



FRANCES ASHFORTH

Frances Ashforth's spare paintings, drawings and waterbase monotypes reflect the geography and geology of intersecting habitats that she has visited and studied. Land, water, mountains and deserts are what inspire Frances. Her passion for fly-fishing and time spent in remote places has allowed her to experience sparsely populated and wild lands across the United States.

Ashforth has exhibited internationally, in the UK, Ireland, Denmark & Canada, at venues including McMaster Museum of Art, Ontario, galleries in Vancouver, BC, Pendle Print Biennial, Lancashire, UK. Cork Printmakers, Cork, Ireland and Fyns Grafiske Vaerksted in Odense, Denmark. Her monotypes have been included in US print biennials in Boston, Atlanta, Wisconsin and Minneapolis as well as The Print Center of Philadelphia. Other small museums have shown her work, The Katonah Museum, Katonah, NY, Bradbury Art Museum, Jonesboro, Arkansas, Sun Valley Museum of Art in Ketchum, Idaho and in August of 2020, at the Boise Art Museum, Boise, Idaho. Her prints have also been shown in NYC at EFA Blackburn 20/20, IPCNY, IFPDA/Printfair, Art on Paper Fair, The Painting Center, Site:Brooklyn, and galleries across New England. Ashforth received a BS in Fine Art from Skidmore College in Printmaking & Drawing and a minor in Art & Architectural History. She also studied Printmaking at the Sir John Cass School of Art in London. Ashforth has been invited to residencies at The Ucross Foundation, Ucross, WY, Playa at Summer Lake, OR, and Apeiron Expeditions Canoe Residency in Northern Maine.

Ashforth - an avid reader and subtle conservationist - honors author Barry Lopez and his belief that... "to really come to an understanding of a specific American geography, requires not only time but a kind of local expertise, an intimacy with place few of us ever develop...If you want to know you must take the time." She studies the environment and its unique relationships between natural elements, whether hiking, observing wild rivers, local streams or rock formations, she focuses on the details and edges that border these habitats. Austin Thomas, artist and curator, recently wrote, "where some artists don't look beyond their studio practices or drawing tables, and where others look to the world for attention, Frances looks with intention at the land. She is a conservationist of her own making. Her art is her voice and one that inspires those to think about the bigger picture. Her images are deep and poetically beautiful like a Jonathan McPhee essay that propels one to act or think differently about the earth and our movements on it. Her work is a true balance of both clarity and time." (NYC, 2017)

Ashforth is precise in how she studies her subject, researching color and consistency of ink, paint or drawing medium. Her approach is summed up by Christopher Shore, Master Printer at the Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Norwalk, CT with whom Ashforth has had a collaborative studio relationship since 2008. Shore states, "Ashforth utilizes the essential emptiness and whiteness of the paper. She simplifies color, allowing for deeper discovery of place and time solely within the tones and values of one particular ink."

She often orients her compositions along a strong horizon line, exploring its relationships within land, water and sky. Ashforth states, "I am acutely aware of the tension and balance within that line. Weather patterns and time of day temper this balance and translate to composition." She manipulates light, perspective and contrasts within the elements of the studied habitats. Her work can appear deceptively simple and spare, yet by focusing on the details and editing the composition, Ashforth's work evokes memory and knowledge that can only evolve from the focused study of a particular landscape.