



STORIES: *Photographs by*
Alexandra de Steiguer

Pucker Gallery • Boston



Stories: Chapter 1, 2010
Archival pigment print
20 x 20"
AS142

STORIES:

by Alexandra de Steiguer

Once upon a timeless... through a cold wind, a lone woman approaches an old building, high and wide and looming above her. Rows of dark windows seem to mark her progress, watching as she climbs broad stairs to the long and empty porch.

Sitting on the planks at the back of the roofed promenade, she leans against the wall and, looking up into the porch rafters, quietly whispers a count of the many nests there, now bereft of summer birds... like the building itself, each an empty vessel awaiting life's return. She looks out at the white-capped waves that sweep past as they have always done, and thinks of the long, slow sweep of centuries, of all the lives that have come and gone, and with them, countless stories, rich and rippling with emotion.

Those departed generations still inhabit this place... though now as shadows cast upon the clean canvas of the empty, wintry isle. With paddle and sail then under steam they'd arrived; hardscrabble fishing villages giving way to guesthouses, then grand Victorian hotels, until time eventually set the present moment awash around these rocky shores.

Among those weathered buildings human history is overt and legible, but the twisted trees and shrubs and the many wild beings that share this place also carry their own heritage, with stories and timelines that interweave our own, and are as rich in meaning.

On her daily walks along the island's edge, she stops to sit upon a particular stone, and often wonders what tales it might tell of mountains wasting and deluges defied, of earth-altering ice ages... and even of the smallest bird that pauses in its great journey to shelter in its lee. Yet even in the presence of the vast experience bound to this single stone, so casually does she perch upon it.

It is in these unhurried encounters with rocks and trees and old buildings, with the eternal sea and sky where the lives of untold multitudes swim and soar, that we may be transported from our own small stories and into the immensity of a living landscape – a place where dramas of timeless scale reside beside us. Here are found witnesses to existences that we can never begin to fathom, hosts to more life than we'll ever know. Humbled, she rises from the stoic stone, and thanks it.

Stories are everywhere, even as she walks down a long hallway of plastered walls, her feet passing over centuries-old painted floorboards. From out of the rooms on either side, history seems to step; a man in a work-worn coat, the blur of a woman in white... In the quiet solitude of the moment, it takes only a faded photograph or painting on the wall to imagine the hallways echoing with faint laughter, or soft sobbing. At almost every window, the ocean. She stops to gaze, fully feeling the emotional weight of untold arrivals and departures found in every island story: the relief of safe passage and joy of reunion; the sorrow of solemn news borne in on the evening tide; possibility promised by a soft horizon in the hazy distance and fragile life heading out, again and again, into the unknown.

And so it is, that while the aged buildings stand, there will always be somebody at a window looking out into another century, somebody wandering the rocks, somebody sailing away, somebody returning. Though she cannot begin to compass the many stories of those that came before, she still feels kinship with all who were stirred by ancient views of rocks and sea, with all who have lived under the ebb and flood of our emotions — universal, endlessly repeating, and timeless.

Dark windows will watch as she walks away, just as each old building, tree, and ledge has marked the countless many who have passed this way before; just as they will all of the stories yet to be told.



They Hold Time
Lightly, 2023
Silver gelatin print
12 x 10"
AS141

Epilogue... Ever since human beings first made marks upon a cave wall, we have told stories to bring meaning, understanding, and empathy to our shared existence. We might also extend that honor to stories integral to our own: those of every thing in nature alive or inanimate. Though their stories remain unspoken, it's my hope that we might imagine them nonetheless, and in so doing, cherish all, and include them in equal measure when we tell the story of our future.

This project has spanned many years. Etched upon photographic film, each image represents a real moment in time, with nothing added or taken away. Each image took a span of time to record: sometimes just a fraction, but often with whole seconds of time ticking by... nonetheless, the finished prints attempt to hint at timelessness and to defy the sole framing of "story-time" as human-scaled. Each gelatin silver print has been lovingly printed by hand in my darkroom where I continue to watch stories unfold.



Gently Came the Tumult, 2023
Silver gelatin print
10 x 10"
AS134



I Came to Be the Sky, 2013
Silver gelatin print
10 x 10"
AS120



*Still Life: Little Houses with
Time and Tide, 2023*
Silver gelatin print
12.5 x 10"
AS127

6



Fleeting Respite, 2023
Silver gelatin print
7 x 7.25"
AS138



And the Wind Came, 2023
Silver gelatin print
7 x 7.25"
AS137



Stories: Chapter 6, 2010
Silver gelatin print
10 x 10"
AS113



Stories: Chapter 20, 2013
Silver gelatin print
10.25 x 10.25"
AS117



Stories: Chapter 21, 2013
Silver gelatin print
10 x 10"
AS118



Stands Beyond the Tempest, 2023
Silver gelatin print
10 x 11.5"
AS124



Passagers, 2023
Silver gelatin print
7.5 x 7.25"
AS130



The Mirror Holds Them Not, 2010
Silver gelatin print
7.75 x 7"
AS111



The Doctor Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 2023
Silver gelatin print
10 x 12.25"
AS126



Geologic Time, 2023
 Silver gelatin print
 12.5 x 10"
 AS125



Here, 2013
 Silver gelatin print
 7.5 x 7.25"
 AS119



Leavings Through the Veil of Time, 2023
 Silver gelatin print
 7 x 7.25"
 AS140



Stories: Chapter 9, 2010
Silver gelatin print
10 x 10"
AS114

II



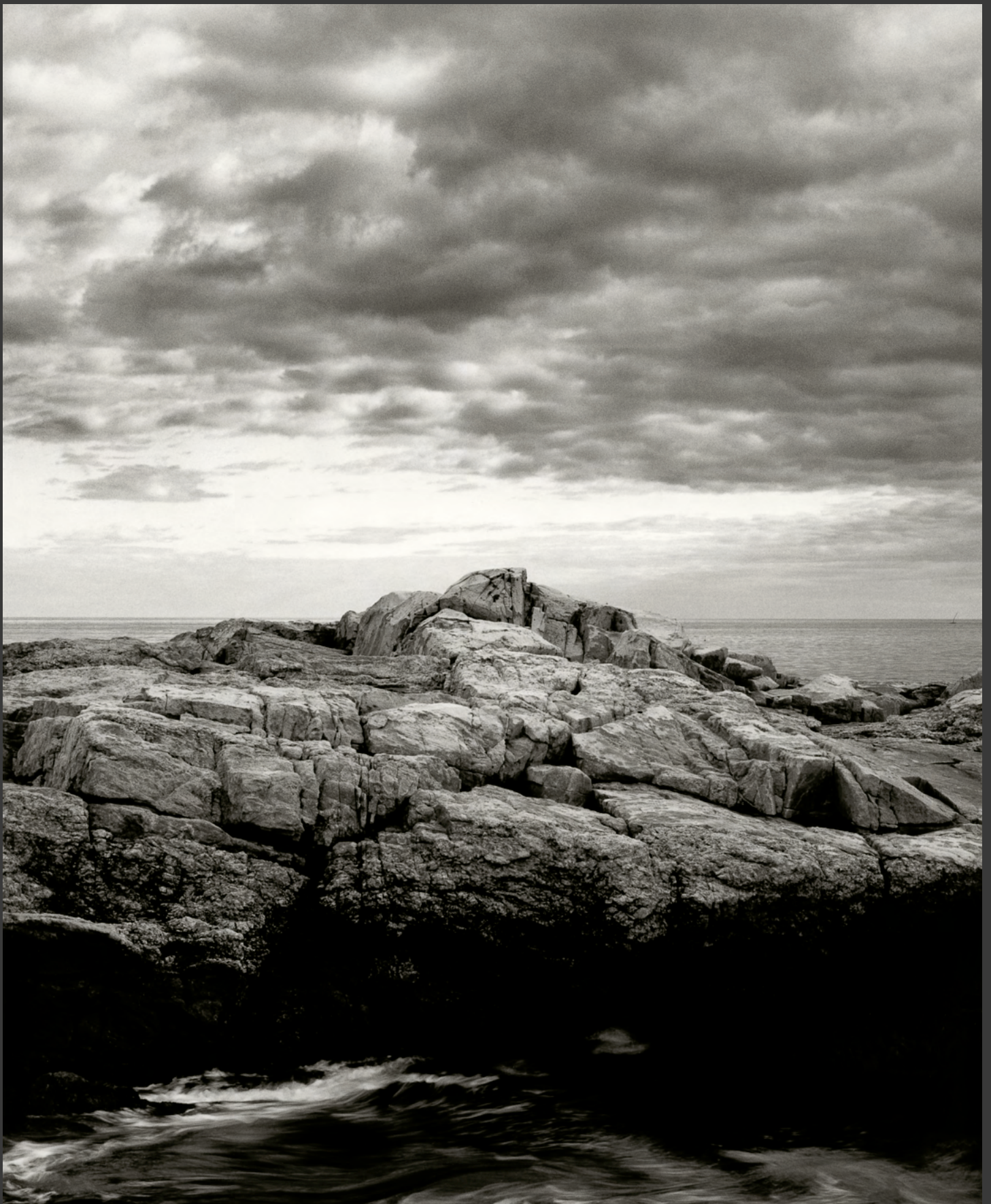
*The Watcher of
Winter's Deep, 2010*
Silver gelatin print
10 x 10"
AS115



Engaging the Oceanic, 2023
Silver gelatin print
10 x 11"
AS135



Luminous Darkness, 2011
Silver gelatin print
10.25 x 10"
AS121



Weathering Time, 2009
Archival pigment print
24.75 x 20"
AS143



A Fundamental Thing About Islands, 2010
Silver gelatin print
7.25 x 7.25"
AS112



Lookout, 2023
Silver gelatin print
7.25 x 7.25"
AS139



Philosopher Stone, 2023
Silver gelatin print
9.25 x 6.5"
AS128



She Came to Be Alone, 2023
Silver gelatin print
9.25 x 7"
AS133



Re-Staff of Life, 2023
Silver gelatin print
7.25 x 9.25"
AS129



Overlook, 2023
Silver gelatin print
7 x 7.25"
AS131



Thoughtful Before Immensity, 2023
Silver gelatin print
7 x 7.25"
AS136



Four Story Witness, 2010
Silver gelatin print
7 x 7"
AS116



Seasonal Two-step, 2023
Silver gelatin print
7 x 7"
AS132



To Singe the White Head, 2024
Archival pigment print
20 x 26.5"
AS144



Held Briefly One to Another, 2023
Silver gelatin print
9 x 6.5"
AS123



Unstill Life, 2023
Silver gelatin print
9 x 6.5"
AS122

Alexandra de Steiguer is the sole resident caretaker on the Isles of Shoals during five deserted months of winter, and recently returned from her twenty-seventh sojourn on the islands. Her images offer a solitary, naturalist perspective: not only paying tribute to the wild elements that claim those particular shores and reflecting wider connections within the natural world, but also pointing to the transitory and humbling nature of our residence in such places.

Alex creates her images using medium-format film and personally prints each one in her traditional darkroom. Her work has been exhibited in galleries throughout New England and is in the permanent collections of the deCordova Museum, the North Carolina Museum of Art, and the Ogunquit Museum of American Art. Her insightful musings on solitude, connection, and the creative process are published in her book *Small Island, Big Picture* and in original music composed and arranged on the Isles of Shoals. Alex's story has been the subject of two internationally distributed short-form documentary films. She is a two-time artist fellow of the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts.

PUCKER

ESTABLISHED 1967 BOSTON

GALLERY

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GALLERY HOURS:

Monday through Saturday

10:00 AM to 5:30 PM

Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 PM

Pucker Gallery is a member of the Boston Art Dealers Association and the New England Appraisers Association.

CREDITS:

Design: Leslie Anne Feagley

Editors: Jeanne Koles and Beth Plakidas

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DATES:

11 May through

23 June 2024

PUBLIC OPENING
RECEPTION:

Saturday 11 May 2024

3:00 to 6:00 PM

The artist will be present.

ONLINE EVENTS:

Please visit

www.puckergallery.com

for a list of virtual gatherings and events accompanying *Stories*.

STORIES: *Photographs by* Alexandra de Steiguer



Cover: Haley House #2, Smuttynose Island, 2005
Archival pigment print
24.75 x 20"
AS25

Stories: Chapter 2, 2010
Silver gelatin print
7.25 x 7.25"
AS110

Please visit www.puckergallery.com to view current and past exhibition catalogues, read artist biographies, and subscribe to the *Artwork of the Week* email list.