

## Francie Ashforth

**When did you first consider yourself a professional artist?** I've been an artist since I was young. I grew up with artists. But professionally, I would say right after college and into graduate school. I realized that I also needed money so I went into graphic design and architectural design. I worked for Taunton Press as an architectural illustrator for five years. Then I had my first real show in Westport before I had kids. My second show was in 1990 with a group of people. I think I had a kid on my hip during that one. When my kids were 4 and 6, I stopped doing freelance and moved to Oregon for 8 years where I became a soccer, hockey and lacrosse mom, but I still kept my work in a gallery there.

**How long have you been in this studio?** Nine years, the woman who lived here before me used it as a studio, as well. It's kind of a weird room, just with a bunch of closets. I don't really know what else you could use this room for besides a studio.

**What is your medium?** Oil on panel. They're custom-made masonite panels.

**What brands do you use?** Williamsburg, which is hard to get, and Charvon. I only use non-toxic supplies.

**How do you price your pieces?** I used to price my pieces myself, but now my dealer in NYC and my curator in Greenwich collaborate to make a price that fits the market.

**Do you work on one piece at a time or do you go back and forth between a couple?** I have ADD and I'm usually working on 2 or 3 at a time, sometimes. If I'm not working on something here in my studio, I'll be at the Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Norwalk working on my printmaking, especially in the summer.

**How do you come up with titles for you paintings?** The titles of my paintings are the names of the places, the road, or the river--whatever it is I am painting.

**Do you listen to music when you paint?** Yes! Mostly alternative and Annie Lennox, Death Cab for Cutie, Adele, Hand of Horses, Black Keys, Al Green.

**Do you sit or stand when you paint?** I stand. I only sit when I am writing and painting in my journals and sketchbooks.

**How often do you clean your studio?** I try to stay as tidy as possible to reduce toxicity. I don't use many solvents in my studio. Even when I'm making prints, I use almost only water-based materials.

**Is there anything specific you always have in your studio when you're painting?** My dogs. I've been painting with dogs in my studio for 30 years--I've have 10 different dogs. They're great company.

**Are there any days you don't feel like painting?** It depends on what is going on in my life. Last month I had so much going on it was crazy. If I need a break I'll go to the Center for Contemporary Printmaking.

**Where do you get inspiration from?** From the sky, the places I've been, fishing. 99% of it comes from outside and nature, or people who write and talk about conservation. My work stimulates memory, makes you think of where you grew up or where you went on vacations as a child.

**Do you have any advice for young artists?** Do it even if you don't think you'll make money. Fulfill your creative side. It takes time and patience. It takes a long time to become an established artist. You've got to work at it. So when you get down, you have to get right back up.

