

What Would Grandma Do?

Electronic Artist Portfolio for Linda Finch



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BIO/ Linda Finch

The lakes of the Adirondacks and the fertile farmland of the Mohawk Valley are the early inspirations for the artwork of Linda Finch, born in Gloversville NY in 1943. Country life, agriculture and the natural environment are reflected in her work, whether it is painting with acrylics, oils or encaustic; she also creates sculpture in wood or steel and paints large historic and exotic murals.

Retired in 2000 from careers in teaching Art, Counseling, and Education, she returned to painting and recently became involved in politics. She is now an environmental activist, trying to squeeze a thousand words into every picture. She has a M.S. Degree in Art from the New York State University at New Paltz and a degree in Industrial Relations from Cornell University.

Currently she resides both in the U.S. Virgin Islands raising bananas on a small organic farm, and also in the Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York.

Current Exhibit Statement

Channeling Grandma: Fracking Paintings by Linda Finch at the Bennington Museum On View May 9 through July 26

"Channeling Moses: Fracking Paintings by Linda Finch"
On view at Bennington Museum

Channeling is the belief that a person's body has been taken over by a spirit for the purpose of imparting wisdom and bringing about a conscious transformation. I feel that Anna Moses guided my hands in an effort to inform and educate people to the risks that lay ahead for the American rural landscape. Linda Finch, Artist

The lakes of the Adirondacks and the fertile farmland of the Mohawk Valley served as the early inspirations for the artwork of Linda Finch, born in Gloversville NY in 1943. Country life, agriculture and the natural environment are reflected in her work, but since 2012, her paintings have taken on a different "color." In 2006, the Marcellus Shale region was discovered and hordes of company men, engineers, gas workers, and lawyers descended on quiet unsuspecting communities that were ill prepared to deal with the legalities of mineral rights. Businessmen versus environmentalists, neighbor against neighbor, arguments within families, were issues escalated by back room deals between local, county, state and even federal level politicians. From this point forward, Finch's paintings became a visual diary documenting the events and the effects that the big gas company has had on small rural communities in Upstate New York.

On view in Bennington Museum's Regional Artists Gallery from May 9 through July 26, is Channeling Moses: Fracking Paintings by Linda Finch. "The naïve style of Grandma Moses is a perfect genre for storytelling. These paintings are a step by step journey that leads you through the gas pain process; some have secret messages within." states the artist.

"'What would Grandma Do?' was the question on my mind when I began this series of paintings in 2012." states Finch. She felt bamboozled after signing a lease and discovered what damage gas companies can cause to the earth, air and water. When done right, the land and water don't have to be damaged, initially. However, this is not always the case, and even though early on there are few problems, with time the concrete casings can crack, and chemicals not recovered, leak into the aquifer. Finch's community became familiar with terms such as burn off, thumpers, Christmas trees, alpha and beta radioactivity, and midnight dumping. With what seemed like an invasion of representatives from Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, the Dakotas, Pennsylvania and Ohio, she found people in the community locking their cars and homes, surrounded by trucks and dust, and the constant knocking on the door by people carrying briefcases and reams of papers to sign. "Our lives changed overnight for the worse." stated Finch. She added, "Fracking is now banned in New York through the efforts of a vocal and well educated population, but there are still serious issues and therefore, I am still painting."

Finch retired in 2000 from careers in teaching art, counseling, and education. She returned to painting and recently became involved in politics, now an environmental activist squeezing her message into every painting. She has a masters' degree in Art from New York State University and a degree in Industrial Relations from Cornell University. She currently resides in both the US Virgin Islands where she cultivates a small organic farm and in the Finger Lakes Region of Upstate New York.

According to Finch, venues for showing this series have been very limited to shows in churches, quilt shops, and empty store fronts. The artist has had difficulty getting her work into many galleries or public spaces in New York as many are said to receive gas company contributions.

NOTE: As a child and into her adult years, Finch would visit the Bennington Museum and spend time in the Grandma Moses Gallery. Inspired by Moses' paintings of the serene countryside, Finch wanted to create paintings reflecting the impact of fracking on the countryside that she was so familiar with. Grandma Moses' style allowed Finch to tell the story of fracking and its impact on rural life.



Burn-Off one

I credit Grandma Moses for the concept of this, my first gas pain painting for a regional show at the National Soaring Museum in Big Flats, NY. After completing this quilt-like landscape, I could not stop thinking of other scenarios and kept on painting. This represents the fields around my home and the intrusion of endless white gas trucks and gas staging areas in the distance. I thought, "What would Grandma Moses do?" The others simply followed.



Under Cover of Darkness

While most companies are responsible in their efforts to dispose of waste water and contaminants, smaller businesses often cut corners to save on expenses and time. Midnight dumping has become a recognizable term in the Southern and Northern Tiers. Farmers watch strange trucks come in go under cover of darkness. Some are apprehended while most are not, dumping toxic waste in fields, along the road or even near streams. The horses represent what is hidden and what is apparent, while well construction glows on the hillside. Be vigilant.



The Thumpers Are Coming

We remember the day that the first seismic trucks came by with their out of towners crews, laying miles and miles of black line in the roadside ditches. It was great entertainment, as we had never seen anything like it. Little did we know that they would locate gas and that for months on end we would be surrounded by white pick ups, huge trucks, machinery, noise and 30 foot high clouds of dust. There was no peace.



Fall Colors

The Holding Point in Horseheads, used for storage during World War II, is once again very busy with acres upon acres of tanks, steel construction supplies, pipes, and machinery moving in and out. This is in sharp contrast to the nearby swampy area filled with cattails, Canada goose families, herons, and occasional turtles. Today trains, trucks, tankers, and geese are all in constant movement and conflict. The colors of the containers are so at odds with this normally quiet verdant stretch of land. On the weekend when all is quiet, the geese have their home back for a while.



I Love New York

This is a scene composed from the Victor's farm up the hill from my house. The well produces and is now capped; Holstein cows graze around the perimeter. The well has been good for this farmer. He has new machinery, equipment, and a new barn. When done right by good companies, the land and water don't have to be damaged, but this is not always the case. In Pennsylvania many dairy herds began losing patches of hair. Water and or land is evidently tainted. Doubtful that they tell their milk customers that. I still Love New York, but we must do the right thing and continue the Fracking ban. (There's a secret message here)

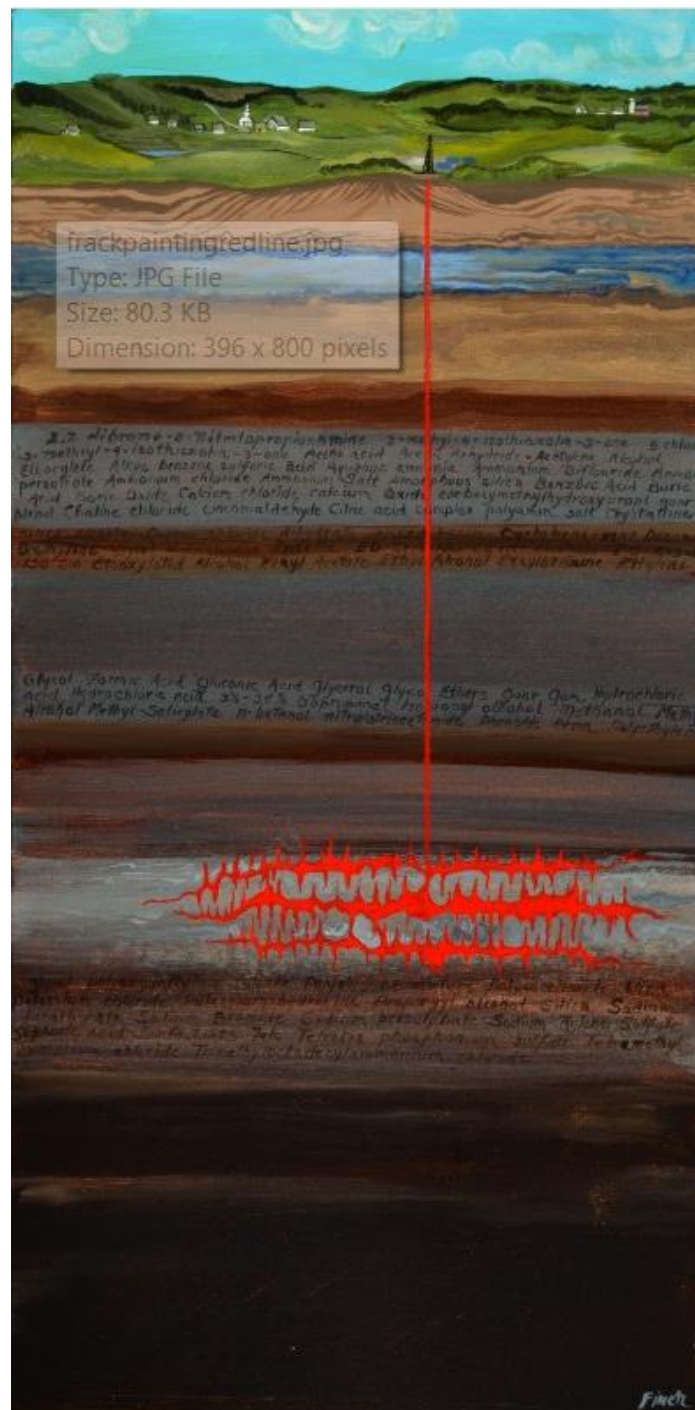
Neighbor Against Neighbor

Signage in nearby Spencer Van Etten and Erin neighborhoods got me thinking about how heated the Fracking issue is. Signs contradict each other across the road sides and people are seen removing each other's placards. It's like a mini war of words and philosophies. Everyone seems to be polarized and convinced that they are right. Gas lease money is a powerful temptation for land rich, money poor farmers. Do the research, make the effort to look at both sides and then decide.



The 76

This represents the Village of Sullivanville with the church at the center of a cluster of homes. A Fracked well goes way below the water table. Into each well goes one to seven million gallons of water mixed with sand, with some of the big 76 chemical combinations most often used. There are now over 250 chemicals utilized. Early on there are few problems, but with time, the concrete casings crack, and chemicals not recovered, can leak into the aquifer. Try and sell your house and your land without water. By that time many companies have moved on or been repeatedly sold, so no one is there to make things right.





Sign Here

We were in the crosshairs when the first round of wells went into our rural community. Strange people were knocking on our door morning and night, each with briefcases and reams of papers. Who were they? Different faces every week for months, telling us that we were holding up the process. "Sign the contract. All your neighbors have." Much later we found that that wasn't true, that we could negotiate and hire a lawyer. We were so naïve. Many homeowners run the risk of ruined land and tainted water, but what do you do.....sign and you can send the kids to college. It is a tough decision that many folks have to make.



Down in the Valley

This shows a small farm in the valley surrounded by the staging area of a drilled well. This scene has been played out all over the Southern Tier and continues depending on the price of gas. Remember how the Marcellus Shale was going to reduce our costs and dependency on foreign oil? Have you seen your energy bill go down? No! Guess where our gas is going now? If you guessed overseas, you're right. It's all about large corporations making money.



Burn Off at Little's Farm

It was a total surprise when the gas company did find gas at the drilled well in the field behind our house. And what a surprise when they fired the well with a “burn-off” of the first gas before capping. No one warned us about this, and it burned day and night with a huge roar for three full days. Later we found out that not all gases are burned and the possibility of toxic gas exposure was real. Had we known, we would have left our home.



60 miles to New York City

While the rest of the Marcellus Shale region was at risk, the Delaware Water Gap in the Catskills has always been off-limits to drilling and Fracking , because that area is the source of New York City's water supply. We all wondered why we were in jeopardy, while that water supply was guarded. Fracking is currently banned in all of New York State; all people deserve pure water, not just metropolitan areas. It all flows downstream. We are all at risk.



Outside My Window

This piece is intended to hang freely so you can look through it, just as Grandma Moses did in her rocking chair by the window looking out past the dotted Swiss curtains at Spring. These panes were painted, dried, fired and assembled from old windows from our farm. I never knew Mrs Moses even painted on glass. That was a surprise.



Christmas Eve at Grandma's

This is a holiday scene where family and neighbors are getting ready for Christmas Eve with last-minute wrapping of presents and decorating the tree. Grandma has to be wary of running water when the stove burners are on. This painting is in homage to our neighbors to the south in Northern Pennsylvania, where methane flashbacks in the kitchen occasionally occur.



Wine Country vs. LPG

Two of New York State's most lucrative businesses are tourism and agriculture. Both depend on pristine landscapes and clean water. Enter the huge company from Texas that buys up the defunct salt wells on Seneca Lake with the intent to fill them with liquid propane gas. Land and salt caverns are not constructed to be holding tanks. They are porous and eventually leak. Of the many salt wells around the world, eleven have had major accidents. Truck traffic is also a concern with deliveries estimated at 60 tankers per day. Is it a risk that we should take? 100,000 people use the lake for drinking water. Politicians say yes! What do you think?



A Rock and a Hard Place

If I asked a class of fifth graders the question....."Should we accept radioactive Fracking waste from another state, put it in our county dump and then pour the liquid from holding ponds into our own river?"I know what they would say. That would be crazy! Our county executives are doing just that; accepting huge amounts of money from waste management corporations to offset taxes. Fiscal responsibility in lieu of moral or ethical care of the environment or the health of its citizens. The trucks from Pennsylvania now dump tons of frack waste all over New York rural communities



Girls Girls Girls

What happens when 20,000 men from all over the country move into town? Nothing good. With 16 hour shifts 24/7, gas men thrive on diets of beer and steak. With no ties to our community, there are strains on services including the police, emergency rooms, STD clinics, 911, and counseling. No more unlocked homes, garages or cars; no jogging for neighborhood girls. Two prostitution rings were broken up in our tiny village. Life is very different. We have been changed forever.

Press Releases: Mohawk News Online, WENY TV Horseheads NY, Star Gazette Elmira NY Newspaper, Daily Gazette Schenectady NY Newspaper

June 19, 2013 - Mohawk Currents

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Linda J. Finch, a painter born and raised in Gloversville, will show some of her work this weekend at a symposium called "Women's Voices for (a) Change" at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs.

Finch, now a resident of Sullivanville, Chemung County, says she has seen firsthand the effects of the recent gas-drilling and hydrofracking boom in New York's Southern Tier. The paintings seen at right (under "Blog Photos") are paintings depicting scenes she has witnessed literally from her backyard.

"What Would Grandma Moses Do?" is the premise of my series of 14 paintings that document the effects that the gas industry has made on our small village since 2006," she writes. "Painting in the folk-art style popularized by Grandma Moses, I have covered gas exploration and exploitation as huge companies and strangers from Louisiana, Texas, Ohio, Oklahoma and the Dakotas descended on our town. Local hiring? Not much to speak of."

"Far from being anti-business, I am pro-water and pro-farming. New York is famous for its clean water for agriculture, our huge wine industry and its beautiful Finger Lakes. Pennsylvania has lost 17% of its farms since gas drilling/fracking has begun, according to statistics from the U.S. Farm Bureau."

The symposium at Skidmore will take place Friday through Sunday. For more details, see [Women's Voices for \(a\) Change](#).

Finch, a GHS class of 1961 grad, says this series of paintings was completed in part with support from a New York State Council on the Arts grant. The Bennington Folk Art Museum in Vermont will show

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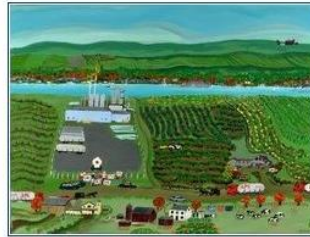


Image courtesy of Linda J. Finch



Blog Links

- [Women's Voices for \(a\) Change](#)
- [Linda J. Finch on Facebook](#)



June 13, 2013

SULLIVANVILLE -- (WENY) Linda Finch has lived in Sullivanville for 25 years and uses the Southern Tier as her backdrop in all of her art work.

She uses what's called the 'Grandma Moses' style of painting. Kind of a folk art.

"You're leaving perspective behind to get the ultimate message across," Finch said.

And her ultimate message is the topic on a lot of New Yorker's minds.

She added, "It's kind of made it a visual overview or visual diary of gas exploration and gas exploitation."

Gas drilling isn't just something Linda paints. She also experienced it.

Gas companies showed up at her house in 2006 and have been there ever since.

This painting shows the seismic testing trucks coming to her home, her family unaware about what it all meant.

"We were totally ignorant and unprepared for exactly what this was all about. We had no clue," she said.

All of her paintings reflect her concern and confusion towards gas drilling. Each painting telling a different story.

"It's symbolic that you can see certain things about the gas industry but then the darker horses here it's a lot of under current and a lot of things that you can't see," Finch said.

Look closely and you'll notice water in every one of Linda's paintings. It's her main reason behind doing this. She says she's not anti fracking or anti business, she pro clean water.

"It's more of an attempt to make sure that our waters clean," she added.

And she hopes her paintings bring her message to life.

Schenectady NY Daily Gazette Article:

Click link <http://www.dailygazette.com/news/2015/jun/14/artist-feels-spirt-grandma-moses-when-painting/?dgzrg>

Recent Exhibits

- National Soaring Museum, Big Flats NY
- Elmira College, Elmira NY
- Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs NY
- Bennington Museum, Bennington VT
- North Franklyn Street Gallery, Watkins Glen

Thank you for viewing

for exhibit inquires

contact Linda Finch

lfinch7777@yahoo.com

607.207.1564

