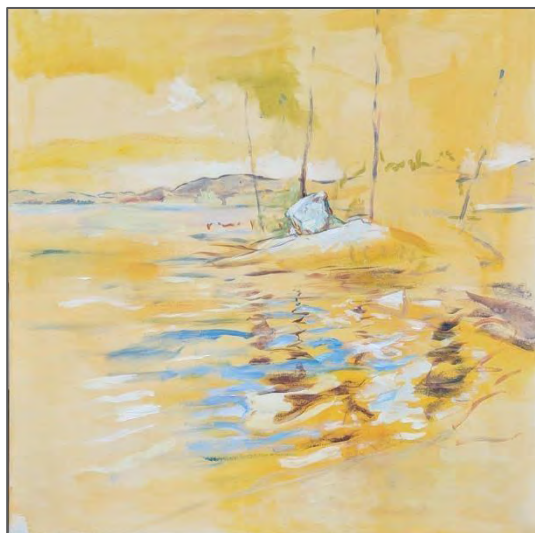
I left for a few hours to take down my nearby exhibition and returned for the mid-day light. I chose to include more of the warmth of the beach at my feet and the beginning of fall colors in the distance. I started on a panel that was tinged with orange.

First brushstrokes.

#L Crane Point 3, 10x10", acrylic on panel, 2018



In December, about three months after my initial three works at Crane Point, I decided to try a larger version (24x24"), with a different approach to the sky and reflections. I had strong memories and photographs of a time when the sky opened up in the middle, changing the whole experience of the space. I started on a warm ground and slowly added detail, being sure to keep many sections barely suggested. With deeper space created I was able to decrease the 2-dimensional height of the mountains and still have them feel "right."



#8 Crane Point 4 24x24"

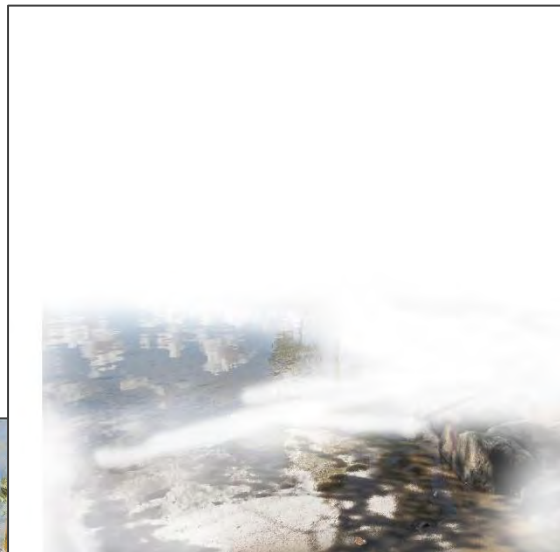
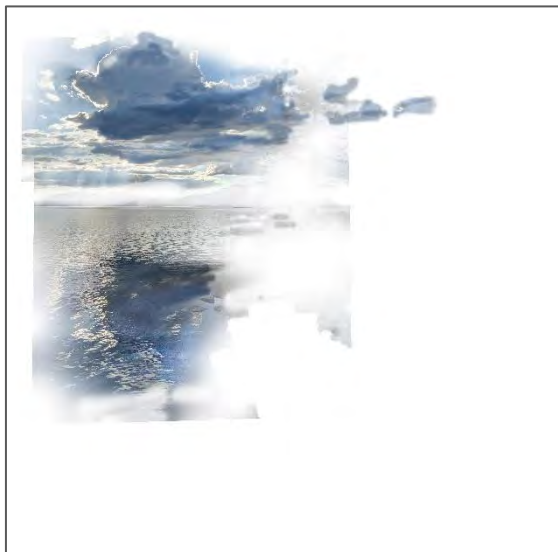
Acrylic/canvas 2019





When I left the site on Crane Point back in September, the sky and water had been darkening and the dramatic light was intriguing. To try that option, in early January 2019 I created two different Photoshop files that combined various painted and photographic versions of the scene. They were printed on canvas so that I could transform them with paint.

For Crane Point 5, in Photoshop I added two sections of photos to a base layer of an early version of Crane Point 4 (the white areas were transparent).





As printed on canvas, before painting



#9 Crane Point 5 24x24" mixed media 2019

For the underlying digital print for **Crane Point 6** (on right), I added a photo of myself and dramatic swirled reflections to a base layer of the file for Crane Point 5.

On left is the printed digital collage, before painting more. The final image (right) has major changes to the water in order to integrate the figure and energize surface. The sky was adjusted as well.

#10 Crane Point 6 24x24" mixed media 2019



Three square paintings were not begun as a series, but are related by my playfulness with a square format that allows for a spinning space, without a real anchor.



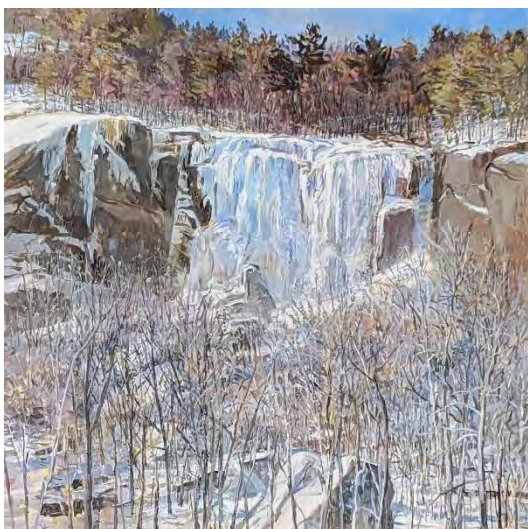
#4 Evening Levitation 24x24" acrylic on canvas 2020

When I was isolated at home at the beginning of the pandemic, I found peace in watching and painting clouds, which seemed to have nothing to do with what was happening on earth. I particularly liked skies that had elements that were in the process of dispersing into the air.



#2 The stone's in the midst of all 24x24" acrylic on canvas 2020

In this image a few rocks are barely anchored in the leftward flow of the stream and the forward flow of the light from the distance. It was inspired by my first trip out with friends after the pandemic began, socially distancing in the woods. The title comes from WB Yeats', *Easter 1916*, which addresses the Irish Easter uprising and the four who died in the event, "troubling the living stream." The title words echo my interest in the fragile stillpoint in the midst of movement.

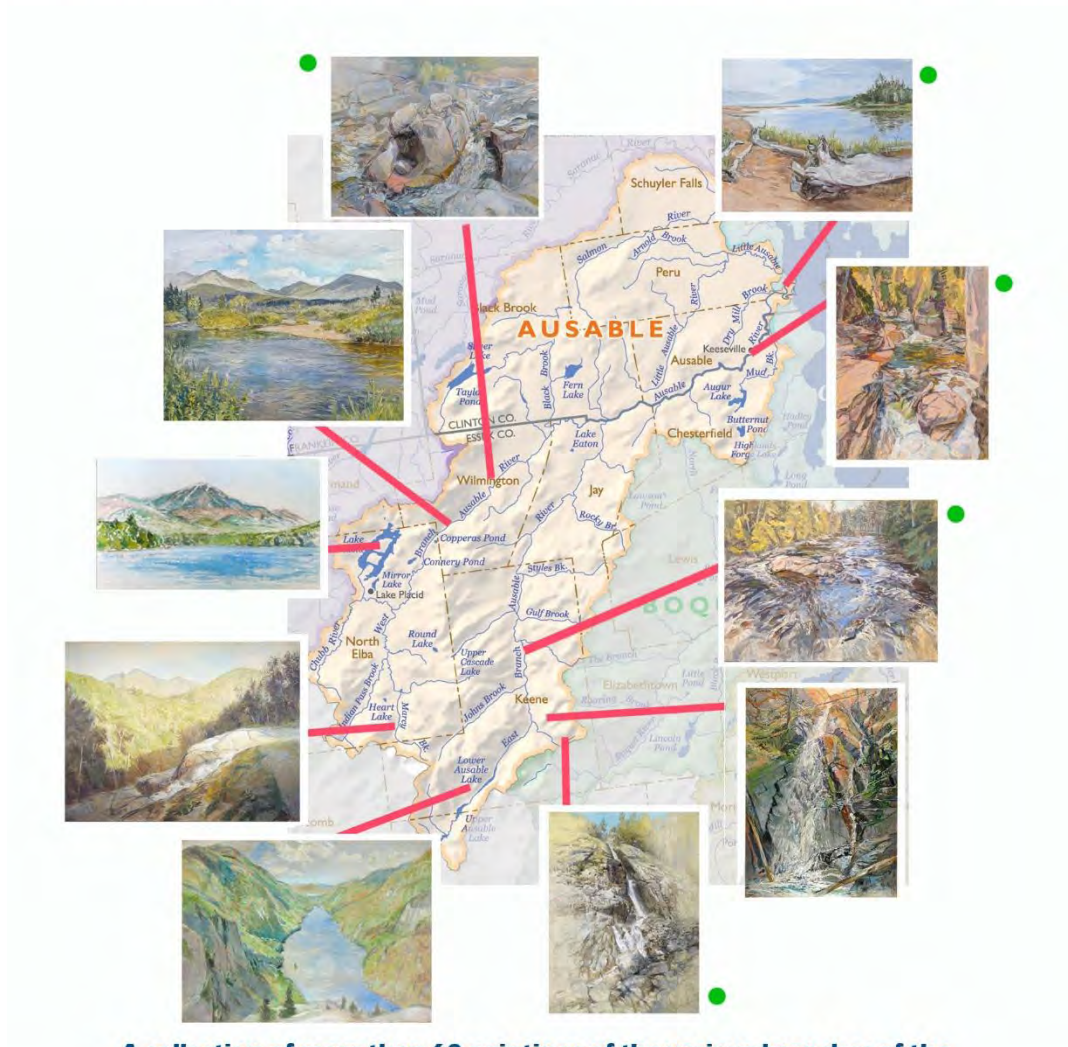


#17 Freeze Frame 24x24" acrylic on canvas 2021

I saw these ice cliffs on Poke-o-Moonshine Mountain while driving north to get my vaccination in Plattsburgh, outside of my usual painting territory. I sketched that afternoon (**#33**) and then returned to paint the earlier light. I liked the contrast of the massive ice and the delicate tracery of tree branches that operated as an intriguing veil.

A large number of the paintings in the show are related to a new project of mine (green dots in this image indicate paintings in the exhibition or the gallery storage).

Follow the Water: Anne Diggory explores the Ausable River Watershed



A collection of more than 60 paintings of the various branches of the watershed - plus new ones to be made.

**See booklets in the gallery for more information about the project
with the Ausable River Association**

online at www.diggory.com/adirondack/Diggory_ausible



The large boulder, river swirls, and shore of the Ausable River at Hulls Falls (near Keene, NY) are the focus of three works in the exhibition and one in gallery storage. The point of view for the paintings is looking upstream from the bridge, focusing on the water making it around the sculptural boulder.



#24 Hulls Falls Diversion 18x24" acrylic/canvas 2020



#23 Resting Place, Hulls Falls 18x24" acrylic/canvas 2021



#34 Streamside 8 3/8 x 10" mixed media 2021

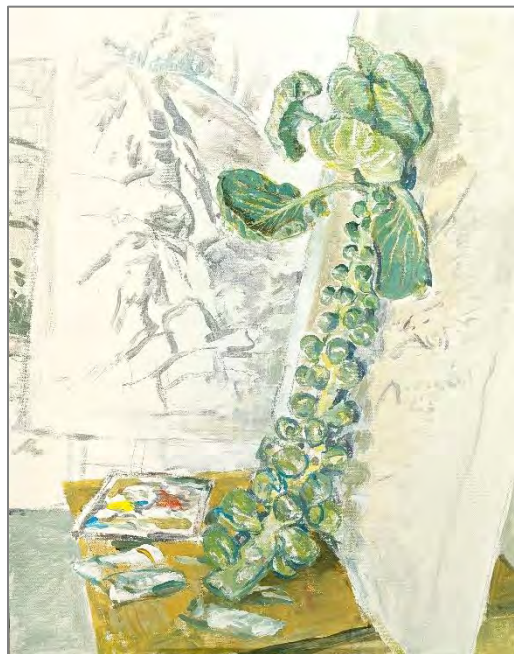


#AA (storage) Stream Lines 6x11" mixed media 2021

The Ausable River watershed is featured also in #3, #7, #12, #17, #20, #22, #24, #26

The two studio still lifes in the exhibition are part of a long running series of paintings of objects in front of my paintings. Appearing in the background of these two there are versions of waterfall paintings that are in the exhibition.

#35 Green Waterfall 20x16" acrylic on canvas



#36 Sport with Amaryllis 20x16" acrylic on canvas

title from John Milton's *Lycidas*



www.diggory.com

www.bluemountaingallery.org