



**THE
ART STUDENTS
LEAGUE**
OF NEW YORK

THE ART STUDENTS LEAGUE PRESENTS

The Sinking Ship:

Alexis Rockman and Trevor Smith on Art and The Environment

[ONLINE EVENT](#)

Tuesday, October 26 6 pm – 7 pm, YouTube LIVE



Alexis Rockman, *The Lifeboat of the HMS Erebus*, 2019, Oil on wood, 40 × 48 in.

New York, NY: For some three decades now, renowned artist and League alum Alexis Rockman has produced oil paintings and watercolors that reckon with the impact of climate change and environmental catastrophe, creating startling images of our near future as a result. His recent series *Shipwrecks* was exhibited this year to great acclaim in the historical East India Marine Hall at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA and at the Guild Hall in East Hampton, New York.



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Rockman deployed his characteristic virtuoso realist technique to create speculative depictions of historical shipwrecks for which there are few or no evidentiary images from the historical record. Like his images of our imminent future, Rockman's recent seemingly realist paintings are acts of imagination built up from close study of the specific ecological, scientific, and historical narratives that swirled around each of these maritime disasters. The interdependence of speculation and representation that haunts Rockman's artistic works also underpins scientific attempts to explain our climate present, and future, such as the dire call to action found in the Sixth Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released this August, as well as the five preceding reports released since 1990. How such productions, cultural as well as scientific, get categorized as speculative versus realistic has profound implications on how such works are received and whether their messages are taken up, or not.

In conversation with Trevor Smith, Associate Director – Multisensory Experience and Curator of the Present Tense at the Peabody Essex Museum, Alexis Rockman will explore this catalytic intersection of representation and speculation in his work, in the history of artists working on environmental issues, and in the creation of depictions of environmental disasters more broadly.

About The Presenters:



Born in 1962 and raised in New York City, Alexis Rockman has exhibited extensively worldwide since 1985. He has been the subject of many international solo and group exhibitions, including a major retrospective organized at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. His work is also included in public and private collections around the world, and he has held a number of teaching posts at prestigious institutions, such as Columbia and Harvard.

Solo museum exhibitions including *Dioramas* at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (1996); *Alexis Rockman: A Recent History of the World* at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield (1999); *Manifest Destiny* at the Brooklyn Museum (2005; traveling

to the Rhode Island School of Design; Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover; Grand Arts, Kansas City); and a mid-career survey *Alexis Rockman A Fable for Tomorrow* at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC (2010; traveling to the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus); *Alexis Rockman: The Weight of Air* at the Rose Art Museum. *East End Field Drawings* at the Parrish Museum of Art in Water Mill, NY (2015). *The Great Lakes Cycle*, Grand Rapids Art Museum; Chicago Cultural Center; Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis; Flint Institute of Art, MI; The Haggerty Museum, Milwaukee Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland (2018-20) His work is represented in public and private collections, including the Brooklyn Museum, New York; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

From 2009-12, Rockman collaborated with director Ang Lee on the prize-winning film "Life of Pi," serving as "Inspirational Artist" and created one of *Pi's* most captivating sequences – "Tigervision" in which Pi discovers the world through the tiger eyes while journeying to the bottom of the ocean.

Upcoming exhibitions include *Alexis Rockman: Shipwrecks*, 2021, at Guild Hall, East Hampton and traveling to Peabody Essex Museum, will feature new large-scale paintings and works on paper that depict the world's waterways as a network by which all of world history has traveled. The exhibition catalog is published by DelMonico/DAP.

He has been the subject of many exhibition catalogues and monographic publications including *Alexis Rockman*, published by Monacelli Press in 2003. His forthcoming monograph, *Alexis Rockman: Works on Paper* will be published by Damiani in 2021. Rockman lives and works in Warren, CT.



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Trevor Smith is Associate Director–Multisensory Experience and Curator of the Present Tense at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA. He leads an initiative that collaborates with contemporary artists across the breadth of the museum’s activities to illuminate how creativity and cultural change emerge at the intersections of cultures, disciplines, or technologies.

Since arriving at PEM Smith has commissioned works and curated exhibitions with Carlos Garaicoa, Kimsooja, Candice Breitz, Michael Lin, Charles Sandison, Nick Cave, Susan Philipsz, Céleste Boursier-Mougenot, and Theo Jansen’s *Strandbeests*. In 2018 he curated a major exhibition exploring the shifting role of play in contemporary art and culture.

Previous exhibitions include the Singapore Biennial 2011, *Wrestle* and *Martin Creed: Feelings* for the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College; *Andrea Zittel: Critical Space* and *Brian Jungen* for the New Museum, and *The Divine Comedy: Francisco Goya, Buster Keaton, and William Kentridge* for the Art Gallery of Western Australia and the Perth International Arts Festival. He has produced over seventy exhibitions and has published widely in exhibition catalogues and journals in North America, Europe, Australia and Asia.

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About The Art Students League: The Art Students League of New York has been making high-quality, studio-based art education accessible to all for almost 150 years. Founded in 1875 by a group of independent artists who dreamed of a place where anyone with a passion for art would have the space to make it, today The League hosts over 100 classes, taught in-studio and online. No applications, no prerequisites, and affordable, month-to-month tuition allow students to find their freedom and pursue their artwork free from the constraints of dogma. Our instructors educate students in an environment that values mentorship and collegiality, and centers diverse art-making practices, including painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, and assemblage. Our ongoing lineage of accomplished instructors is matched by our legacy of extraordinary students: Artists who have studied or taught at The League include Georgia O’Keeffe, Norman Rockwell, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Norman Lewis, James Rosenquist, Ai-Weiwei, and many others. www.theartstudentsleague.org/



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