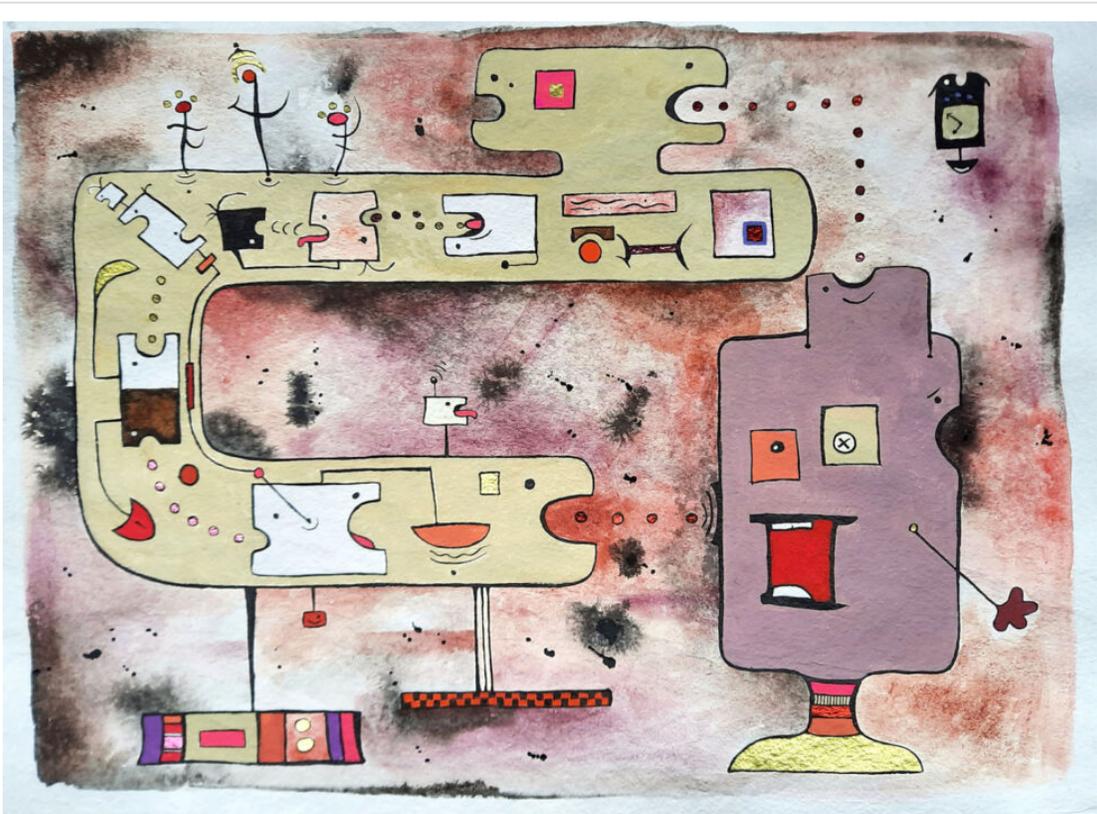


Members' Showcase: Anita Loomis, Marcie Bronstein, Eric Taubert

Spring 2021, UMVA Members Showcase | 0 comments



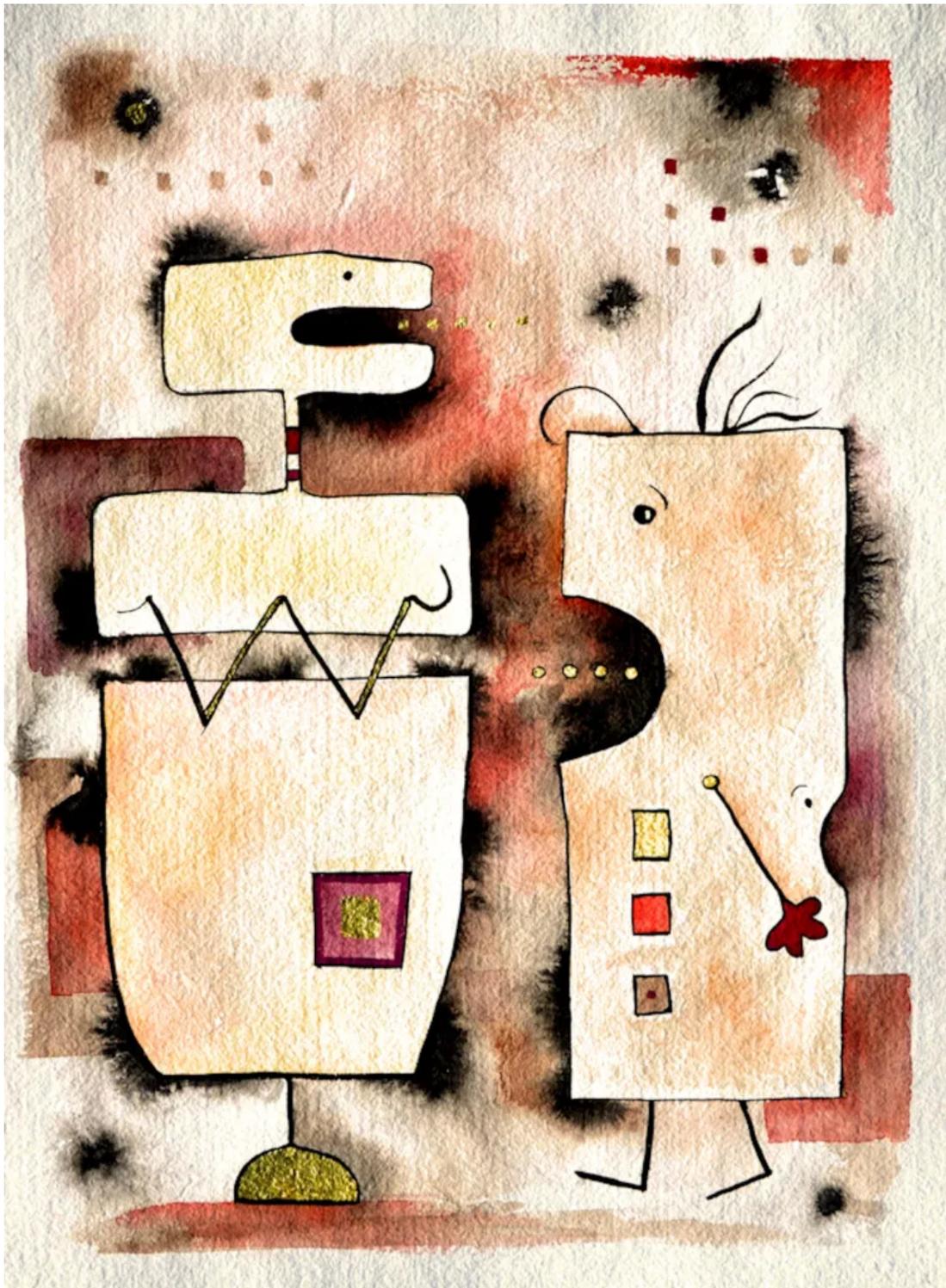
Anita Loomis



Anita Loomis, *An Oral History*, watercolor, ink, gouache, and gilding on paper, 30 x 22 in., 2021.

COVID was my excuse to become the artist and gallerist I always thought I should be. Considering my own mortality last May, I asked myself, "What do I feel the need to accomplish before I die?" I sold my home in Massachusetts, moved closer to my daughter, bought a new home in Kittery, opened a small art gallery, and left a middle-school art teaching position that I had briefly held. I was a career changer who, at age 55, earned an art teacher certification. The teaching experience was wonderful and valuable, but when COVID hit after four months on the job, I knew that more seasoned art teachers were needed to serve students. This was my time to invest in my art passions full-time.





Anita Loomis, *A Meeting of Minds*, watercolor, ink, gouache, and gilding on paper, 22 x 30 in., 2020.

Being able to work uninterrupted has been one of the few positive aspects of the pandemic. Opening the gallery, I have also



been able to meet artists and make new friends. Having more time to write and call has been a luxury, affording me the time to build relationships and have heartfelt conversations with other artists I might not otherwise have the opportunity to get to know in a meaningful way. My painting practice reflects a renewed focus on communication. Pre-COVID, I worked primarily in oils but have migrated back to watercolor to build on my chatter-box series. These paintings explore the nuances of our connections through speech in a light-hearted and expressive way. I have an evolving visual vocabulary of symbols that is expanded in my new work. *An Oral History* is a work that shows the transition of a story over time through a series of “tellers” that are shaped and changed. Issues of political influence also crept into recent work.

I imagine what is going on in the lives of people behind their end of the box. In *Totem 1*, I am working out the different expressions and emotions we observe and express ourselves while talking with others.

I can see the light at the end of the COVID tunnel. I will try to look back on it in a way that builds my character and informs my



Anita Loomis, *Totem 1* (*Queen of Talk*), watercolor, ink, gouache and gilding on paper, 12 x 56 in., 2021

life, rather than an endurance test to be forgotten.

I found Zoom to be both a blessing and a curse, a new fixture of daily life as I struggled with teaching middle-school art to students. Now, I tend to avoid the meetings as the boxes flatten and dull my enjoyment of interacting with others; the novelty has passed, and I yearn for the real thing again. In *So Sophisticated*, I present my own hand as that of a gorilla—so frustrated with my cell phone that I upset my tea and swipe it on the floor. In the painting, I'm poking fun at the fact that technology evolves faster than we do, and we are not always graceful about dealing with challenges.

Image at top: Anita Loomis, *So Sophisticated*, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 in., 2018.

Marcie Bronstein





Marcie Jan Bronstein, *Still Point*, watercolor and salt on paper, 12 x 16 in., 2021.

These paintings are part of a new series entitled *Still Point*. The title is a reference to a line in T.S. Eliot's poem "Burnt Norton," in which he wrote about the "still point in a turning world." In the wake of the past year's events, this was a powerful image to me, most especially after the Capitol riot.



Marcie Jan Bronstein, *Mindful*, watercolor and salt on paper, 12 x 16 in., 2021

Who among us is not



Marcie Jan Bronstein, *Still Life*, watercolor, graphite, and salt on paper, 16 x 24 in., 2021

searching for a Still Point, a place of peace, harmony, and clarity about the trajectory of our days and futures?

I've spent most of the past eleven months in isolation with my husband and our cat, Bacio. It's not possible to overestimate the

importance of Bacio's presence during this time. He has been an anchor, a beacon of calm, and a master of mindfulness. I've spent more time than usual watching him, so it's no surprise that he entered my paintings.

The muse now immortalized in watercolor, composed, balancing cairns, raising a tattered curtain after the storm.



Marcie Jan Bronstein, *After The Storm*, watercolor and salt on paper, 20 x 16 in., 2021

Eric Taubert

“I know of a cure for everything: Saltwater. In one way or the other.
Sweat, or tears, or the salt sea.” —Isak Dinesen



Eric Taubert, *A Maria*, aluminum archival dye sublimation (matte) print, 24 x 16 in.

As the pandemic began to surge in early 2020, the essential landscapes of the Ogunquit Art Colony called out one morning, as they are wont to do. As always, I answered.

Camera in hand, I left my home on the Shore Road in Ogunquit and walked, following the scent of salt spray and lobster bait towards Perkins Cove.

Ogunquit was unseasonably quiet on this particular mid-May day. Beyond that, it felt different. It looked different.





Eric Taubert, *how is it, in this crowded world, we can still sometimes find ourselves completely alone, even where it's beautiful* | Main Beach, Ogunquit, Maine, aluminum archival dye sublimation (matte)

print, 24 x 16 in.

In his *Painting and the Personal Equation*, Charles H. Woodbury (founder of the Ogunquit Art Association) advises, “Select something that is capable of interesting variations, and go to it at different times on different days.”

Well, times don't get any more different than the ones we're living in. These are the quarantine days none of us saw coming.

Here were brilliant, blinding shafts of authentic Maine peeking through the disorienting fog of COVID-19 during the social distancing days, with no absolutely one else around to witness them.

This rare, transcendental solitude turns Perkins Cove into my personal playground.





Eric Taubert, *knotted wrack* | Perkins Cove, Ogunquit, Maine, aluminum archival dye sublimation

(matte) print, 24 x 16 in.

“Artists today think of everything they do as a work of art,” states Andrew Wyeth. “It is important to forget about what you are doing—then a work of art may happen.”

Microscopic particles of sulfur, brine, decay, and organic matter swirl through the salt mist air. I breathe it in and feel tendrils of these elements twisting deeper into my lungs, entering my bloodstream, reaching the most primal parts of my brain. The place where life happens. Where memories are made.

For the first time in weeks, my thoughts are no longer dominated by concerns of disease transmission, economic stability, and survival. I’m completely alone on a vast and craggy seacoast, knees and elbows on wet pebbles, peering through a camera’s viewfinder, completely mesmerized by the patterns in a mussed tangle of seaweed. Therapeutic. Restorative. A curative vaccine against negative ruminations. Losing myself in the moment flattens the curve of my anxiety.





Eric Taubert, *when the ocean recedes and the bladderwrack goes limp* | Ogunquit, Maine, aluminum archival dye sublimation (matte) print, 24 x 16 in.

I take a deep breath and hold it to steady my body. The simple sensations of color, form, and light pass through the filters of my thoughts, experiences, and memories until some ineffable truth is discerned, and I shiver with the aesthetic chills of frisson.

I release the shutter, capture the shot, and exhale. Then I look out at the horizon, where the sky meets the sea, across the infinite expanse of undulating, luminous swells.

Good old Gulf of Maine saltwater. It's the cure for everything.

Eric J. Taubert is a contemporary fine art photographer and writer from Ogunquit, Maine. Learn more at taubertgallery.com.



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