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Portrait of the Artist

She gives new life to our natural treasures



COURTESY PHOTO

Amy Talluto

By Barbara Gallo Farrell
Poughkeepsie Journal

Editor's note: Portrait of the Artist is a regular feature in Enjoy! that spotlights artists with exhibits in the Hudson Valley. If you are an artist in a current or upcoming exhibit and would like to be included in this feature, email bfarrell@poughkeepsiejournal.com. This week's Portrait of the Artist features Amy Talluto, whose work is on display at Roos Arts in Rosendale through Nov. 8.

Tell us about your artwork at Roos Arts and what inspired you to select it for the show.

The paintings and drawings selected for the show emerged from moments I have discovered in the landscape of upstate New York. In choosing pieces for the show, Heige Kim (gallery owner) and I wanted to pick works that I had made since moving upstate in 2010, specifically works that showed local spaces. A work might show a face in a roadside hill sagging down from its wall of stone in Kingston, or apple trees in an overgrown New Paltz orchard entwining around each other like octopi. In my landscapes, these and other natural forms become highly personified and alive.

How is it that you see landscapes so differently from most people?

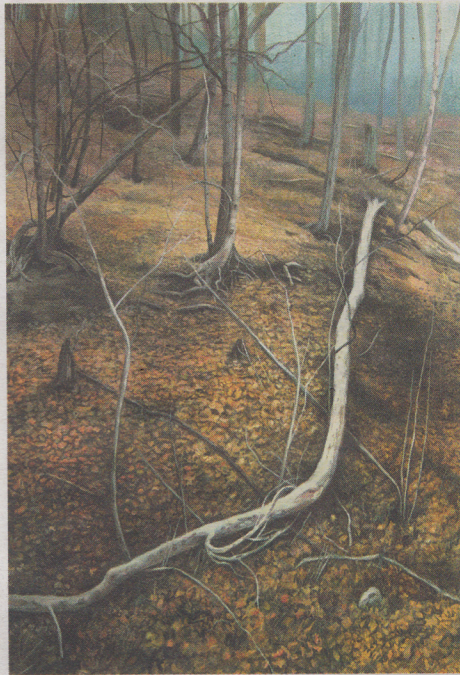
Perhaps I do see landscapes differently and hope to show that vision in my work, but I also believe that everyone notices things in their own unique way. The main difference is that an artist has the ability to give her vision tangible form. I remember a great quote about this in the book "Art & Fear," which advises artists to "notice the objects you notice" and I think that that is really the key: Notice what you notice. I notice landscape.

Describe the process that goes into crafting one of your landscapes.

As I'm driving, sometimes a scene or moment will just reach out and grab me, and I won't be able to forget it. Later I'll return to take a photograph and then try to recreate my memory of that first "jolt" back in the studio. My process of painting is to build up layers and layers that are applied over the course of months. Like a "palimpsest" (a kind of document that is repeatedly erased, rubbed smooth and written upon over and over again), this process can sometimes result in many versions lying hidden under the final layer.

What is your artistic medium of choice? Why that medium?

Oil, gouache, pen and ink, and graphite. All the mediums are appropriate in different ways for different ideas. I might say oil is my favorite because it



COURTESY PHOTO

"Fallen Tree, Route 28, Kingston," by Amy Talluto.

really allows you to build a rich space over time and to change your mind a lot.

Do you see yourself in your artwork? How?

I'm not sure if I see myself specifically in my work ... at least not consciously. But I do see my way of seeing in my artwork. I see something astonishing and strange, and alien.

How have you handled the business side of being an artist?

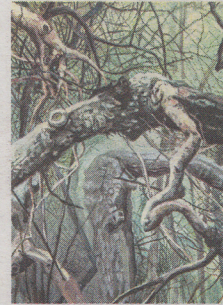
I try to live by these rules: 1) Say "Yes." 2) Be ready 3) Reply promptly and be professional. 4) Focus on things you can control: spend time making your work as good as possible, work regularly and commit to time in the studio. 5) Stay in touch and follow up. 6) Remember that things don't happen overnight. There's no quick fix. 7) Everything comes down to micro-steps.

What is your personal definition of art?

Art is a slippery wriggly eel, and as such very hard to pin down. But if I had to define it, I would say that art is the visual record of a courageous personal vision and voice. And also that art is hard.

If we were to get a peek inside your journal or sketchbook, what would we see?

Little drawings, including a dead moth, a Tasmanian



COURTESY PHOTO

"Apple Orchard, Putt Corners Road, New Paltz," by Amy Talluto.



COURTESY PHOTO

"Slack-branched Tree, Route 209, Kingston," by Amy Talluto.

nian tiger with a gigantically wide-open mouth, a self-portrait, a Rhode Island rip current, my mother at age 5, my 4-year-old son asleep, the green eyes of a friend whose orange flecks seem to jump their bounds and bleed out to the white edge, a short poem or two (that I would never show anyone), and many, many quotes by artists that inspire me.

What type of art decorates your home?

I have a small collection of works that I've traded for over the years or that I've purchased by fellow local upstate artists, including paintings, prints, cut-paper works and ceramics. Many of the works I've bought at Roos Arts in fact! Some of my favorites are by Meghan Petras, Danielle Pagani, Jenny Lee Fowler, Elaine Chow, Chris Kannen, John Mathias, Si-yeon Kim, Johanna Byström Sims, Rita MacDonald, and Amy Finkbeiner.

How does your background contribute to your process as an artist?

I've, of course, studied art for many years and learned from many wonderful teachers, but my interest in landscape began specifically when I was a teenager in New Orleans and my mother moved across the street from this abandoned lot. The area had been allowed to grow wild with thistles and waist-high grass and had essentially become a meadow. It was this surprising pocket of wildness in the city that first got me excited about working with nature.

What excites you about art?

The most addictive thing about being an artist is experiencing that rare transcendent moment where the thing you have been working on changes ... to something alive and apart from you. It becomes ready to be shared. This doesn't happen every time, but the hope that it might keeps you coming back for more.

Amy Talluto earned her bachelor of fine arts from Washington University in St. Louis in 1995 and earned her master's of fine arts from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 2001. She has shown her paintings across the country. She lives and works in Hurley. Visit www.amytalluto.com