

In 2019, I was fortunate to spend the month of September living in the historic Caretaker's Cottage on Weir Farm National Historic Park in Wilton CT as Artist in Residence. When the sun set, it was just me, the owls, and other creatures of the night.





Weir Farm is special: it was home to American Impressionist J. Alden Weir and later, sculptor Mahonri Young. Their studios, home, and land have been preserved for visitors and historians.



Each day I set up and painted at a different place on the farm, joining a long line of artists who have worked there since Weir first arrived.



Part of what makes Weir Farm so special is the living history, cared for and shared by the incredible staff and park rangers. I signed up for many tours and heard lovingly detailed and expertly presented topics ranging from stone wall construction, to a lake Weir built with funds from a painting prize to amuse his young daughters. I was continually awed by the passion and care with which Park Rangers did their jobs, and the interest and respect they showed to me and all the park's guests.





Through the lens of history each spot took on special significance: my favorite tree was next to the stone picnic table Weir built for his family, an apple tree grows by the studio of the sculptor who married one of Weir's daughters, the porch of the small cottage was shared by the caretaker's family of ten. Painting there, I felt a palpable sense of connectedness across time.





Being free to devote so much time and attention to my art allowed me to immerse myself in my practice. Mornings were spent on focused energetic creation, allowing for slower and more explorative afternoons. I got to work on projects normally far down on my creative wish list, like paper mache.



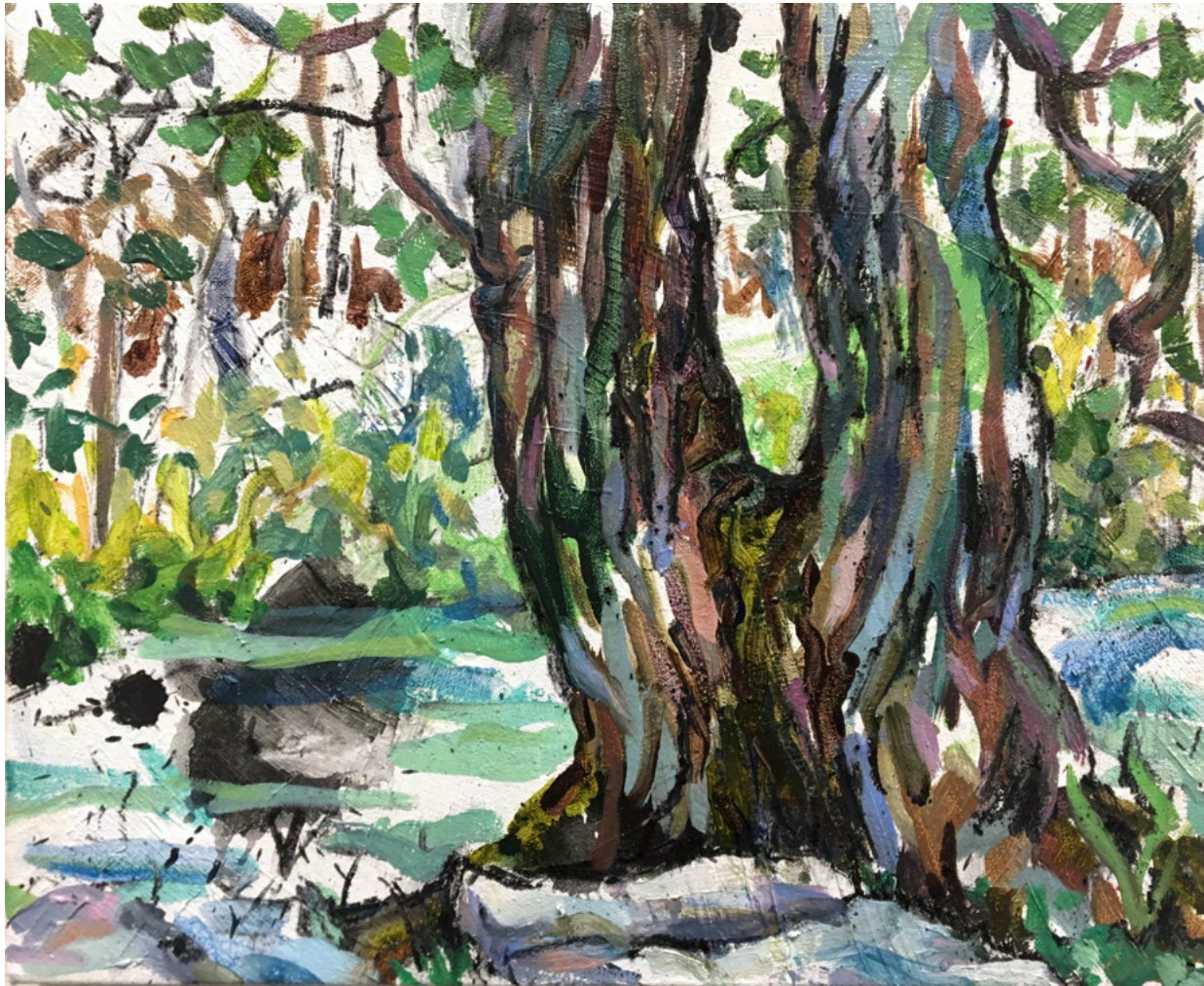


Even with plein air mornings and studio afternoons, there was plenty of time to enjoy the Park's public offerings: cider pressed from the orchard's apples, a slide show and lecture on women's role in art, a moonlit painting class led by Impressionist painter [Dmitri Wright](#).



I filled the sunny studio with art, and towards the end of the residency was given the opportunity to present my work and a bit of my story to the public.





I can't say enough good things about what a residency can do for an artist.

The ability to set aside the cares and tasks of daily life and simply be and grow as an artist is such a great gift, and continues to resonate two years later.

My application was a commitment and a declaration of how central my art is to my life, and having that validated and supported by the National Parks Service was a form of magic.