

# Artist uses photos to create sublime Maine scenes

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“Awake” by Lilian Day Thorpe, a photomontage. *Courtesy of Green Lion Gallery*

Green Lion Gallery closed its physical operation in Bath this spring with the onset of the pandemic, but the gallery is still operating as an online entity. Through the end of the year, the gallery is showing on its website photomontages by Lilian Day Thorpe, who grew up in Maine and now lives in Brooklyn, New York, where she works as associate director of the Nancy Margolis Gallery.

Maine shows up in Thorpe’s latest series of work, “Ten Miles Out.” All were inspired by her hometown of Brooksville.

Thorpe, who also shows her art at Courthouse Gallery Fine Art in Ellsworth, creates photographic landscapes that look like paintings. “I have a proclivity for romanticizing reality,” she wrote in an email. “In my work, I am not interested in capturing a straight photograph of a landscape, or a small house, or a moonlit body of water. I use my tools to

build a scene afresh, imbuing it with the emotions I feel while imagining it, or that I remember feeling during a certain encounter with nature. Qualities I always weave into each composition are: quietness, introspection, and the sublimity of nature.”

She takes inspiration from a painter’s ability to interpret nature from scratch. “Any painting of any landscape will always be completely a product of the artist’s hand, every brushstroke an invention,” she noted. “I strive to carry these principles into my photographic practices. My photomontages are constructed, manipulated, colored, re-worked, and imagined, similar to the way a painting is conceived from start to finish.”

Thorpe grew up in Indiana, and her family moved to Brooksville when she was 10. Her grandmother was a longtime resident of Blue Hill. Thorpe attended the Bay School in Blue Hill and George Stevens Academy. She says her experience at the Bay School set her path in art. In addition to hands-on art classes that included watercolor painting, knitting and woodworking, she learned about the role of art through time. “We studied the pioneers of the Italian Renaissance, as well as modern pillars, such as Mark Rothko and Wolf Kahn,” she said. “Most of all, there was an emphasis on art appreciation and how to be an individual through creative expression.”

She moved to Brooklyn at age 17 to attend the Pratt Institute, where she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in photography in 2014. She returned to Pratt for her master’s degree in the history of art and design. While in college, she spent her summers working at Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, which was akin to earning another degree. “My years there exposed me to a wonderful stable of Maine artists, from modernists such as John Heliker and Chenoweth Hall, to contemporaries, like William Irvine and Philip Frey. I loved Maine as a child but returning to it from away completely changed my perspective of this singular, special community. I was struck by how fortunate I was to have roots in an historically significant tradition of artists living in, or flocking to, Maine to paint and create art,” she said.

Her parents are still in Brooksville, and she gets back to Maine as often as she can. “On the horizon I envision myself living in my own Maine cedar-shake house with a golden retriever and a quiet patch of land,” she wrote.

To view her images, visit [greenlionart.com/lilian-day-thorpe-show](http://greenlionart.com/lilian-day-thorpe-show).



"The View" by Lilian Day Thorpe. *Courtesy of Green Lion Gallery*

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