

Upriver from Lumberville: Walking Bridge II, 1984

Alan Goldstein, (b. 1938)

oil on canvas

**James A. Michener Art Museum, purchased
with funds provided by Anne and Joseph
Gardocki**



Biography

*Alan Goldstein once said, I believe in “the magic of making art.
Art is a dance where you turn whatever goes on inside you on.”*

Alan S. Goldstein was born on May 11, 1938 in New York City. He had his first formal exposure to art there at the now famous High School of Music and Art. He went on to study at Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, The Philadelphia College of Art (now University of the Arts) and at Pratt Institute in New York City.

Alan Goldstein is an abstract painter who likes to work with paint, ink and mixed media. When Goldstein first went to college he studied architecture. He soon became interested in stage design, and then sculpture and painting. He has experimented with materials you may not normally think of using in a work of art - including tar, rope, steel, and fabric.

Goldstein’s work is related to the human figure, the landscape and the human spirit or soul. He is inspired by nature. His work is represented in over 70 private collections in the United States and abroad, and he has exhibited in many prestigious venues. An educator, Goldstein was the head of drawing and painting at Bucks County Community College, and has often served as guest curator and lecturer at the James A. Michener Art Museum. He has been Professor Emeritus at Bucks County Community College since 2003. He still lives in Bucks County.

This painting is titled *Upriver from Lumberville*. Where is Lumberville?

Lumberville, Pennsylvania, is located along the Delaware River, about 50 miles north of Philadelphia. For about a century — until 1932 — canals like the Lehigh to the northwest and Delaware and Raritan on the New Jersey side were used to transport coal and timber to Philadelphia and New York. The decades that followed were boom years for New Hope, as boatyards, stores and hotels thrived, new mills were built, and canal barges streamed through town, laden with coal, lumber, building materials and other cargo.

Inevitably, the canals succumbed to their great rival, the railroads. Traffic on the canal dwindled, and it became a picturesque but outmoded curiosity. A railroad line to New Hope opened in 1893, but it was not a major route, though it did provide local farmers will easier access to Philadelphia markets.



Around this time, a group of artists began to settle along the river, such as William L. Lathrop, Daniel Garber and Edward W. Redfield. Although their homes and studios were scattered along the river valley in places like Lumberville, Centre Bridge, and Phillips Mill, their group became known as the New Hope School, and the town acquired a reputation as an artists' colony. Today Lumberville continues to be a picturesque town, and if you go there you may see many sites that Alan Goldstein and other Bucks County artists have included in their artwork.

What does this painting have to do with architecture?

Alan Goldstein started his formal schooling by studying architecture. Architecture is the art or practice of designing and constructing buildings. Do you see anything in *Upriver from Lumberville* that reminds you of architecture? Architecture continues to inspire the things Alan Goldstein includes in his work. The elements of art are line, shape, color, form and texture. Look at some photographs taken of local Bucks County buildings. Better yet, travel around the county. Do you see any “elements” in the buildings that look like they could be part of Goldstein’s paintings?

What does this painting have to do with nature?

The natural beauty of Bucks County inspires Alan Goldstein. He enjoys traveling around the countryside looking for things to paint.

Alan Goldstein works a lot with the human figure. He doesn't like to hire professional models – he likes to work with friends and people he meets because he feels their movements and ideas are more fresh and spontaneous. Working from the human figure – whether you are working realistically or not, is a way to use nature in your art.

Alan Goldstein works a lot with landscapes in his art. He travels through the countryside, finding views of hills, rivers, stone walls, meadows and forests that interest him. Sometimes he sketches his ideas, sometimes he photographs them, and sometimes he simply remembers the images for a future work of art. When Alan photographs his work, he often combines different photographs in a collage, and then uses the collage as a basis for his paintings. He finds patterns in the repetition of roads, rivers and trees. His colors come from nature, though like any artist he changes the colors to make all the colors in his art look well together. Look carefully at *Upriver from Lumberville*. Think of it as a real view and an airplane view. What in nature can you find in Alan's painting? How is this painting a landscape?

Alan Goldstein collects stones. He loves the colors, the textures and the sizes of stones. He once joked that when other people travel around the world, they buy souvenirs; Alan collects stones. He may pick up a stone from a road, a stone from a wall, a stone along a riverbank, or even a stone in his shoe. He keeps his stone collection throughout his house and his studio. Do you see things in his artwork



that remind you of his interest in stones?

What kinds of materials does Alan Goldstein like to use?

Alan Goldstein played with his food when he was a kid. He thinks he was always interested in moving a lot of different materials around on a surface, whether it was peas on a potato or crayon on a piece of paper. He once said, “When I get a material, I try to investigate it.”

Alan Goldstein loves to experiment with his art. Many things inspire him when he creates his images. In addition, he uses many different art materials in his work. He used to like prepared canvas and oil paint, but found one day by accident that he liked the un-prepared painting surface even better. He loves the way paint bleeds and drips and runs when he works with acrylics on plain muslin, as opposed to the controlled lines and edges he gets when he paints on prepared canvas with oil paint. The difference is a lot like the difference between painting with tempera or acrylic paint in dry paper and painting with watercolor paints on wet paper. Morris Louis and Jackson Pollack are two artists who have a big influence on Alan Goldstein. Look them up in an art book about Modern Art. Compare their paintings. What do you see in common among all three artists? Are there other artists you know about who paint like Goldstein, Louis and Pollack?

Alan also explores many different kinds of surfaces to work on. He has worked with twenty to thirty different kinds of paper. He has found that using papers with different textures, fibers and thicknesses changes the way his works of art look. Once he paid over \$900.00 for a roll of paper because he thought it was so special.

Would you like to talk to the artist who made *Upriver from Lumberville*?

Alan Goldstein is still alive, and lives very close to the Michener Art Museum in Doylestown. If you have questions you would like to ask the artist, or ideas about your own artwork you would like to share, you may email him at aromano@michenerartmuseum.org.

Learn More

Remember to ask a grown-up at home for permission before you do these projects. Think architecture! In 1963 Goldstein was awarded a Fulbright Foundation Grant for study in Spain. The work of Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi inspires the organic nature of Goldstein's work. When you look at the architectural creations of Gaudi in Barcelona, Spain, you may be reminded of drip sand castles you could make on the beach. His buildings, parks and sculptural creations look fantastic, unreal and imaginary. But they are very real! To explore some of Gaudi's forms, “Build a Gaudi Structure” as described in the activity sheet below.



Learn “All About Abstraction” in the activity sheet below.

Alan Goldstein’s art can inspire you to create many masterpieces. For some ideas, look at the activity sheet below entitled “Inspire Your Art:”

Construction Collage! Assemble a work of art from old photographs, magazine pictures and original art.

Explore Paper! Experiment with the effect different types of paper may have on your art medium.

Mix it Up! Mix your paint with dish soap and see what happens!

Take a Chance! Use cast shadows as the beginning for a work of art.

Shine a Light! Trace your shadow – and see what happens.

Related Images

To see a variety of photographs of the picturesque Lumberville, Pennsylvania, region, go to online.wsj.com.

To see a variety of artwork created by Alan Goldstein, go to www.michenerartmuseum.org.

Related Links

To learn more about Alan Goldstein and other Bucks County artists, go to www.bucksmedia.com.

