

ANNE DIGGORY

FOLLOW THE WATER



Painting the Ausable River Watershed

This catalog accompanies the exhibit

Anne Diggory : Follow the Water
The Art and Science of the Ausable River Watershed

July 3 - 27, 2025

With perspectives of place by
Rachel Finn, Tim Fortune, Joy Muller-McCoola, James Prosek,
Kevin Raines and Ausable Freshwater Center staff

Presented by
Keene Arts and Ausable Freshwater Center



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FOLLOW THE WATER

ARTISTIC ADVENTURES IN THE AUSABLE RIVER WATERSHED

BY

ANNE DIGGORY



The July 2025 exhibition “Follow the Water: The Art and Science of the Ausable River Watershed” features seventy artworks of mine inspired by the broad region. The exhibit, presented by Keene Arts and Ausable Freshwater Center (AFC), also includes a section of intense focus on one location, Quarry Pool, with perspectives of place by staff of AFC and the invited artists: Tim Fortune, Rachel Finn, Joyce Muller-McCoola, James Prosek and Kevin Raines.

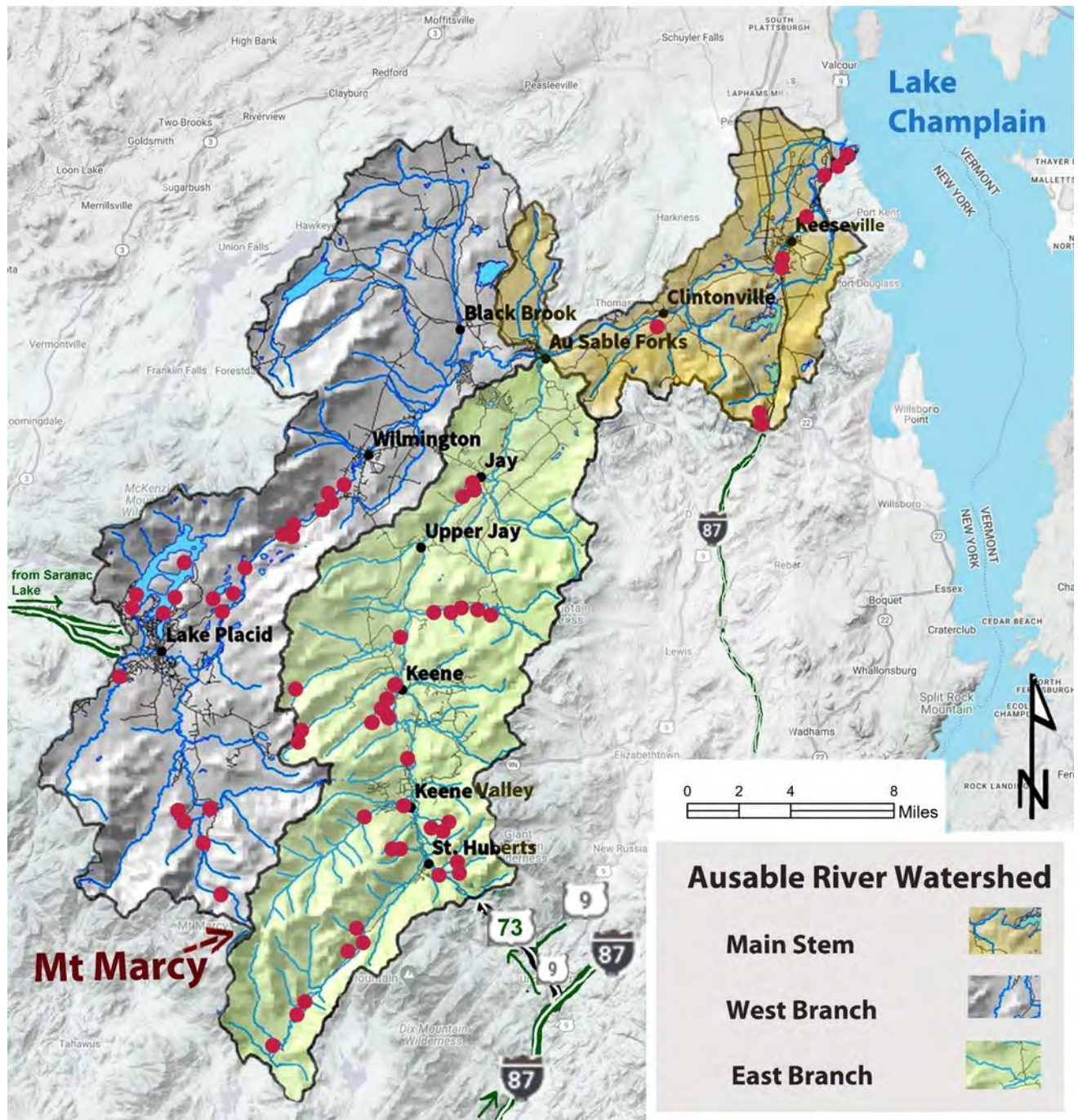
In this catalog I describe several decades of my artistic adventures in the Ausable River Watershed, the large area that drains most of the High Peaks of New York’s Adirondacks into Lake Champlain. While the drawings, paintings and hybrid pieces stand on their own as dynamic works of art, they also serve as an introduction to an extensive network of waterways.

In order to tell the full story, I have added images and information beyond what is on display at Keene Arts. While this is not a complete guide to seeing or painting the over 1100 miles of tributaries, lakes and paths of the watershed, it is a starting point. Many of the sites are easily accessible from the road or with a short hike. Others require more effort on foot or by canoe or with an invitation to be on private land.

My paintings of the Ausable waterways are part of a much larger body of work that includes other subject matter. I have had a studio in Saratoga Springs since 1977 and initially painted the city’s dynamic landscapes, crowds and interiors as well as the landscapes of Alaska, the Alps and the West. About half of the watershed works are from 1990 to 2005, painted in the Keene Valley area, long before I knew they were interconnected by the water’s flow. Several are from 2013-17. The rest, from 2018 to the present, are from a more deliberate focus on the watershed that began when I discovered the online maps of Ausable Freshwater Center. In between those periods and while working on this project I continue to paint in many parts of the Adirondacks and on my travels.

It is my hope that the exhibition will inspire others to follow the water by paying attention to the expressive qualities of water, exploring the watershed, and supporting the work of Ausable Freshwater Center. They are now working Adirondack-wide, but their home and laboratory for exploration is still the Ausable watershed as they are committed to being a hub—a center for innovation in freshwater science and stewardship.

Anne Diggory, July 2025



The catalog is organized by the flow of the water through the three parts of the watershed. Further divisions of the watershed into sub-watersheds can be seen on the AFC website where maps are zoomable (ausablecenter.org). Red dots in the map above indicate places I have painted.

EAST BRANCH OF THE AUSABLE

CHAPEL POND

At first, my painting adventures in the Ausable watershed were on day trips from Saratoga Springs to Chapel Pond, whose waters I later learned flow into Beede Brook and join the East Branch in St. Huberts. I was fascinated by the cliffs on both sides of the road, eventually making more than twelve artworks. In many of the them, cliff patterns dance between the more horizontal shapes of the water and the dynamic clouds.



Descent to Chapel Pond 1995
oil on paper, 23x31"
private collection



Afternoon Rhythms 2021
watercolor, 8x11.5"

ROARING BROOK FALLS

Further along highway #73, before reaching Keene Valley, there are several steep cascades that eventually join the East Branch. I have focused my attentions on three very different structures, Roaring Brook Falls, Mossy Cascade and Flume Brook. I painted them repeatedly on multi-day trips in the 1990's and early 2000's. I stayed in Keene Valley with Pat Quinn at her B&B and with a wonderful painter, the late Vry Corscaden, at her home and Barn Gallery.



Just down the hill from Chapel Pond is a pullover with a view toward Roaring Brook Falls, which flows into Beede Brook. The falls can be explored from a trailhead at the bottom of the hill.



Carved Surface 2024, acrylic on panel, 14x11"

Roaring Brook Falls often appears as a relative trickle in a cleft amidst enormous bare rock faces that have been stripped clean during immense storms with extensive runoff from Giant Mountain. Huge boulders and streams of rock debris at the bottom create their own silent flow. I have worked to evoke the power of those natural forces in paintings and in hybrid works that combine photography and painting.

Afternoon Retreat 2018, acrylic on panel, 20x16"

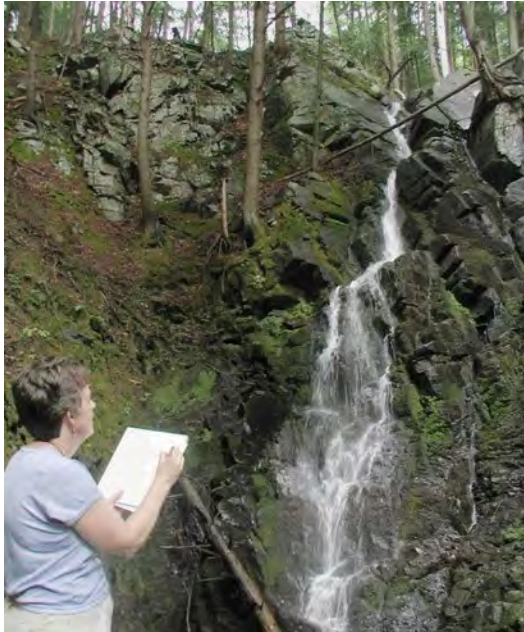




White Lightning 2020, mixed media on canvas, 48x36"

"White Lightning" started as a small painting. I placed a photo of the painting in Photoshop, added fragments of my photos, had the digital collage printed and then continued to paint. The varied approach to details adds drama to the scene in a landscape that itself is forming and dissolving.

MOSSY CASCADE



Mossy Steps 2001, watercolor, 15x11.5"

Just past St. Huberts, Mossy Cascade Brook flows into the East Branch. The waterfall can be reached by a short hike, often over downed trees. The steep wall of the falls has an intricate series of large and small rock ledges. Some days a tiny rivulet adds contrast to the main flow. And each day the light is different. I worked on many small paintings on site and created larger ones in the studio. Here is where I discovered that wearing a full rain suit would be helpful when painting close to a waterfall.



Dark Cascade 2001
acrylic on paper, 13.5x8"



Mossy Falls 2003, acrylic on canvas, 12x12"
AYCO/Goldman Sachs

Two views of the upper part of Mossy Cascade were purchased by Siena College for their library. In both the study and the larger painting, I focused on the splitting of the massive wall by both water and light. The weighty sides of the falls oddly evoke the wings of a butterfly.



Cascade 1998
acrylic on paper 25.5x25"
Siena College



Long Division 1999
acrylic on canvas
50x58"
Siena College

In 2001 I revisited Mossy Cascade and focused more on the steps as they wove in and out of the water. The elongated composition was the basis for one of two waterfall paintings proposed for a 22-foot-high stairway mural for the Adirondack Trust Company of Saratoga Springs. The bank selected my image of the flume of the Opalescent instead and I went on to use these sketches for the six-foot painting seen on the next page, "Spillway."



Arachne 2001, acrylic on paper, 26x19"
private collection

Mossy Cascade Steps 2001, pencil, 40x18"



Spillway 2003, acrylic on canvas, 72x54", private collection, Keene Valley



I remember repainting the steps many times to clarify the structure that the water was dancing over.

FLUME BROOK



On private land a short way past Mossy Cascade, Flume Brook provides a different spatial experience but a similar sense of the powerful forces at work. I focused on the narrow passage between almost vertical rockfaces, with a glimpse of a light-filled space that seems unreachable. Only a trickle passes through, belying the power that carved that space and moved those boulders.

Trapped 1998, oil on paper, 22.5x30", private collection

Split Procession 1998, acrylic on paper
24.75x16.5", Siena College



Stairway of Stone 1999
acrylic on canvas, 80x50", Siena College



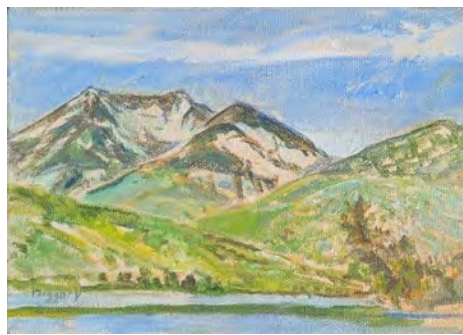
AUSABLE LAKES



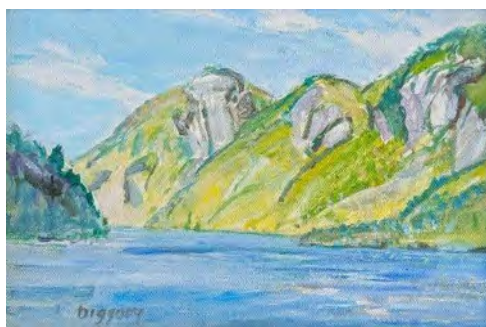
Following my focus on the dramatic waterfalls of the headwaters, in 2003 and 2004 I was able to experience the calmer source of the East Branch, the Upper and Lower Ausable Lakes. They are on private land, but can be seen from nearby overlooks. Both lakes are fed by the streams coming off many High Peaks, including Mt Marcy, the highest. Those summers I was invited to stay a few

nights at Inlet Cabin on Upper Ausable Lake as a guest of Pat Quinn. She was seeking solitude from her popular B&B and she figured I would be busy painting, not talking. The journey to the cabin is by oaring a guideboat on each lake and walking between the lakes, carrying supplies and art materials.

The lakes have been popular subjects since the 1880s and those early portrayals made me eager to join Pat. I painted from the dock and waited patiently for the historic view to appear, painting several small versions before the mountains cleared the next morning. On left, *Ausable View Covered* 2003, acrylic on canvas, 4x6"; on right, *Ausable View Revealed* 2003, acrylic on canvas, 4x6"



On the way back through Lower Ausable Lake I was at the back of the boat and I was free to paint the view toward Indian Head as we progressed toward it.



Approach 2004, acrylic on canvas, 6x9"

Near the outflow from Lower Ausable Lake, where the East Branch officially begins, a hike to Indian Head provides a long view of the lake. “Divided Light” features the way that the lake quietly sits between long rows of substantial mountains.



Divided Light 2004, watercolor, 9.5x13”

In composing “Weston’s Ausable,” I was inspired to use the dynamic sky in an off-kilter arrangement based on many triangles of strong shapes that go across, down and over. And at the back of my mind, I was remembering Harold Weston’s forceful paintings of the area.

Weston’s Ausable 2004
acrylic on canvas, 7x9”



RAINBOW FALLS

There are many places along public trails between the outlet from Lower Ausable Lake and the Ausable Club where the river and side tributaries provide watery motifs. In 1995, I hiked with a group to Rainbow Falls. It was a rainy day and I painted a watercolor from under an umbrella. Because the humidity wouldn't allow the watercolor to dry, I had to carry the paper horizontally under a small plastic tent on the long hike back so that the colors wouldn't all flow off the paper.



Muted Deluge 1995, watercolor, 12.5x9"



I took a different approach back in the studio, with evocative sepia washes of oil on canvas.



This Gorging Good 1995, oil on canvas, 32x36"

KEENE VALLEY

Further along the highway, within the town of Keene Valley, the river meanders through flat lands, yet it is still fed by the cascades of streams.



Beaver Pond 1995
pencil, 22x28"

In 1995 I spent several days drawing and painting at a beaver pond near the beginning of Trails End Road. I remember lots of bugs and a curious beaver. In the drawing I chose to set up a contrast between the tiny details of the foreground with the faintly suggested distant mountains. The tall plants became the audience for the view. Many of the foreground details have changed greatly since then, but the mountains remain and a bench or two next to the pond.

Just past Keene Valley there is a small park with a view of a dynamic s-curve in the river. The sand bars shift yearly and provide a counterpoint to the blues and greens of summer. A little further on, across from Marcy Field, is a swimming area where I have cooled off but haven't painted.



Sandy Bend 2022, acrylic on panel, 8x8"

HULLS FALLS



Hulls Falls Road loops off from the highway between Marcy Field and Keene. It provides access to one of my favorite spots in recent years. I have painted many times from the bridge over the Ausable, in both directions, and from the shore upstream where there is an easement for public use.

In “Pool Below,” I focused on the shifting colors of the circular pool, with the other forms spinning around it. Kayakers were practicing on the steep drop-off while I painted.



Pool Below 2023
acrylic on canvas, 24x24"

Looking upstream from the bridge, I focused on the large rock forms that redirect the flow and are softened and shaped by it over time. The space recedes dramatically while the water rushes forward and appears to dissolve as it passes under the bridge.

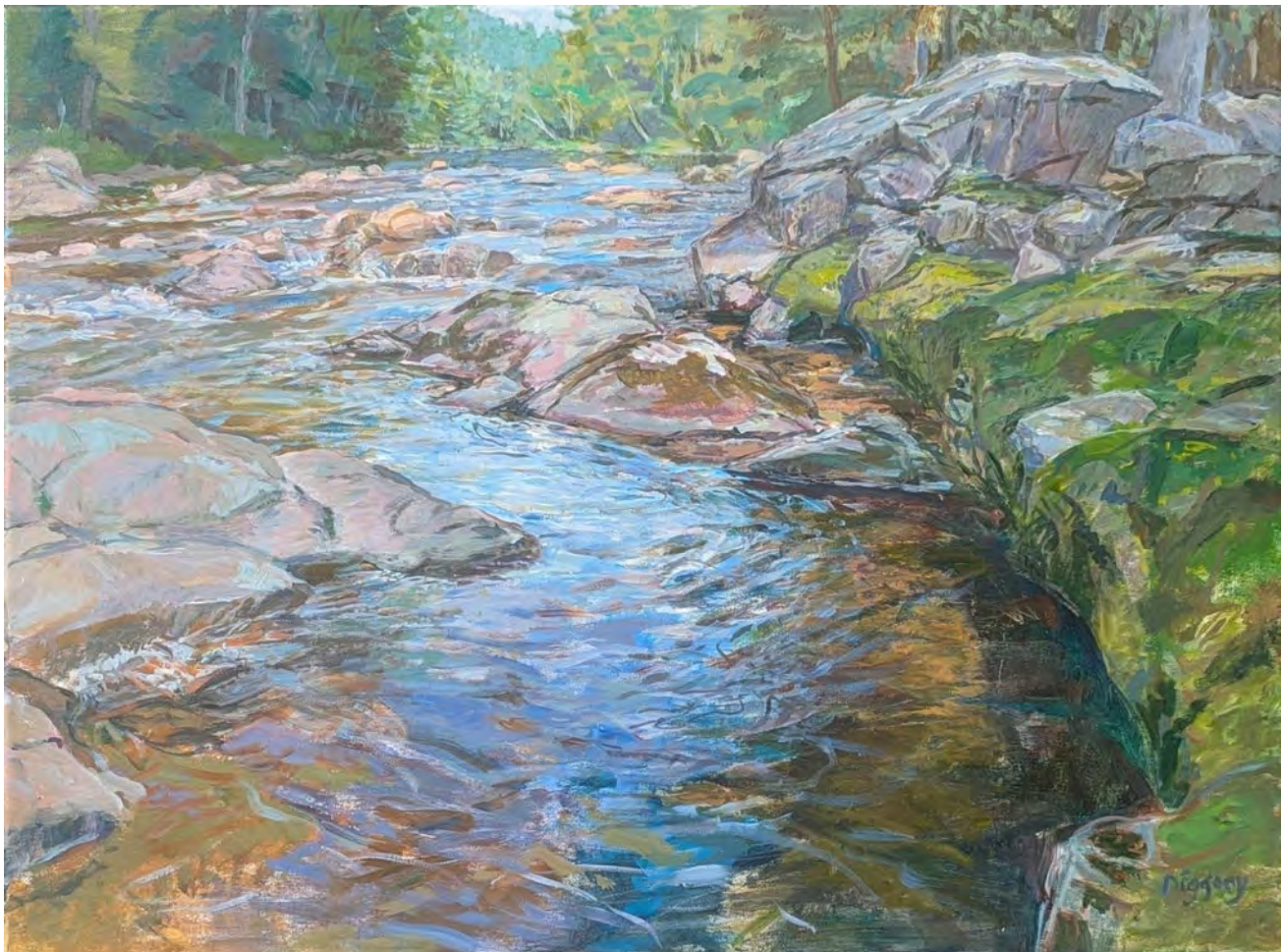
Diversion 2020, acrylic on canvas, 18x24"



I spent three days perched on a flat river boulder upstream from the bridge, painting the swirl of color in a small dark pool where the water has eroded the shore. Even the boulders on the shore appeared to be flowing along with the light.



Ausable Pool 2024, acrylic on canvas, 18x24"



Friends directed me to a location on the same section of river but from the opposite shore, off of Grist Mill Road. Intrigued by the contrast of natural and man-made forms, I started with the downstream view of dramatic light on the huge rock formation that appeared to be flowing out of the trees. Then I found relief from dark colors as I looked upstream at the glowing light on shore and in the water. Someday soon I'll return for the huge rock form resting between these two views.

Downstream Light 2024
acrylic on canvas, 16x20"



Upstream Glow 2024
acrylic on canvas, 16x20"



STYLES BROOK

Past Keene, many streams flow into the East Branch. Through an introduction from Tyler Merriman, who was then with the Ausable River Association (the former name of the AFC), I met Lorraine Duvall, a writer and resident along Styles Brook. She was working on a book about it and took me to various places she admired. I eventually painted five separate artworks: the beaver dams on the uplands, the view from near her house (which became her book cover), an intriguing passage near the road and a private waterfall.

Construction Sight 2022
acrylic on canvas, 18x24"



Styles Brook Skyline 2022, acrylic on aluminum, 8x8"
Collection of Lorraine Duvall



Styles Brook Waterfall 2024
acrylic on canvas, 20x16"





Distant Light 2022, acrylic on canvas, 30x40"

I was drawn to the light on the distant boulder, at the end of a dark, watery tunnel. Partway through the painting process I decided to express that focus by leaving the foreground details barely suggested.



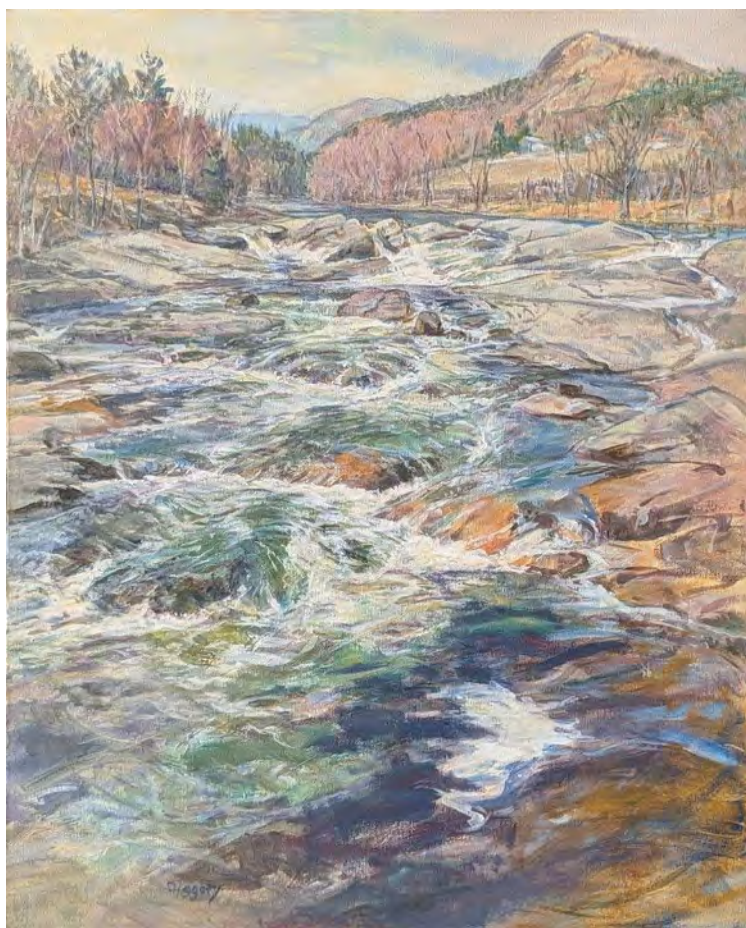
Winter Openings 2022
acrylic on canvas, 11x14"

On a winter day I painted at the site that inspired "Distant Light," this time zooming in on the boulder.

JAY



The last set of paintings of the East Branch is from the town of Jay where I painted from the viewing area beside the covered bridge and from the shore. I was intrigued by the way that the water wound its way across the descending levels of the falls and created abstract swirls in the pool below the bridge. I spent three days painting the spring runoff and then later finished the painting in the studio where it was warmer.



Ausable Serpentine 2022
acrylic on canvas, 30x24"

The early morning light inspired several small paintings that look downstream toward the covered bridge and the Jay Range.

Early Morning Flow 2022
acrylic on panel, 8x10"



Jay Sunrise 2022, acrylic on panel, 4x8"



WEST BRANCH OF THE AUSABLE

INDIAN FALLS, MARCY BROOK

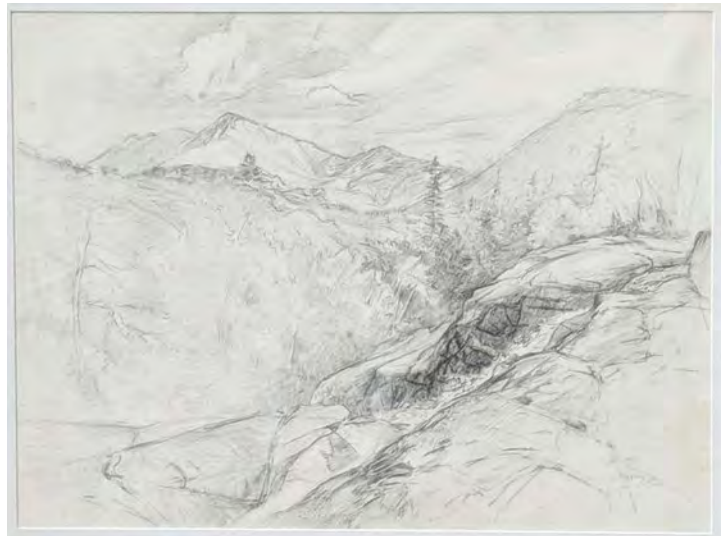
One of the unexpected discoveries I made in 2018 from the maps of AFC was that the water in Marcy Brook, that I had painted as it went over Indian Falls, makes it to Lake Champlain. The brook merges with other streams to form the West Branch just before it passes under Loj Road.

Indian Falls Prospect 2000, watercolor, 13.5x14.5"



The view across the falls provided a strong diagonal of plunging water and rock, adding a drama to the scene.

Tangents 2000
pencil, 21x28"



The onsite watercolor and drawing, combined with the photos and videos, provided enough details to create the large "Eos," that evokes the magic of the place and the power of the deep space.

Eos (Dawn) 2000, acrylic on canvas, 50x65", private collection



HEART LAKE / MCINTYRE BROOK

Waters that flow off the McIntyre Range, pictured below from Heart Lake, are joined by the waters from that lake and other sources to merge with Marcy Brook. While I was painting by the lake, my daughters, Ariel and Parker, were climbing to the top of those mountains.



Summer – McIntyre Range 1999, acrylic on paper, 13.25x21"



While I painted this study of McIntyre Falls, my family was preparing dinner at our nearby campsite. I kept saying, "just five more minutes." I did promise to help with cleanup. There is a delicate balance between art-time and hiking or family time.

McIntyre Falls 2000
acrylic on paper, 11x12"

CHUBB RIVER

The Chubb River joins with the waters of Lake Placid to merge with the East Branch. I look forward to exploring the river further upstream from this painting spot, which is just a short distance from the parking for the end of the Northville - Lake Placid Trail. In March the icy shore was just beginning to melt and the river rose substantially after the first day of painting. I was actually glad it had done so, since the colorful water took over a section of small stones that I hadn't figured out how to use in the painting.

Spring Ripples, Chubb River 2023
acrylic on paper, 8.25x10.5"



LAKE PLACID

I painted Lake Placid several times from the Lake Placid Lodge, which at the time had my paintings on display along with many other regional artists. Later I paddled the lake to research locations painted by William Trost Richards for an article for the *Adirondack Almanac*. This angle toward Whiteface was painted during a lunch break on Moose Island.

Mid-day Majesty 2015
watercolor, 7.25x 13.25"



WEST BRANCH FISHING AREAS

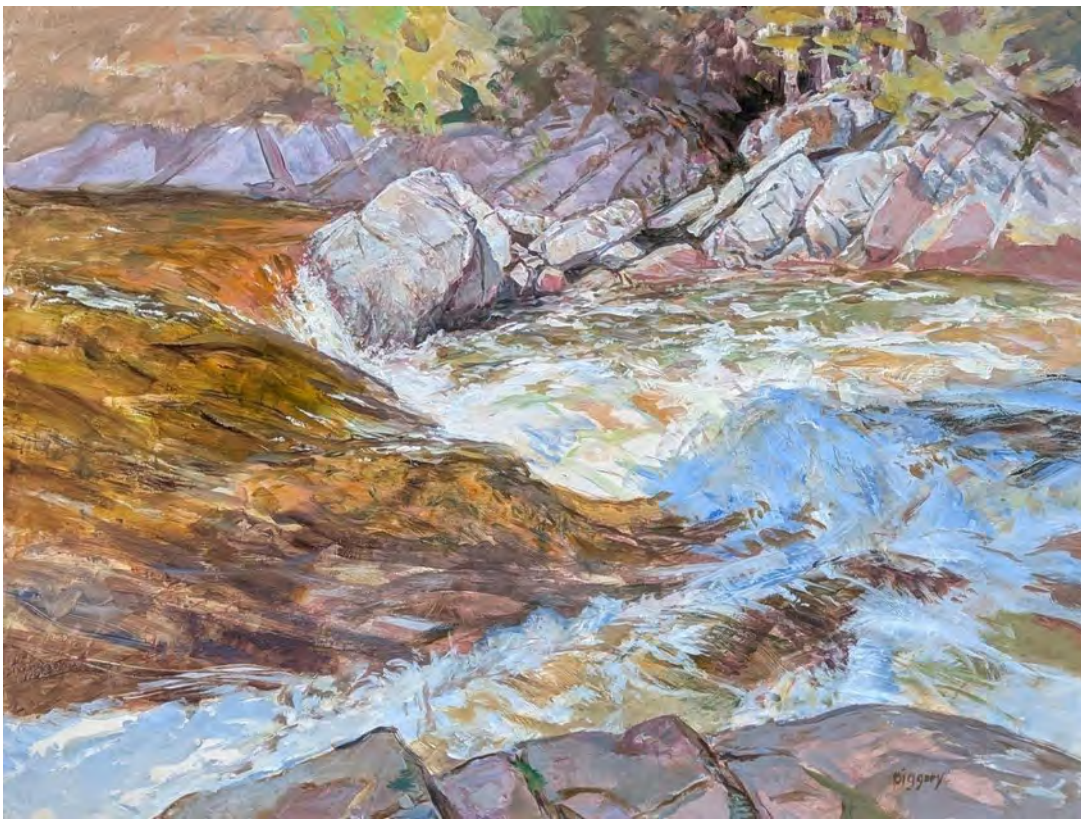
All along the West Branch past Lake Placid are numerous pullovers for fishing and enjoying the river. The AFC has placed boot-washing stations at them to discourage the transfer of invasive species.

QUARRY POOL

For one section of the Keene Arts exhibition, we selected Quarry Pool as the focus for the invited artists and the scientists of AFC. At this location, an old dam from a sawmill was removed relatively recently, opening up the river.

I chose to paint an angle that emphasizes the release of dammed-up water, which for me stands in for the release of creativity from restrictions. A solid rock formation still deflects the flow but is partnered with the similarly shaped airborne swirl of turbulent water.

Ausable Release 2025, acrylic on panel, 18x24"



BASSETT FLATS

Further along the road toward Wilmington, the pullover at Bassett Flats provides a wealth of locations for observing, painting and fishing. The waters rose each day of my March 2022 painting trip. On the first day, from a location further upstream, the boulder that held its own in the river was more visible. It practically disappeared on the third day. I chose the midway version for the final painting in order to show the way that the swirling flow met resistance and continued onward.



Ausable Abundance 2022
acrylic on canvas, 18x24"

Downstream from the parking area, the river flattens out below the dramatic cliffs of Wilmington Pass. That day the light was flowing downhill more than the river.



Bassett Flats 2023
watercolor, 9.75x10"

HIGH FALLS GORGE

Past Bassett Flats, the West Branch dives through gorges and flumes. At High Falls Gorge, there are walkways with dramatic views of the clashing of water and stone. In preparation for a group show titled "Viewpoints" at Blue Mountain Gallery In New York City, I sketched the gorge as it passed by viewing platforms and bridges. In Photoshop I then combined the sketch with details from my photographs and from the drawing book that I used as a very young artist learning perspective. The digital collage was printed on canvas and I continued painting on it.



Points of View II 2015
mixed media, 48x36"

WILMINGTON NOTCH CAMPGROUND

A little further along the river, I painted a dramatic view from a spot on a trail at Wilmington Notch Campground. The barely defined forms capture the energy seen from my precarious perch.

Restless Gleam 2005
acrylic on panel, 16x20"



WHITEFACE SKI AREA

Further along the river, on the bridge leading to the Whiteface ski area, I had a much steadier perch. I only had to battle the wind on two warm days with skiers walking by. The two boulders, one in shadow and the other in full sun, stood silently, divided by the raging spring melt.

Opening Gambit 2025
acrylic on panel, 11x14"



WILMINGTON FLUME

The flume area starts upstream of the bridge over the Ausable, just beyond the Hungry Trout Resort. I painted at a location with water rapidly circling a large formation. Its front appeared to have been carved out over a long period of time by smaller boulders spinning around an opening. The resulting painting, "Ausable Carving," then inspired a much broader, hybrid work, "Ausable Twist," pictured on the next page.



River Carving 2019, acrylic on canvas, 24x30"

The same formation became more isolated in the Spring runoff, as seen from further downstream.



Spring Overflow 2022
mixed media on paper
8x11.5"



Ausable Twist 2020, mixed media on canvas, 35x60"

In "Ausable Twist" I manipulated abrupt and subtle changes of represented detail to match the constantly shifting attention I experienced there. The tiny figure, with sketchbook put aside, places me there, dwarfed by the experience.

I also painted a view from the opposite shore, focusing on a smoothed boulder that appeared tentatively perched, but likely was heavily anchored. At the time, my March 2020 exhibition in New York City was in danger of being cancelled due to Covid (it was cancelled). I identified with the rock in limbo, not sure what would happen next.



Balanced 2020, acrylic on canvas, 20x16"

In July 2019, I painted on two very hot days in the main part of the flume. Downstream from the bridge the river runs between two steep walls. The swirling patterns of carved rock are as lively as the flowing water.

Ausable Carving 2019, acrylic on canvas, 16x20", private collection



MAIN STEM OF THE AUSABLE

The East and West Branches merge into the Main Stem in AuSable Forks. While I had made one painting expedition to Ausable Chasm many years earlier, the area was unfamiliar to me when I signed up to paint in the Keeseville Plein Air Festival in 2018. The week inspired me to learn more about the Ausable River, and my project of “Follow the River” got its start. I returned to the festival in 2021 with a partial goal of painting the river as it flowed into Lake Champlain.

CLINTONVILLE

South of Keeseville, along Dugway Road near Clintonville, I stopped to paint where the river split into three channels, with the sand both blocking the flow and merging with it. I responded to the energy of the clouds dramatically flowing to my left while the water flowed in the opposite direction.



Three-way Split 2018, acrylic on panel, 16x20"

POKE-O-MOONSHINE ICE CLIFFS

I discovered the ice cliffs of Poke-o-Moonshine Mountain while driving to Plattsburgh for my COVID shot. I sketched that day and returned for a day of painting. Only later did I discover that the melting ice would eventually enter into the Ausable. With ridgelines directing their flow, some waterways south of Keeseville join the Ausable past the town, entering just above Ausable Chasm



Freeze Frame 2021, acrylic on panel, 24x24"

KEESEVILLE



I painted Keeseville from the pedestrian bridge above the main town, where the Ausable widened in the evening light. The railing provided a geometric framing of the flowing scene.

Evening Flow 2018
acrylic on panel, 18x18"

I later painted upstream toward where I had stood earlier. The scale of the rock formation dominated the buildings.

Keeseville Swirls 2018
watercolor, 9.75x13"



In 2021, on a trip back from Plattsburgh, I was intrigued to see that even in winter the Keeseville flow was visible.

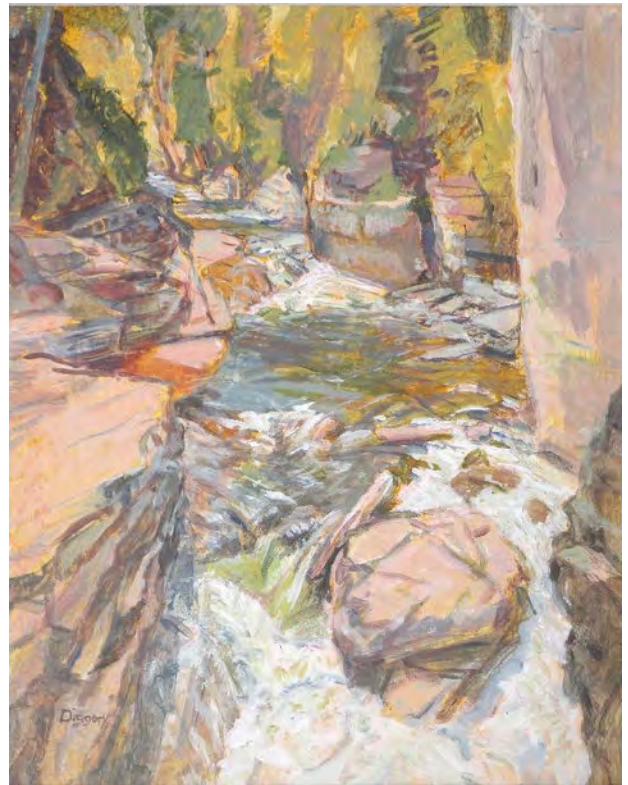
Icy Flow 2021
acrylic on canvas
8x10"



AUSABLE CHASM

Past Keeseville is the dramatic Ausable Chasm, with suspended walkways and overlooks for viewing. The late afternoon light added to the drama of the location as it was trapped in the chasm along with the water.

Chasm Glow 2018, acrylic on panel, 14x11"



AUSABLE POINT

At Ausable Point, the water from Mt. Marcy and the Ausable Lakes finally makes it to Lake Champlain. From the campground, I paddled up the river a short way and painted some of the lush growth from my canoe. I then focused on the bare bones of the trees that had been deposited along with the sand. One of the trees evoked a reclining figure, resting after a long journey.

Ausable Odalisque 2021, acrylic on canvas, 16x20", private collection



Future Explorations

There are many places on the maps of the Ausable River watershed, as well as in other regions, that continue to call to me, to explore and to paint. With so many options, it's hard to choose. My favorite locations will always provide new material with changing light, different seasons and variations in water levels. But I like to wander as well.

I enjoy painting on location, where I am inspired by many energies : the shifting light, the rapidly moving water or clouds and the stiller forms that show the remnants of older natural forces that shaped the landscape. Transforming that experience into artwork is a wonderful process, both intuitive and deliberate, of creating powerful relationships among colors, lines, shapes, marks and spaces. Much work is done on site, but for me, important work is done in the studio, ensuring that the energy I felt in the motif is actually in the painting.

Anne Diggory

Anne Diggory paints out of her studio in Saratoga Springs, NY. She is known for her combination of accurate detail with expressive painting and strong abstract structure – an outgrowth of education at Yale and Indiana University and many years of exploring and painting the natural world. Diggory creates artwork that goes beyond the description of a certain place as she conveys the complex experience of looking around a space. By manipulating composition, color, amount and clarity of detail and the ways that forms merge or separate, she presents the carefully observed details as an energized, light-filled whole. Her work has been seen in over 40 solo exhibitions and 75 group exhibitions in the United States, Panama and Germany. She shows regularly at the Blue Mountain Gallery in New York City.

While many of her works are inspired by the Adirondack Park in upstate New York, painting locations also include California, Arizona, Alaska, Ireland, Italy, France and various seashores as well as her own city of Saratoga Springs and the clutter of her studio. With an interest in the choices made in the creative process, Diggory researches historic painting locations for 19th century American artists. She lectures about those choices and occasionally writes about them for the *Adirondack Almanac*. She has published her research on nineteenth-century artist John Frederick Kensett at Lake George in the *Metropolitan Museum Journal*.

Diggory's hybrid works combining photography and painting were the focus of two museum exhibitions, at The Hyde Collection in Glens Falls NY in 2016 and the Albany Institute of History and Art in 2019. That work was featured in the *Adirondack Explorer*, *Saratoga Living* and the March 2015 photography issue of *Adirondack Life*. Major commissions include an Adirondack scene for the Upstate Cancer Center in Syracuse, NY, several large murals for the Adirondack Trust Company in Saratoga Springs, NY, and a very large winter scene of the High Peaks for the Olympic Regional Development Authority in Lake Placid. Public art works include a collaborative commission of art work for the Saratoga Springs Train Station and a large interactive artwork series for the Albany Institute of History and Art.

Follow her work at www.diggory.com and on Facebook and Instagram



Follow the water



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Also: Facebook
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Painting the Ausable River Watershed



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