



RK MILLS INSIDE OUT, STILL 2019 - 2023

## VESSEL

A "vessel " perched  
on the green slope of the mountain: --  
a "vessel," the painter titles it,  
not a "can"  
or a "canister;"  
not a "jug"  
or a "receptacle"  
not a "jar".

A vessel can hold  
most anything:  
milk, wine,  
bourbon, ink, --

anything a solitary painter  
in the mountains  
might want or need.

Cover: ***Inside Out*** oil on canvas 36"x 36" 2020



RK MILLS INSIDE OUT, STILL  
FREDERICK LOWE, POETRY

BLUE MOUNTAIN GALLERY  
MAY 23 - JUNE 17, 2023  
NEW YORK

**Vessel** oil on raw canvas 16" x 16" 2020





**Screenpaint** oil on canvas 30" x 24" 2023



***Greensward*** oil on canvas 30"x 24" 2019

## UNTITLED

This valley is so  
precipitous and deep  
the moon rolls along  
the hill-rims  
to find the narrowest  
place to leap

Above on the table-lands  
the rock allows  
the water in colourless pools;  
to reconsider  
(but never refuse)  
its headlong fall  
to the river.



**Green Screen** oil on linen 40" x 35" 2019-23





**Gray Day** oil on canvas 24" x 20" 2020





***Studio Chair*** oil on canvas 30" x 40" 2019

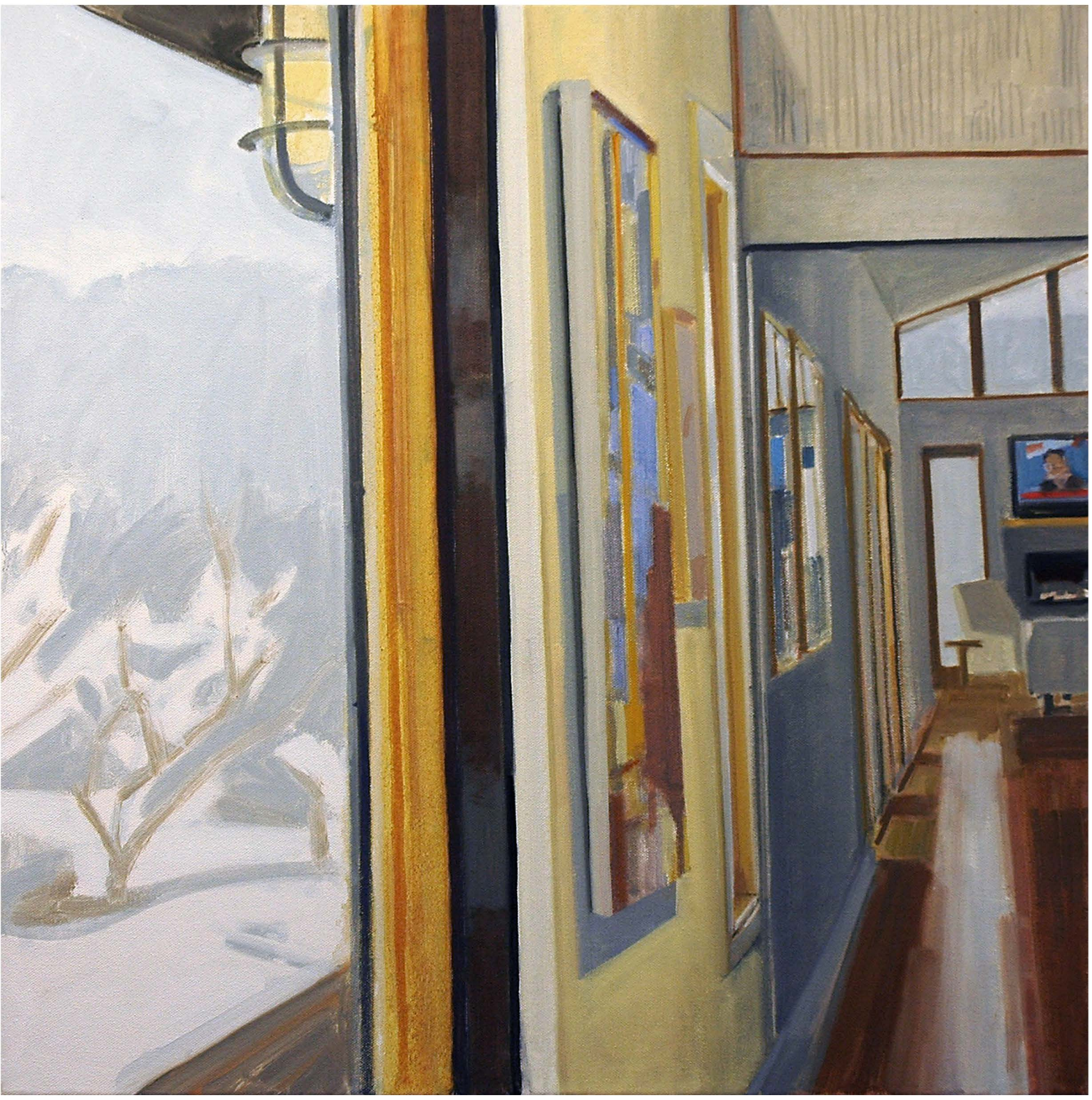
### ***Cities on the Plains***

In autumn there is  
an eternal hope;  
that this year's winter  
will freeze  
the bankers' fingers;  
that the enmity  
of the cold will stoke  
heart fires all around;  
that men, all men living  
in the seams of the hills,  
and falling with the  
water courses in the river  
will burn together,  
will create together  
a cluster and a line  
of hot blue flame;  
a nexus of shared fire  
to stave off, to warn  
away the darker  
deeper color.



***Toward Dusk*** oil on canvas 30" x 24" 2020









***South Light*** oil on canvas 36" x 24" 2020

left: ***Snow Squall, Breaking News*** oil on canvas 24" x 24" 2020

DEEP SNOW

rumpled sheets

deep snow

dreamy windrows of meringue

deep in the endless mountains

right: **Deep Snow** oil on canvas 36" x 36" 2020











Previous: **Days End** oil on canvas 30" x 70" 2020-23

Right: **Sunlight and Shadow** 48" x 48" 2020





BETWEEN THE GLASS AND THE BED  
L'heure bleu

*"At the winter solstice, I began to focus on the single hour  
the quicksilver minutes between day and night, light and dark.  
In and out as one ---" RK Mills*

L'heure bleu –  
the painter behind the window,  
standing between night and day,  
between the glass and the bed,  
as he puts it;  
caught in the midst of a splendid confusion  
of images – reflections of the mountains,  
the fields, the trees – reflections  
of other paintings in the studio,  
reflection of reflections --

not the one thing or the other, but  
the all





***Between the Glass and the Bed*** oil on jute 40" x 44" 2020

## BREAKING THROUGH

A quiet day --  
winter without the sharp edges.  
The sun pours in,  
leaving its mark on the floor.  
The sky is soft and buttery  
in the part where the sun is,  
outside the frame  
of the window.

The zig-zag  
in the slope  
below the window  
the hollow and  
the distant mountains --  
yellow, white --  
all butter and sugar, mild --  
until you step out the door.



***Breaking Through*** oil on canvas 48" x 36" 2020





**One Hour** oil on jute 40" x 44" 2020





***Inside (Getting Dark)*** oil on jute 44" x 40" 2020

## MOON, SHADOW, COMET, MULLEIN

"February 2020. Covid hits. Light reverses outwards.  
Spring passes unnoticed."

There is a narrow deck alongside his studio.  
The eaves catch light from within.  
There is a broad shrub against which the painter casts  
an elongated shadow.  
He must be standing in a doorway.  
Or a window.

There is also a mullein stalk, a remnant of summer.

Under the snow new grass is sprouting.  
The mullein is hatching a new yellow candle  
in its root.  
Voles and meadow mice huddle in their nests.  
Buried In the earth, earthworms and cicada nymphs  
rise a little closer to the surface.  
Spring is indeed passing unnoticed  
under the snow,  
or at least preparing itself.

Light reverses outwards –  
what does this mean?  
We're past the solstice,  
coming up on the equinox.  
Comet Neowise  
has just been discovered –  
it's in the sky to the right  
of a quarter moon.

What light is reversing outwards?





***Moon, Shadow, Comet, Mullein*** acrylic on canvas 32" x 43" 2020

## ORION, SHADOW

*oblio di piena notte – Salvatore Quasimodo*

*OUROS-ion – “native of the mountains,” per Robert Graves*

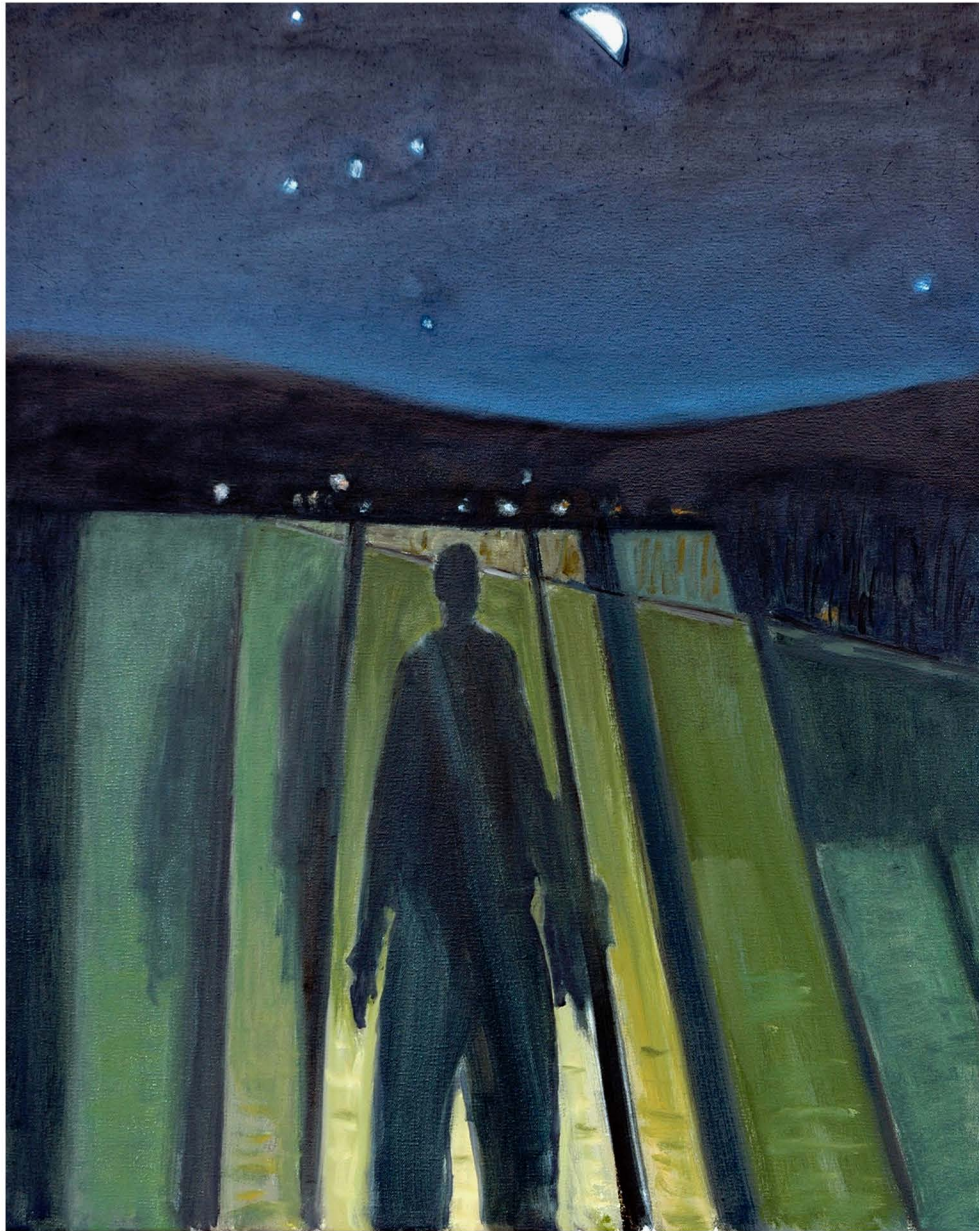
It's night, a blue deep night in the mountains.  
The painter stands in silhouette in a doorway  
or perhaps in front of a window in the studio.  
He casts a huge shadow, the shadow of a giant.

(I can't quite figure it, but the shadow  
reverberates in other, parallel planes –  
a sort of lateral mise en abîme.)

Orion shines brightly above the house and studio.  
The moon anchors his (Orion's) belt.  
In the distance are the humps of other mountains,  
a few distant lights --

lonely, lovely vista.





**Orion, Shadow** oil on canvas 30" x 24" 2020





*"As with rosy steps the morn  
Advancing, drives the shades of night;  
So from virtuous toils well-borne,  
Raise thou our hopes of endless light"*

*- So sings Irene, from G. F. Handel's Oratorio Theodora*

The paintings in this exhibit are primarily from late 2019 through the pandemic isolation of 2020 into 2021. A solitary and quiet focus on my immediate surroundings, mostly my Delaware County studio and the light flowing in and out, helped keep me somewhat sane. That, and gardening. Although the paintings did get dark, light is the principal subject. Its shifting moods through the seasons and hours encouraged careful observation and distillation: a narrative arc emerged.

In general my work is informed by years of environmental work and an inclination to simply observe my surroundings; perhaps a bit of "luxe, calme et volupté" plus a love of architecture; of composition and light; of color and discovery, the tension between observation and invention. Of being unfinished.

I love Bonnard and DeChirico; Thomas Noskowski and Lois Dodd; Edward Hopper and Fairfield Porter. The formal and the psychological. I embrace ambiguity. I'm a classicist and not. I like to watch. Like Chance, the Gardener.

**RK Mills** has followed several paths. Painter, printmaker, master printer, teacher, ecoartist, public art and finally a return to painting.

He has studios in Teaneck, New Jersey and Delaware County, New York.

This is his second solo exhibit of paintings at Blue Mountain.

He is also represented by Longyear Gallery in Margaretville, New York.

More information can be found at [richardkirkmills.net](http://richardkirkmills.net).

**Fred Lowe** is a poet and psychotherapist who lives along the Delaware River in Frenchtown, New Jersey and summers in Washington County, Maine. He has collaborated on a portfolio of poetry and prints about Maine with Mills entitled "Intimate Views....From Away".

He has published poetry and translations in River Styx, The Beloit Poetry Journal, The Maine Times, The Aputamkon Review, and others.

Previous: ***Joe Pye for Piet Oudolf*** oil on canvas 36" x 36" 2022  
Back cover: ***Boxed In*** oil on canvas 20" x 20" 2020



***Boxed In*** oil on canvas 20" x 20" 2020-23