

An abstract painting by John Walker, featuring a complex composition of thick, expressive brushstrokes. The color palette is dominated by dark, moody tones like black, deep blue, and green, contrasted with vibrant areas of orange, red, and yellow. The texture is highly visible, with many areas of impasto. The overall effect is one of intense energy and emotional depth.

OGUNQUIT MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

John Walker

**FROM LOW TIDE
TO HIGH TIDE**



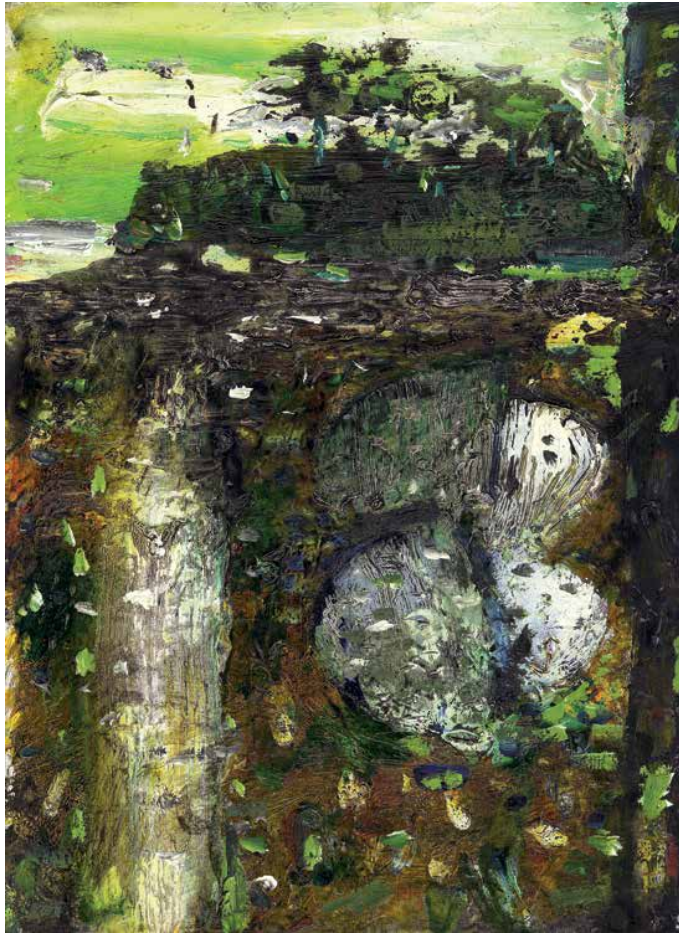
OGUNQUIT MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

CATALOG AND ESSAY BY
Katherine French, Guest Curator

John Walker

**FROM LOW TIDE
TO HIGH TIDE**

August 1 – October 31, 2022



COVER

Seal Point Series #V VIII, detail, 2007
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

PREVIOUS PAGE

Untitled, 1986
oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches

LEFT TO RIGHT

Untitled Panel Painting #3, 2013
oil on panel, 11.75 x 8.625 inches

Harrington Road Series #27, 2010
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

Harrington Road Series #30, 2010
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

Harrington Road Series #10, 2010
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

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John Walker
LEFT
Untitled, 1980
 oil on canvas, 10 x 8 inches

John Walker: From Low Tide to High Tide

by Katherine French

When John Walker first visited Maine, he couldn't paint landscape. It was too pretty, too scenic – he couldn't do anything with it. Known for emotionally charged work that draws upon personal history and a profound love of art, he was primarily a studio painter before finally moving to the state, capable of creating monumental, abstract canvases that would command large gallery spaces, yet still convey intimate feeling. However, walking along the coast near what became his home, he felt inspired by the oddly shaped pools of water that had formed in tidal mudflats and began painting outdoors. No longer disconcerted by Maine's beauty, he now saw ways to work from the landscape without having to resort to predictable views. And while the resulting paintings are decidedly beautiful, there is nothing pretty about them.

Born in 1939 to a working-class family in Birmingham, England, Walker knew what he wanted to become by the age of seven. When a teacher praised his ability to articulate limbs in a figure drawing, he ran home from school to announce he was an artist and luckily, his mother agreed. "She was a life force," Walker remembers. Forced to leave school to care for younger siblings after her own mother died in childbirth, Walker's mother somehow managed to educate herself and became a "supplier of knowledge" for her children.² He remembers her reading Shakespeare aloud. She took him to the Birmingham Museum and introduced him to Constable – for "industrial cities in England have great museums and in great museums there is always a wonderful Constable painting."³ When he was old enough, she left him there for entire days to wander through and look at paintings while she worked. And, after scrubbing floors at the local Woolworths, she brought home drawing supplies, thinking that if her youngest son wanted to be an artist, she would find ways to make it happen. "She was one of those women that society depended on to function" he said. "If someone gave birth, she was there. If someone died, she'd wrap him up."⁴

Walker's parents met during the First World War when his mother was serving as an auxiliary nurse and his father, John Henry, had been temporarily sent home to recover from injuries that were both physical and emotional. On the very first day of the Battle of the Somme, a bloody five-month conflict, his immediate family lost eleven members due to the practice of sending entire neighborhoods into combat together. When things went badly as they so often did in trench warfare, whole communities were decimated. Trying to recover at home, the artist's father often found himself the uncomfortable bearer of bad news for those who came to him seeking word of missing

loved ones. When he ultimately returned to the front Walker's father almost died from shrapnel wounds at Passchendaele a year later, physically surviving to marry and raise a family, but psychologically damaged by his wartime experience.



Walker grew up in West Midland city of Birmingham near the coal fields of Black Country, once poetically described as "black by day and red by night" because manufacturing furnaces burned continuously, spewing smoke and grime and lighting the Victorian countryside with an insidious glow.⁸ Birmingham itself is not a city known for its picturesque beauty and this landlocked industrial center located fifty miles inland seems an unlikely birthplace for an artist who now concentrates on ocean landscape. However, Walker insists that although a city boy, he's always felt more comfort-

able outside cities. Despite its reputation as an urban center, Birmingham offered easy access to the countryside. Walker's housing estate was located on what was then the outskirts, just a short walk to the River Tame and its many tributaries where his older brothers went fishing and he often tagged along.

His training at the Birmingham School of Art, from 1956 until 1960, was rigorously traditional. Students drew and painted from the figure five days a week. There was no mention of abstraction or the avant garde. Walker remembers a reproduction of a Renoir hanging in a classroom, but never anything modern or contemporary. Yet, somehow, he developed a fascination with Van Gogh and at the age of eighteen he got on his motorbike and went to Amsterdam, primarily to see Van Gogh, but also pay homage to Rembrandt. Pausing in front of *The Jewish Bride* in the Rijksmuseum, he was overcome by the image of a couple touching hands, a sublime moment in painting that manages to fuse the sensual and the spiritual. This visual expression of tenderness triggered profound emotions in the young art student. Leaving the Rijksmuseum, he stumbled across the street to the Stedelijk Museum and immediately felt confronted by a Malevich painting of a white square on a white ground. He was confused, taken off balance by the same depth of emotion he'd experienced standing in front of the Rembrandt.

Coming out of a figurative art program, Walker had no way of intellectually dealing

LEFT TO RIGHT

Untitled (Wounded Soldier Carried), 1998
etching, aquatint, chine collé, 16 x 15 inches

Dawn - July 01, 2001
oil on linen, 84 x 66 inches





LEFT TO RIGHT

Untitled, 2011
oil on Bingo card
7.25 x 5.5 inches

Harrington Road Series #6, 2010
oil on Bingo card
7.25 x 5.5 inches



with geometric abstraction. He had no idea why he should feel so strongly and didn't think anyone at school could explain it. However, seeking out examples of the New York School at the Tate Museum in London, he found them to be hugely spiritual and years later was comforted by the response Malevich gave when questioned about his ambition for painting, which was "to imbue the square with feeling."⁶ This made sense. "Somehow that square had to act figuratively and not abstractly even though it was in an abstract form."⁷ This observation set up a dialogue between representation and abstraction that's still evident in his work. Like Picasso who "wanted his paintings to stop just this side of abstraction," Walker once said that "he wanted his paintings to stop just this side of figuration."⁸ This desire to occupy a middle ground provided a path forward when it came to successfully depicting his father – or more importantly, his father's experience – in a meaningful way. "I was still a figurative painter," Walker remembers, "trying to paint pictures of my father who had been injured in the war. And I exhausted it. I mean, how many times can you paint someone in agony or pain before it becomes a cliché?"⁹ So, after a year in school copying Goya, a painter whose *Disasters of War* prints managed to avoid the predictable with subtle, yet harsh complexity, Walker began to edge towards abstraction. He continued his studies at the British School at Rome and then the Académie de la Grande Chaudière in Paris before returning to England to teach. He continued to experiment sometimes by drawing directly on the wall, sometimes with three dimensional collages in reaction to the minimal flatness of 1960s painting. "I never believed abstract art should be merely frontal... why can't it have volume," he asked. "Why can't it have air?"¹⁰

Confronted by evidence that Malevich and Rembrandt could accomplish the same thing in radically different ways, Walker resolved that *his* shapes would be filled with emotion as what should "be truly the ambition of painting at its highest moment"¹¹ and this work was increasingly well received. He won prizes from the Arts Council and other organizations, and in 1967 received a prestigious artist residency at the University of Leeds. In 1969 a Harkness Fellowship enabled him to move to New York where he became acquainted with the critic Dore Ashton who identified forms in his canvas collage "as protagonists in his personal painting drama."¹² She was insightful enough to recognize that certain hourglass figures were cast and recast, sometimes floating and sometimes grounded, defined by surrounding space. Other critics debated whether these shapes were purely abstract or referenced art history. Was Walker depicting the Infanta or doorway in *Las Meninas* by Velazquez or the arms akimbo outline of Goya's *Duchess of Alba*? As it turns out, specific references didn't matter. Walker was happy for his enclosed forms to be ambiguous and subservient to the act of painting itself. It would be wrong to think that Goya was merely painting a portrait or that Walker was only referencing him. Like all artists, both were pursuing complex artistic metaphors

by instinctual choices they made about "shape, color, spatial sensations and techniques."¹³ While Walker's Alba works might have begun "as a parable of the painter's life," Ashton realized that they had quickly evolved into "an argument with the essential paradox of painting itself: the transformation of a flat surface into an illusion."¹⁴ Or, as Walker would emphatically insist, "these are just paintings – in the end it's about nothing except painting."¹⁵

In England Walker felt isolated, but in New York enjoyed being part of a community of serious artists his own age all prepared to help each out – Elizabeth Murray used to babysit for his children, and he used to trade favors with friends in a circle that included Harvey Quaytman, Brice Marden, and Jake Berthot. He also appreciated the attention and generosity of older painters like Philip Guston and Robert Motherwell, as well as Richard Diebenkorn when the California artist was in town. His dealer Betty Parsons was particularly helpful. After insisting that Walker couldn't possibly remain in his Grand Street loft with young children during August, she arranged for his family to stay in a cottage in Maine near the Head Tide on the Sheepscot River to escape the heat. This was his first introduction to the state, and as a studio artist was disconcerted by a landscape that he found too beautiful, too unpaintable. "It was painful to look outside the window."¹⁶ Although he went fly fishing on the tidal river, he stayed inside to paint that summer, creating works that attracted the attention of collectors and museum curators who exhibited them alongside wham bam contemporaries like Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. This was also disconcerting. Touring an international exhibition at the National Gallery in Washington, Walker felt "so sorry for my paintings" vulnerably displayed beside works that were so "brazenly visual."¹⁷ Size wise, his paintings stood up, but their personalities were more introspective. "Even though they were large in surface, they looked terribly intimate," said Walker. "There was no way I could or wanted to compete in that sort of billboard kind of art."¹⁸

After two years in America, he returned to England for an artist residency at Oxford and to teach at the Royal College before being invited back to teach at Yale. For a while he commuted between London and New York but was invited to Australia in 1979 where he stayed for ten years, eventually becoming Dean of the Victoria College of Art in Melbourne. This had a profound impact. Australia is a country that's tremendously

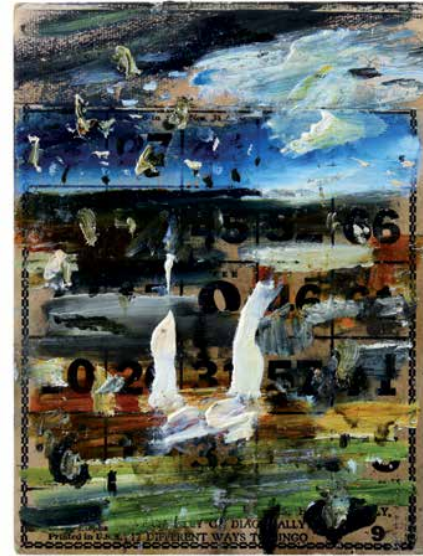


LEFT TO RIGHT

Untitled Bingo Card, 2005
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

Seal Point Series #091, 2005
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

Beano #9 Seal Point Series #K36, 2006
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches



LEFT TO RIGHT
Seal Point Series #K37, 2006
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches
Seal Point Series #KXI, 2006
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches
Seal Point Series #V III, 2007
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

encouraging to young artists, but far more important were connections Walker made with Aboriginal painters. Becoming friendly with an elder member of a clan, he was invited north to observe bark painters working on site – something he later described as “one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.”¹⁹ He found Aboriginal artists to be completely authentic, totally engaged in the process of making art as opposed to endlessly talking about it. Invited to watch a group work, he was at first confused when they kept putting it off, but later found out it was because they were waiting for a particular white pigment coming from three hundred miles away by foot. When it finally arrived, they all hiked five miles into the bush together, prepared the bark, and told Walker to sit a distance away to observe. He could barely hear them singing and chanting but clearly saw the magnificence of the painting they were working on. However, at the end of the day, they got up and left what he thought was a masterpiece lying in the dust. Walker protested and was laughed off. “They’re no good now, Johnnie,” they told him. “Spirit’s gone.”²⁰

This certainly goes against Western training, as well as the inclination of any curator or gallerist to preserve work. However, as a practicing artist Walker could understand. Aboriginal painters are told to be painters. They have no choice about the roles they’re assigned and are forbidden to share stories about what they create. Walker knew in his bones what that meant. Art was the only thing he’d been any good at. He might have chosen to pursue a calling yet was an artist long before going to art school. And, while others might encourage him to talk about his work, he never felt able to communicate meaning through words alone. Instead, the essential nature of painting was revealed in the sound of a brush sweeping across a piece of bark or canvas, a sound that might contain a thousand years of history and emotion in one whispered stroke. Back in Melbourne, Walker invited Aboriginal painters to come and teach, not so much to expose his students to techniques involving hand-dug ochres or prepared bark, but rather to acquaint them with the spiritual intent of an indigenous people who’d been living in their country for thousands of years.

After ten years in Australia, he was invited to teach at Skowhegan, an intensive summer school for painting and sculpture in rural Maine. For a host of personal reasons, he decided to move to the United States, accepted teaching jobs first at Yale and

then Boston University and began looking for a place to buy in Maine. He started inland, but an exploration of the coastline eventually landed him in South Bristol. He was still anti-scenic, capable of ignoring the saltwater pastoral outside his window in favor of studio work, yet proximity to muddy tidal flats perhaps triggered reinterest in depicting his father's wartime experience. He began a careful study of the World War I poets Wilfred Owens and David Jones whose descriptions of trench warfare were often filled with references to mud. Walker actually began to incorporate poetic verse into his work as a way of getting close to his father. In *Passchendaele I*, a monumental painting made in reference to the battle where his father almost died, Walker quotes Owen writing about a dying soldier with the words "...Languid seemed his mood...slowly he lowered, his whole face kissed the mud."²³ A blood red mudslide flows down from the top of the painting, weaving past text-filled shapes and bead dots that recall Walker's interest in tribal art. "My father wasn't a poet," Walker remarked when asked why expressive wartime poems struck such a chord or why it was important to integrate them into his work, "but they sounded like my father talking."²²

By painting words, he was touching them; by outlining the shape of words with his brush, they became meaningful. Although his father had died more than twenty years earlier, work made in the 1990s allowed Walker to continue conversations they'd begun when he was back in art school. The Alba form appears almost unbidden.²⁵ A defeated looking soldier with a sheephead skull marches surreally into the picture. Images based on his five-year-old son Harry's drawings not only pay homage to Walker's own father, but also the idea of fatherhood itself. Around the same time, Walker began a series of prints entitled *Passing Bells* referencing Goya's *Disasters of War* prints, as well as Wilfred Owen's realization that passing bells for the doomed youth of his generation would not be rung over the quiet English landscape but instead sound mockingly in the "monstrous anger of the guns...the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle."²⁴ Fifteen of these dramatic works were organized into a traveling exhibition entitled *A Theatre of Recollection* that began its tour at Boston University and ended at the Yale Center for British Art. Many viewers interpreted Walker's complex engagement with personal and global history to be antiwar, but as he told curator John Stomberg, *A Theatre of Recollection* had "less to do with war than love...love of my father."²⁵



LEFT TO RIGHT
Seal Paint Series #V VIII, 2007
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

Untitled Bingo Card [KM 127], 2007
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

Untitled, 2010
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches





LEFT TO RIGHT
Seal Point Series #V VII, 2007
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

Harrington Road Series #2, 2010
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

Harrington Road Series #2I, 2010
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

Love is arguably the most profound emotion – that it can be contained within a shape or defined by it was at the core of an argument Dore Ashton made in the early 1970s. Somehow Walker had managed to break through an impasse experienced by painters whose “impoverished stylistic variations”²⁶ denied the emotional depths of abstraction. Instead of trying to eliminate feeling, Walker embraced it headlong with a creative impulse more in line with the romantic landscapes of Constable or the ambition of Malevich to imbue a square with meaning. Shape “has to have integrity,” Walker told Ashton. “It has to be so personal I can attach things to it.”²⁷

A Theatre of Recollection was intensely personal. Haunted by his father’s memory – and by the artistic memory of those who didn’t survive – Walker found himself distressed by something he’d never experienced. After *Passing Bells*, he felt empty. A kind of inherited trauma made it difficult to paint, but eventually landscape saved him. “There is a saying,” Walker once humorously remarked in an interview, “that if you cut an Englishman, you don’t draw blood—you draw a landscape.”²⁸ He’d spent years contemplating the fact of mud, first with Aboriginal artists who would wait for just the right earth pigment to arrive by foot and then by trying to describe the muddy trenches his father had occupied. Now spending time on the coast of Maine,

he was seeing a lot of it. Painting, basically the act of moving earth pigment across a prepared surface, is defined by mud. Walking along the muddy tidal flats in South Bristol, Walker discovered a place his family nicknamed “smelly cove” where garbage and plastic debris washed up and collected into rotting piles with old seaweed and dead fish. Nothing about the place was picturesque and that suited him just fine.

For years, a reluctance to paint scenic views had kept Walker inside the studio, but now he felt inspired by his environment. Twice a day new watery shapes formed in pools left by outgoing tides. While an expanse of mud might have once recalled muddy battle fields churned by artillery, Walker was now able to concentrate on the peaceful ebb and flow of the ocean. He liked watching seagulls swoop down to peck at crustaceans or listening to barely submerged clams spit water. A whole living world lay at his feet while overhead dramatic cloud patterns broke and reformed. The weather was constantly changing and so was the light. Nature imposed itself on his painter’s eye and he felt compelled to respond.

Although now working from observation, Walker's paintings are still usually classified as abstractions. However, a requisite horizon line allows us to read them as landscapes. An indistinct sun or moon sometimes appears over swaths of blue ocean or white cakes of sea ice. Yet as before, Walker's primary interest is an exploration of shape. If the Alba form was a vessel that contained sincere emotion, then found shapes left in the wake of outgoing tides could be representative of truthful reality. Walker once said that he was committed to "drawing honestly what I was seeing, not what I *thought* I was seeing"²⁹ and the same holds true for painting. "This thing about abstraction versus representation...it's not part of the dialogue anymore,"³⁰ he insists. "The idea is to get the painting to the point of reality. Now whether that's an abstract reality or a realistic reality is beside the point...If the painting is going well, it becomes its own representation, its own reality."³¹

Smelly cove became the studio. Sometimes Walker took paintings inside to work on them, but then brought them out again, never feeling they were complete until he'd achieved an accurate description of what he'd seen. These were never simple illustrations of place. Instead, work became an amalgam of what Walker had observed over days and months of looking at transient light and shape. "Everything you see in the paintings I've seen," he affirms. "I try to believe that with all my heart. But a lot it I've not seen at the same time."³² Essentially, he was reinvigorating abstraction by turning to the real world, a practice which he could identify in the work of others. Kandinsky might have claimed to have made the first abstract painting, but the stage was set by Cezanne's geometric studies of Mont Sainte-Victoire. Walker points to Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, which infused a love for jazzy blues into an abstract street grid, as perhaps the most accurate depiction of New York city there is. And once, after walking through Richard Diebenkorn's neighborhood to visit the artist in his studio, he was struck by how realistically Diebenkorn had used cubist abstraction to represent his immediate surroundings.³³

Walker became the expert of smelly cove and its environs. Looking closely, day after day, month in and month out, he was able to realize a desire to know everything about the place, perhaps in an unwitting tribute to the artist his mother first introduced him to in the Birmingham Art Gallery, a painter so invested in the area around



LEFT TO RIGHT
Untitled Bingo Card 54, 2014
 oil on Bingo card, 7.5 x 5.625 inches

Untitled #1, 2014
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches

Untitled, 2016
 oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches





Fire and Tide, 2011-14
oil on canvas, 48 x 36 inches

where he was born that it became known as Constable Country. "I should paint my own places best," Constable once wrote a friend, for "painting is but another word for feeling."³⁴ Most good painters realize this: feelings grow from observation and observations need to be truthful. Walker relates a story about the small paintings that Constable made en plein air to record the ever-changing clouds over Hampstead Heath, paintings so precise that auction houses have been able to confirm authenticity by comparing penciled notations about weather on the back against official accounts at the Royal Observatory.³⁵ Ideally, thought Walker, he could pursue the same kind of veracity in his own work.

Contemporary critics have remarked on similarities between Constable's cloud studies and small landscapes Walker has made on the back of discarded bingo cards. Discovered in an old community center purchased as a studio, he'd almost consigned the cards to the rubbish, but thought he might make drawings on their black paper backing. However, the frontside presented other possibilities and Walker eventually made hundreds of paintings on the 7.5 by 5.5 inch card stock, diminutive works that read as monumental. Classically, the grid is a tool artists use to transfer small images onto a larger wall or canvas, but in modern times, it's more often the subject of art. Or, as art theorist and historian Rosalind Krauss once said, "what art looks like when it turned its back on nature."³⁶ Walker refused to deny nature. Bingo as a game of chance was a perfect metaphor for unpredictable weather conditions; the grid spoke to whatever controls society might try to impose. Artistically, this was a challenge Walker relished. The grid pushed his painting to the front, yet he was still able to subvert its rigid structure with thick, freely expressive brushstrokes that broke past the structural confines of those dead straight lines.

And of course, there was always mud. Painting starts with mud. Over the centuries artists have transformed it brilliantly. Ochres mined in southern France was used by prehistoric artists inside caves; by the Romans to create wall murals; and by Picasso who thought his paint was just that – colored mud. Near smelly cove was place where clammers liked to go and Walker watched them creating unexpectedly beautiful earthworks with the holes they dug. And just like aboriginal artists, the clammers would simply get up and walk away when finished, leaving marks in wet sand that disappeared when the tide returned. Walker began to incorporate mud into his medium as a way of literally bringing nature into his painting. It seemed important to take this most mundane of materials and use it for something special, to make it part of his art.

The foul, stinking mud of Maine's low tide is unappealing to tourists, but perfectly acceptable to people who live and work by the sea. Like Maine's fishermen, clammers

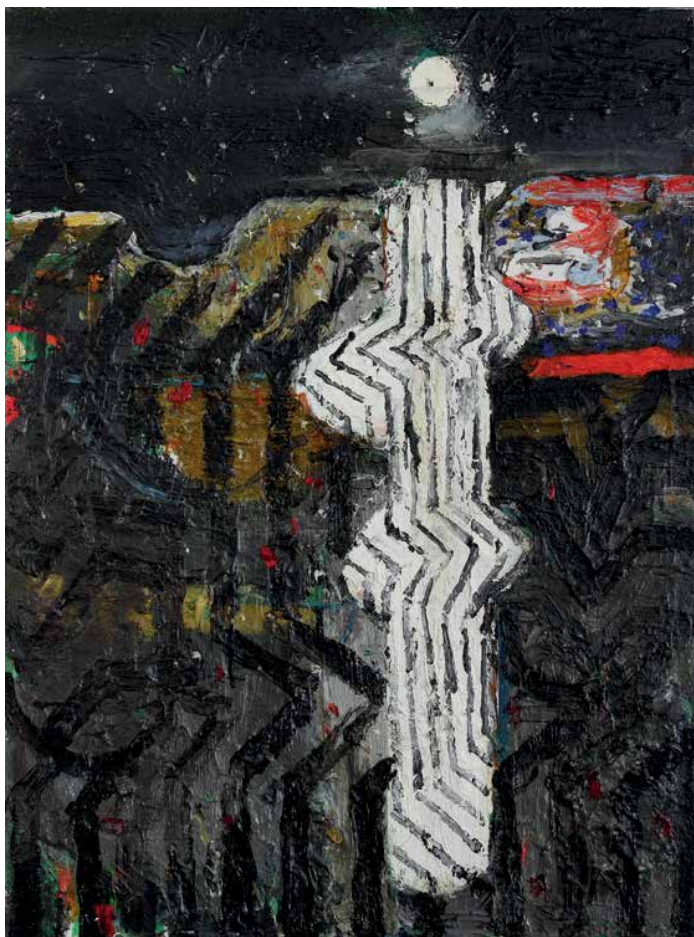
and lobstermen, Walker was working. Inheriting what he's called a terrible work ethic from elderly parents who'd "been sold the idea by the Victorians...that's all the working class was given, really,"³⁷ Walker feels guilty if he doesn't paint every day. Yet the physical act is necessary. Despite living in a place of great natural beauty, he's "as blind as anyone else until...immersed in it."³⁸ Convinced that artists are only intelligent when they're working, Walker views drawing as a "perfect convergence of heart and mind and hand,"³⁹ and perhaps painting even more so. He likes listening to the sound of his brush. Engaged in a physical conversation that goes back and forth, it seems as though he's almost talking with his brush, and it's begun talking back to him.

Like a parent who recognizes similarities in children, but understands their differences, Walker wants each painting to possess individual character, its own personality. His approach to marine landscape pretty much insures this will always happen. If Constable studied clouds to understand transient energy, then Walker looks to short-lived shapes formed by tidal movement. In the first phase of landscape work called *Low Tide*, Walker hated to see water rushing in. It covered up everything he was interested in painting, and he would simply get up and walk away. But after years of examining muddy pools, he shifted into a second phase called *High Tide* to embrace the ocean's return. Luminous, more optimistic blues now predominate large canvases completed inside the studio. Zigzag lines record ripples and reflections of changing light on fast moving water. "I am painting about something that's moving, literally moving" he says about attempts to record this dynamic power, and "there's an anxiety about catching those moments..."⁴⁰

In the end, Walker does not so much represent Maine's coastline, but rather feelings he has about natural forces that can't be controlled – whether time, tides, or a worldwide pandemic that prevented him from traveling to Madrid to view Goya's black paintings. Finally able to visit the Prado in March 2022, he was overcome by the late works of an artist he'd long admired, a response not only based on respect, but also upon emotional understanding of what a lifetime spent painting can truly mean. Walker believes in the intelligence of the hand and a process that takes him past human inhibitions to that special place where colored mud can be transformed into light and air. "I'm more interested in what painting becomes," he's said, "rather than my intention."⁴¹ Expressing sentiments about drawing that can also be applied to painting, he's observed "... it's just like breathing. It makes me think, it makes me care, it makes me feel."⁴² And perhaps also generate the necessary bravery to relinquish control and let a painting take him to places he's not yet been.

Two Brush Fires, 2013
oil on canvas, 28 x 22 inches





ENDNOTES

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3. A video interview between the artist John Walker and Jennifer Samet, March 5, 2019, in conjunction with the exhibition *John Walker: Moments of Observation*, January 18-July 14, 2019, at the Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5zWX6VI_4I.
4. Samet, "Beer with A Painter."
5. Linda Ellis, "Black by Day, Red by Night," Black Country Museums blog, October 24, 2009, <https://madeintheblackcountry.wordpress.com/2009/10/24/black-by-day-red-by-night/>. "Whilst in 1862, Elihu Burritt, the American Consul to Birmingham, described the region as black by day and red by night because the local furnaces gave out smoke and grime during the day and glowed at night."
6. A quote by Malevich recalled by Walker in his conversation with Jennifer Samet. Samet "Beer with A Painter: John Walker."
7. An interview between the artist John Walker and Colin Smith. See Colin Smith, "Doors Not Windows," in *John Walker: Paintings, Prints and Works on Paper, 2008-2018*, (Wiltshire: Messums Wiltshire, 2018): 5, <https://messumswiltshire.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/John-Walker-FINAL-2.pdf>.
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9. Samet "Beer with A Painter: John Walker."
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12. Dore Ashton, "In Light of Painting: John Walker's Recent and Not So Recent Work," in *John Walker: Collage* (New York, Knoedler & Company, 2005), 9.
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14. Ibid.
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16. A video interview with the artist John Walker, December 4, 2019, in conjunction with the exhibition *John Walker: New Paintings*, December 4, 2019-February 23, 2020, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, England, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbx8HodtiZl>.
17. A recorded interview between the artist John Walker and Jonathan Watkins, May 4, 2019, in conjunction with the exhibition *John Walker: Paintings, Prints and Works on Paper, 2008-2018*, May 4-June 9, 2019, Messums Wiltshire, Wiltshire, England, <https://soundcloud.com/user-605355935/john-walker-in-conversation-with-jonathan-watkins-copy-online-audio-convertercom>.
18. Ibid.
19. Samet, *John Walker: Moments of Observation*.
20. Ibid.
21. Wilfred Owen, "The Last Laugh," in *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, ed. Jon Stallworthy (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), 145.
22. Samet, *John Walker: Moments of Observation*.
23. John Stomberg, "A Theatre of Recollection: Paintings and Prints by John Walker," in *A Theatre of Recollection: Paintings and Prints by John Walker* (Boston: Boston University Art Gallery, 1997), 28. "Walker says he wrestles with the Alba form, as though it appears on his canvas with little provocation on his part."
24. Wilfred Owen, "Anthem for Doomed Youth," in *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, ed. Jon Stallworthy (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), 76.
25. Stomberg, "A Theatre of Recollection," 28.
26. Dore Ashton, "The Shape's the Thing: Paintings by John Walker," *Studio International* (April 1971): 171.
27. Ibid.
28. Samet, "Beer with A Painter: John Walker."
29. A video interview with artist John Walker, June 19, 2017, in conjunction with the exhibition *John Walker: A Painter Draws*, May 18-August 20, 2017, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME, <https://vimeo.com/222210944>.
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31. Ibid.
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33. John Walker in conversation with the author, May 9, 2022.
34. See Ronald Parkinson, *John Constable: The Man and His Art* (London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1998), 9.
35. John Walker, in conversation with the author, May 16, 2022.
36. Rosalind Krauss, "Grids," *October Magazine*, Vol. 9, (Summer 1979), 50.
37. Watkins, *John Walker: Paintings, Prints and Works on Paper*.
38. Ibid.
39. Samet, *John Walker: Moments of Observation*.
40. Ibid.
41. John Walker in conversation with the author, May 9, 2022.
42. Samet, *John Walker: Moments of Observation*.

Pemaquid #21, 2016
oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches

Biographies

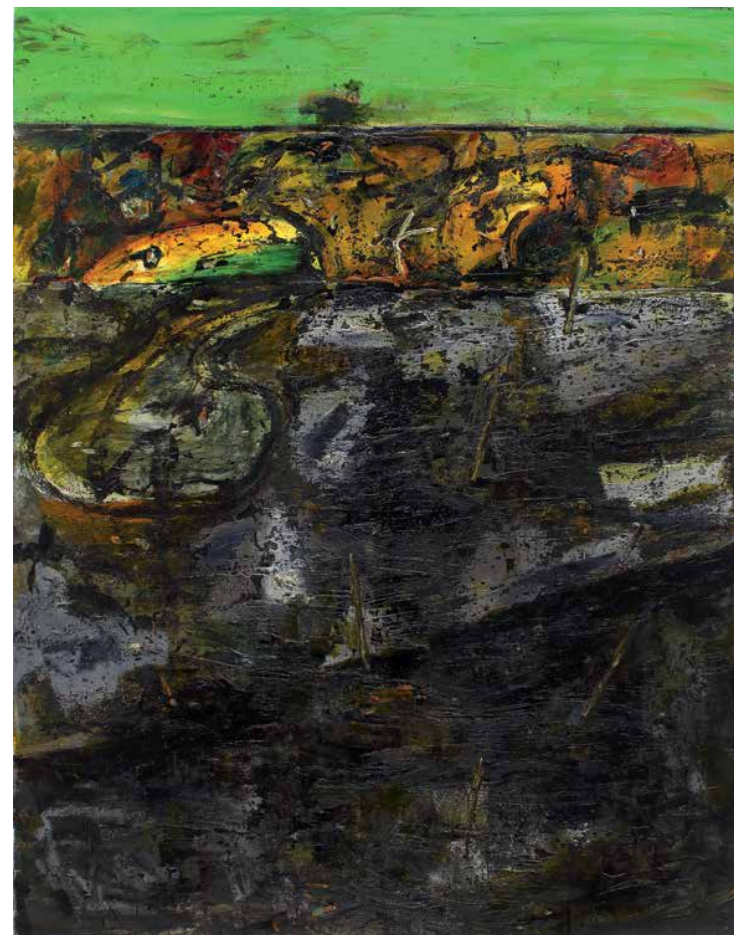
John Walker

Born in Birmingham, England, the painter John Walker has been the recipient of numerous awards and represented England in the 1972 Venice Biennale. He has exhibited widely, both nationally and internationally, and his work can be found in the permanent collections of countless museums, which include the Guggenheim, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles; the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston; the National Gallery of Art and the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC; the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven; the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra; and the Tate Gallery in London, among numerous others. Walker has held significant teaching positions in England, Australia, and China and in 2015 retired as Professor Emeritus from Boston University, where he was head of the graduate painting program for many years. Much of Walker's work of the last twenty years is based on the coast of Maine, where the artist lives and works.

Katherine French

Upon retirement from the Danforth Museum of Art as Director Emerita, Katherine French moved to northern Vermont where she now works as an independent curator. Recipient of awards for curatorial excellence from the New England chapter of the International Association of Art Critics, she was also named Best Curator of Locally Made Art at the Boston Art Awards.

Fall, Maine, 2003-08
oil on linen, 84 x 66 inches





Sea Cake II (Winter 04), 2004
oil on canvas, 84 x 66 inches

John Walker: From Low Tide to High Tide
Ogunquit Museum of American Art

- | | |
|--|--|
| 01. <i>Untitled</i> , 1980
oil on canvas, 10 x 8 inches | 17. <i>Harrington Road Series #10</i> , 2010
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches |
| 02. <i>Untitled</i> , 1986
oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches | 18. <i>Harrington Road Series #2</i> , 2010
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches |
| 03. <i>Untitled (Wounded Soldier Carried)</i> , 1998
etching, aquatint, chine collé
16 x 15 inches, Private Collection | 19. <i>Harrington Road Series #21</i> , 2010
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches |
| 04. <i>Dawn - July 01</i> , 2001
oil on linen, 84 x 66 inches | 20. <i>Harrington Road Series #27</i> , 2010
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches |
| 05. <i>Fall, Maine</i> , 2003-08
oil on linen, 84 x 66 inches | 21. <i>Harrington Road Series #30</i> , 2010
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches |
| 06. <i>Sea Cake II (Winter 04)</i> , 2004
oil on canvas, 84 x 66 inches | 22. <i>Harrington Road Series #6</i> , 2010
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches |
| 07. <i>Seal Point Series #091</i> , 2005
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches | 23. <i>Untitled</i> , 2010
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches |
| 08. <i>Untitled Bingo Card [KM 28]</i> , 2005
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches | 24. <i>Untitled</i> , 2011
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches |
| 09. <i>Beano #9 Seal Point Series #K36</i> , 2006
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches | 25. <i>Fire and Tide</i> , 2011-14
oil on canvas, 48 x 36 inches |
| 10. <i>Seal Point Series #K37</i> , 2006
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches | 26. <i>Two Brush Fires</i> , 2013
oil on canvas, 28 x 22 inches |
| 11. <i>Seal Point Series #KXI</i> , 2006
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches | 27. <i>Untitled Panel Painting #3</i> , 2013
oil on panel, 11.75 x 8.625 inches
Private Collection |
| 12. <i>Untitled</i> , 2007
oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches
Courtesy Doug and Betsy Anderson | 28. <i>Untitled Panel Painting #4</i> , 2013
oil on panel, 11.75 x 8.625 inches
Private Collection |
| 13. <i>Seal Point Series #V III</i> , 2007
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches | 29. <i>Untitled #1</i> , 2014
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches |
| 14. <i>Seal Point Series #V VII</i> , 2007
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches | 30. <i>Untitled Bingo Card 54</i> , 2014
oil on Bingo card, 7.5 x 5.625 inches |
| 15. <i>Seal Point Series #V VIII</i> , 2007
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches | 31. <i>Pemaquid #21</i> , 2016
oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches |
| 16. <i>Untitled Bingo Card [KM 127]</i> , 2007
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches | 32. <i>Untitled</i> , 2016
oil on Bingo card, 7.25 x 5.5 inches |



Untitled, 2007
oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches

Acknowledgements

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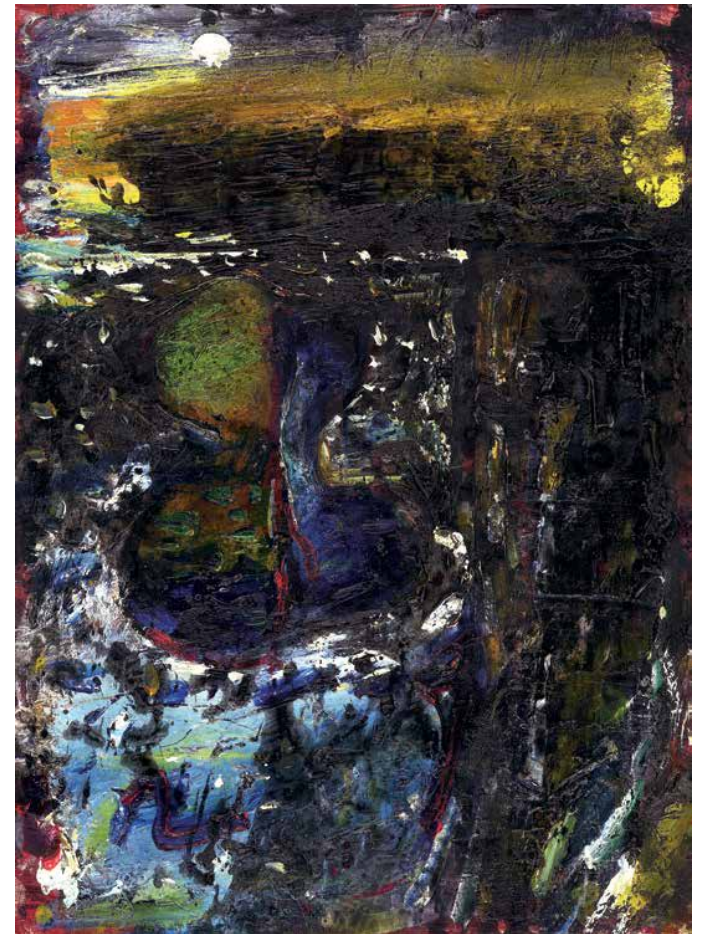
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Unless otherwise noted, all works collection of the artist, loans courtesy of Alexandre Gallery.

Untitled Panel Painting #4, 2013
oil on panel, 11.75 x 8.625 inches



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