

HYPERALLERGIC

ARTICLES

A View from the Easel

This week, artist studios in Connecticut, Indiana, New Jersey, New York, and Ontario.



Hrag Vartanian July 19, 2018



Ellen Kozak, New Baltimore, NY ([site](#))

I've had different studios in Greene County, New York since 1993. The shoreline of the Hudson River has been my work-site for 25 years. In 2015, while on a sabbatical, I built this studio in New Baltimore, New York. Fortunately, it is a bit elevated from the river.

I mostly paint on-site out of doors on a field easel. Since the paintings are seldom finished on site I continue to work on them in my studio, developing and expanding color ideas that cannot be brought into the work until the oils are dry. Often the paintings take a year or more. I also work in my studio on video projects, especially for nighttime shooting.

In the last six years, I have watched the Hudson River become re-industrialized. Bakken crude, sent by rauc from the shale oil fields in North Dakota to Albany, started being transported down the Hudson by tanker in 2012. In this image, taken from inside my studio, you see one of the tankers that plies the river both day and night. I employ the surface of the water much like a lens and I am mesmerized by its synthetic properties including capturing color in the reflections. Reflected color from these vessels, such as this nearly soundless hulk, mixes interestingly with other visual phenomena in the river's surface such as patterns created by current and tide.

For me, the location of the studio is ideal, it allows me to continually retrieve color ideas from direct observation. In the studio, while I may not be standing at the exact site where a painting began, I can continue working perceptually because of the studio's proximity to the river; its light, movement, and sensations that keep my subject within constant reach, something I depend upon.