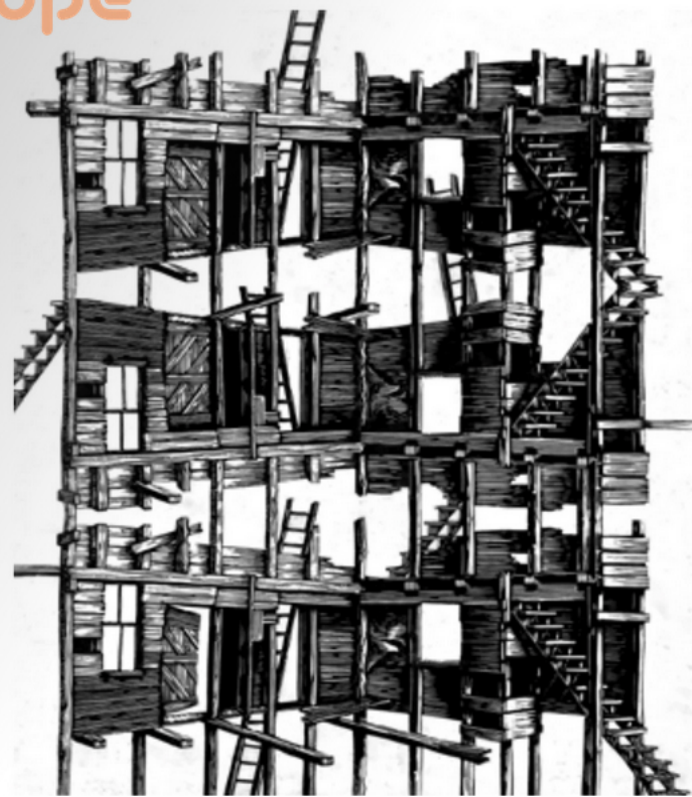




KATE KNOX

A SUBTLE DREAM LOGIC

Kate Knox searches for the buildings most people have stopped seeing.

Late fall. Early spring. When the leaves are down. She and her husband take the backroads. The narrow ones that curve into stands of maple and disappear. They've learned the signs. Old stone walls. A row of decrepit apple trees. "Those kinds of landmarks dictate which turns we take," she said.

Sometimes Knox finds what she's looking for. The skeleton of a structure. Walls crumbling. Roof caving in. Open to the elements. Fighting physics. Defying gravity. "It's so exciting," she said. "Like the treasure hunt has paid off. Sometimes I cry."

The discovery, however, is only the beginning. Before launching a drone or setting up her camera, she seeks out the nearest neighbor to ask permission. The conversation that follows is often as valuable as the image — stories surface, fragments of local history, personal memories tethered to the ruin. "That's my favorite part of the process," she notes.

Knox is usually right on time. These buildings rarely last much longer. "Most of them don't exist anymore except in memory, family lore, and these woodcuts."

Knox is a New Hampshire-based printmaker and mixed media artist whose work examines abandoned barns, decaying homes and derelict mills drawn from the agrarian landscapes of New England. She builds each image through traditional woodcut techniques — carving Shina plywood blocks, inking them and printing them on an American French Tool press — before layering, reconfiguring, and sealing the surfaces in encaustic, where beeswax lends both material depth and a final act of preservation.

"I don't add much detail until I start carving," she said. "I try to let the wood I'm carving impose its own personality in the final image." Once the structure is preserved in print, something shifts. "Having preserved these structures, I then feel free to liberate them," she said. "They don't have to work so hard anymore, they can finally play."

After printing, Knox lays out multiple woodcuts on the studio floor. She moves them around and lets them "talk to one another; this one may want to try that one's legs or they may piggyback one another into structural illusions and impossibilities à la Piranesi or Escher. It's a very conversational process."

Knox isolates and reimagines these structures within precise and symmetrical compositions, setting their exposed beams against patterned grounds. A disciplined rigor underpins the work: controlled fragmentation followed by deliberate reconstruction. A subtle dream logic takes hold. Houses



Still, the structures themselves seem to be trying to speak. What is this place? What happened here? What story would these beams and shingles tell if they could talk? The effect is both gritty and beautiful, dreary yet wildly evocative.

When pressed on what drives her process, Knox reflected for a moment before responding, "It's mostly the hunt, the stories. But there has been a shift lately in how I think about our past, our present, and our country. A solemnity has entered the process that wasn't there before. Vines, tendrils, branches and tangles have entered the work. Are they here to hold the broken parts together or to consume them? Perhaps they are just briars to hide in until the storm passes."

Stand before one of Knox's pieces long enough and a realization settles in. The buildings are broken, yes — but also freed from their former duties. They no longer need to hold up a roof or brace for the coming winter. Linger a moment more and feel yourself transform from a gallery visitor to a witness, a passerby at the edge of an overgrown thicket. You look. You listen. Wind moves through the ruins. Boards creak. Small animals rustle inside the walls. Time presses in. So does our place within it. Everything our imaginations and hands give shape to is temporary. Yet still we create.

Kate Knox's work has recently been exhibited in the International Printmaking Show at the Art Center in Dover, at See/Saw Gallery in Manchester, and presented in a solo exhibition at the Rochester Museum of Fine Arts' Carnegie Gallery in Rochester, all in New Hampshire. From May through October viewers can see her work at the Barn Gallery in Ogunquit, Maine, where, since 2012, she has been a juried member of the Ogunquit Art Association — Maine's Original Artists Group established in 1928. To explore additional work and upcoming projects, visit kate-knox.com or follow her on Instagram @katemcgirlver.

Eric J. Taubert

OPPOSITE LEFT: Kate Knox, *You Wanna Step Outside*, 2025, woodcuts and beeswax, 24" x 30". | OPPOSITE RIGHT: Kate Knox in her studio. | OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Kate Knox, *Waltz of the Quarrymen*, 2022, beeswax and woodcuts on panel, 24" x 24". | TOP: Kate Knox, *She Bought the Farm*, 2021, beeswax, woodcuts, 24" x 24".

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