

SOHN FINE ART



Housatonic: A View of the Village

John Clarke

November 25 - April 16

Curated by Cassandra Sohn

Presented by Sohn Fine Art



On view at and in collaboration with
Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center
122 Hourglass Drive, Stowe, VT
sprucepeakarts.org

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JOHN CLARKE BIOGRAPHY

b. 1971, Uxbridge, MA

John Clarke has lived in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts since 2007. He was born in central Massachusetts around a landscape of mills, rivers, trains and bridges. Clarke received his degree in classical music composition from Bates College in Maine.

Clarke's fine art work is created using a range of mediums. Oil paints, pastels and pencil were his main tools for many years. A series of fifteen large pieces were inspired by a neoclassical piece of music called *Alina* by the Estonian composer Arvo Part. The *Alina* series exemplifies his style and use of color, line and shape. In an article in the on-line journal *Rural Intelligene*, Associate Editor Nichole Dupont called him a "multimedia abstract master." Earlier, in 2002, Clarke started scanning pressed flowers through a now-outdated color printer. The results, what he called *Flower, Stain and Fingerprint*, were a novel type of botanical illustration, which cannot be recreated, as newer printers do not produce the same effects. Also, around 2002 Clarke stopped riding freight trains and realized he had not documented the incredible journeys and places he had discovered. So he bought a camera and started exploring railroad tracks and train yards to capture some of those memories. At that time Clarke was interested in sharply focused images, describing his desire for sharpness as wanting to feel the rust in his photos. In 2012, his tripod broke. During an autumn hike Clarke headed out without his tripod and produced images with accidental blur. The trails of light and color appealed to the abstract line painter in him and changed the way he thought about photography. The experience established a new course for him as a visual artist. A year later, Clarke discovered the iPhone and has become an accomplished iPhone photographer.

Clarke continues to push the camera to its limits, translating photographic images into other mediums. Painting with light, his works are often mistakenly viewed as pastel or charcoal drawings. Long exposures and gestural movements blur the distinction between art forms. There is often a tension in his work between what is revealed and what is obscured. This has been with him since the beginning when he started painting and is revisited in alternative ways again and again. He is driven to create images that are purely personal, diffusing and abstracting the world around him in the hopes that they will spark an unknown journey into aesthetic, emotional and spiritual territories. He calls it "looking through the curtain." The creation of an image holds the excitement of unlimited potential.

Hanging one visual language on the balance of another, Clarke's latest work combines mediums, using photographic prints or post-written stories as backdrops for emotional layers of line, color and symbol with acrylic, pastel, pencil and gesso to create one-of-a-kind pieces. Clarke's most recent body of work, "Drawing on Memory" is a tactile and visual exploration of past written stories of jumping freight trains throughout the northeast.

Often described as a "renaissance man" Clarke was front man and a primary songwriter for the band Bell Engine. He also has a solo album, *All Beneath Our Train*. An avid writer, he has written more than 60 short stories about his years jumping freight trains and more recently, after the birth of his son and daughter, writes poems for children. Clarke's work has been shown at The Berkshire Museum, The Katonah Museum of Art, Geoff Young Gallery, Art on Main at Barnbrook, Joyce Goldstein Gallery, Isha Nelson Gallery, Deb Koffman's Little Gallery and Sohn Fine Art Gallery, where he is currently represented. Clarke has been featured in the April 2011, August 2016 and September 2019 issues of *The Artful Mind Magazine* and the 2018 Autumn issue of *ArtAscent Magazine* (silver medal honor).

RECENT EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 The Art of the Hills, Narrative, Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, MA
On the Surface, Attleboro Arts Museum, Attleboro, MA
Neoteric Abstract, Llmner Gallery, Hudson, NY
Dreamscapes and Visions, PhotoPlace Gallery, Middlebury, VT
Moments of Focus, Alfa Art Gallery, New Brunswick, NJ
Interiors, Cape Cod Museum of Art, Dennis, MA
- 2019 Summer Residency Exhibition, Red Lion Inn, Stockbridge, MA
Juried Exhibition, Becket Arts Center, Becket, MA
Beneath the Surface, 6 Bridges Gallery, Maynard, MA
Drawing on Memory, Stockbridge Station Gallery, Stockbridge, MA
BerkshireNow, Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, MA
- 2018 Lyrical, Sohn Fine Art, Lenox, MA
Surfaces, LoosenArt Gallery, Rome, Italy

ARTIST STATEMENT FOR "HOUSATONIC" EXHIBITION

I looked out the third floor window at 133 Front Street, Housatonic, MA, for the first time the day Liz and I saw the apartment in early fall of 2013. Immediately I knew that, if offered the place, I had to live here. Something in the view of the village from that window hit me hard. Like remembering a vivid but forgotten dream image. It was the archetype of the small mill village that has enticed and attracted me my whole life. I shot ten pictures right there, before we'd even moved in. They would be the first of literally thousands I would take from that spot over the next ten months. I became obsessed.

November browns and reds gave way to browns and whites and finally to the many whites of winter. Fog sat over the river in the early mornings. Snow fell. Spring and green returned. Clouds came and went and new clouds came. Thunderstorms washed the town clean. The train rolled through, oblivious to the weather or the time of day.

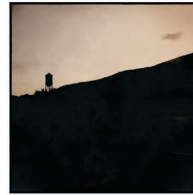
And for ten months, every day I was home, I checked the window, often many times a day, worried I might miss a subtle variation I hadn't yet seen. The series did not start out as a series. I just didn't want to miss anything. The mills, the tracks, the bridge, the river and the tower were the anchors, the constants that the whole scene hung on. But the light, the time of day, the weather and the season added the daily dose of unknown magic that made the view endlessly intriguing.



2-13-14
6" x 6" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 2/12
Framed 13" x 13": \$600



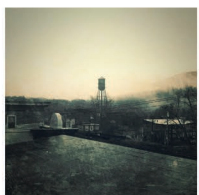
8-15-14
6" x 6" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 1/12
Framed 13" x 13": \$600



8-7-14
6" x 6" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 2/12
Framed 13" x 13": \$600



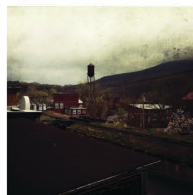
6-27-14
6" x 6" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 2/12
Framed 13" x 13": \$600



11-5-13
6" x 6" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 1/12
Framed 13" x 13": \$600



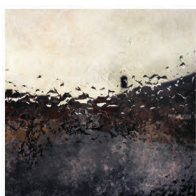
12-10-13
6" x 6" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 1/12
Framed 13" x 13": \$600



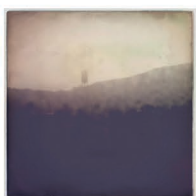
5-10-14
6" x 6" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 2/12
Framed 13" x 13": \$600



3-2-14
6" x 6" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 2/12:
Framed 13" x 13": \$600



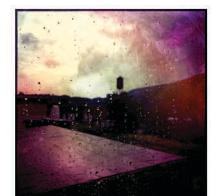
3-31-14
18" x 18" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 1/6
Framed 26" x 26": \$1,500



8-8-14
18" x 18" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 1/6
Framed 26" x 26": \$1,500



5-14-14
18" x 18" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 1/6
Framed 26" x 26": \$1,500



7-4-14
18" x 18" Archival Pigment Print
Edition 1/6
Framed 26" x 26": \$1,500



ABOUT SOHN FINE ART

Sohn Fine Art was founded in 2011, by photographer Cassandra Sohn. The Gallery specializes in contemporary photography and unconventional mediums and is dedicated to the development, promotion and exhibition of innovative contemporary artworks by international and local artists. It is the company's mission to promote broader understanding of, and community engagement with photographic mediums through exhibitions, lectures and workshops. Sohn Fine Art's Master Artist Series Program hosts world class photographers in the Berkshires annually. The goal of this program is to offer unique experiences with artists in the top of their fields to patrons and collectors of photography, as well as professional and aspiring photographers and artists.

In addition to the Gallery, Sohn Fine Art specializes in producing creative projects. Visit Sohn Fine Art for your fine art printing and framing needs. Sohn Fine Art offers custom, one-on-one service with attention to detail, using only archival materials. Utilizing pigmented inks and the highest resolution and widest gamut printer available, Sohn Fine Art produces stunning works of color and B&W exhibition quality pigment prints (also known as giclee prints) on a wide range of archival fine art and photographic papers including watercolor, canvas, glossy, matte, pearl, luster, rags, silver rags, large variety of fabrics, reusable adhesive vinyls, and transparencies. Sohn Fine Art showcases innovative and contemporary framing designs as well as traditional framing. Framing options are available from affordable to high end in a variety of materials that fit your style and budget at any size.

