

What Inspires Me

She makes water and light live in harmony

By **Fredericka Foster**

For the Poughkeepsie Journal

Editor's note: What Inspires Me is a regular feature in Enjoy! that asks visual and performing artists and writers about the passions that motivate them to create or perform. If you would like to write about your passion for this feature, email bfarrell@poughkeepsiejournal.com

When I was 7 years old, my mother would send my sister and me to visit the Toledo Art Museum, across the street from our apartment house. A woman in a long white dress would look at us out of a canvas and I would stare back, feeling that she was as real as I was.

Unimaginable landscapes inspired curiosity and a passion to travel. Looking at the art of others made us want to paint, too. As with nature, love, religion, music and poetry, in painting we can experience a sense of intimacy with all that is. Likewise, when on water, I would lose my sense of isolation and feel profoundly connected.

Spending much of my life in the Pacific Northwest, I learned to love both water and the light that illuminated it. These oil paintings are a record of memories of being in or near a body of water, the formal aesthetic qualities of the photographs I make as models and the experience I have painting water. They are as much about color and light as they are about the abstract qualities of water painted without a horizon.

While I paint, I listen to



"Hudson River Wake" by Fredericka Foster. COURTESY PHOTOS



"Hudson River XIV" by Fredericka Foster.



Fredericka Foster



"Baybird" by Fredericka Foster.

music, strengthening the physical connection I have with my work. Rhythm is one of the primary organizers of composition in my paintings, along with color. I steal palettes from other paint-

ers: for example, Vermeer, Turner, Monet, Church, Whistler and Morandi, to make my paintings. My 2013 exhibition at the Fischbach Gallery in New York City was influenced by the music of

Philip Glass, Leonard Cohen, Patti Smith, Sezen Aksu and Italian opera.

Water, and consequently all living beings, face extraordinary challenges resulting from the rarity of fresh water on our plan-

et, pollution, fracking and the misuse of our most intimate resource. Exhibiting with an ally of water, the Beacon Institute of Rivers and Estuaries, allows this work to be part of the effort to support

clean water.

Two local groups — Motherlode Trio and Red — will perform songs about water at the artist's talk I will give at the Beacon Institute of Rivers and Estuaries from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday.

Visitors will have the opportunity to experience the rhythms and art that are inspired by this invaluable resource that is water. We hope you can join us.

Fredericka Foster is represented by the Fischbach Gallery in New York City. She was the guest curator for the "Value of Water" at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in 2011-12. She attends retreats at the Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries in Garrison. Visit www.thinkaboutwater.com

IF YOU GO

Fredericka Foster will share her thoughts in a Creative Process Artist talk at Beacon Institute Gallery, 199 Main St., Beacon, April 12 at 5 p.m. The event is free. Musical guests include Motherlode Trio and Red. Visit www.bire.org for more information.