

Frances B. Ashforth  
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Artist Statement

Raised in an extended family of artists, I have always been surrounded by the nuances of line, color and observation. Time spent at my grandparents' working farm along the Connecticut River in New Hampshire, cultivated my need to study the horizon line. The 'long view' of the river valley was my early geographic center. My work honors my family legacy of both land stewardship and art. Our world moves at an extreme pace and my study of land, water and sky, both vast and detailed, helps me to find balance amidst the hectic pace. Sense of place and personal memory define our individual points of view. 'Apparent horizon' is the range of knowledge that defines each individual through personal experience and acute observation.

I divide my studio time between drawing, printmaking & painting. Having lived in the Pacific Northwest for 8 years, my work is still very influenced by the weather and open vistas of that region as well as of the arid American west. An avid fly fisherman, my work is also significantly influenced by the time I spend in both fresh and saltwater environments. Water is our most precious resource and my recent work addresses the study of both arid, wetland and drought-ridden habitats. The inherent stark beauty of these habitats often tricks us into forgetting about the history of land use over the years. I am acutely aware of our ever-growing need for natural resource use, whether it's fresh clean water, mining and extraction, or over grazing and non-sustainable farming practices. Ancient geologic events have created our familiar geographies, landforms that offer beautiful vistas, often taken for granted each day have become rapidly more accessible to resource exploration. Perhaps I am simply committing views to paper in hopes that we will remember to be good stewards of the land. Our landscape defines us, we know the outline of a particular hill or mountain, we know the shape of the edge of the lake we swim in or walk along and we know the feel of a familiar stonewall. Simply put, we are all part of the landscape. We enjoy it and take from it, we scar it, then try and fix it. My hope is that my work, my simple memories on paper, will help instill the desire to respect and remember what the land continues to give us in all its variety, grit and beauty.

My studio practice is as sustainable as possible. I use water base inks, which require no use of solvents and I repurpose paper frequently. Natural resources are essential to us all, I am an ongoing observer and do my best to research where my materials, such as ink and paper, are sourced from.

Much of my practice is focused on giving back. I pay it forward when possible by donating a portion of my artwork sales as well as a few prints each year to chosen non-profits that benefit both socially and environmentally responsible causes. I also enjoy sponsoring a few artists each year from the NYC area, who don't have access to printmaking facilities, to come join me for a session in the studio at The Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Norwalk, Connecticut.