

THE OVERLOOK

ART /// SAUGERTIES

Heather Hutchison Builds Light

Heather Hutchison's light-filled works shone in NYC; next, she joins a group show at the Currier Museum.

by **Noah Eckstein** /// June 20, 2025

In the sun-washed hills where Saugerties meets Woodstock—"Saugerstock," as locals call it—Heather Hutchison builds light.

For more than two decades since 2000, the not-formally trained artist has lived and worked in a converted barn purchased in 1996 perched just outside Woodstock, a structure she and her husband, painter Mark Thomas Kanter, transformed into an airy studio-home after relocating from Brooklyn. "We knew we wouldn't be able to afford studios in the city forever," Hutchison recalled. "So we came up here and made it work."



Artist Heather Hutchison in her Woodstock studio, where she constructs luminous works from reclaimed Plexiglas and birch plywood. *Michael Sofronski/The Overlook.*

From that modest studio, she's forged a singular visual language—fusing transparency, color, and light into meditative constructions that blur the lines between painting and sculpture. Her most recent solo exhibition in New York City, a semi-retrospective at Winston Wächter Fine Art, spanned works from 1989 to the present. “Everything I did is there,” she said, noting that even her typically tight-lipped son, a poet at Columbia University, was moved. “He told me after the opening, ‘That was really great.’ That meant something.”

Her work, defined by horizontal bands of color, carefully layered Plexiglas, beeswax, and delicately manipulated surfaces, draws on a life steeped in changing light. Born in Oregon in 1964, Hutchison grew up between California's coast and the desert skies of Bisbee, Arizona. “Looking at both the desert and the sea enabled me to see long distances,” she said. “It felt safe to know what was coming.”



Hutchison's barn studio in Saugerties, a converted workspace filled with natural light where she has created art for more than two decades. *Michael Sofronski/The Overlook.*

Those early experiences seeded a fascination with perception, light and abstraction that would grow into a lifelong practice. “I think it’s really important that art comes through the hands. I hold that process dear. Whatever we take in, our influences, passes through us, and something happens in between. It comes out changed. That space, that transformation, is the creative process, and I think it’s essential.”

Her compositions are often made from salvaged materials like reclaimed Plexiglas and birch plywood and are deceptively simple. Viewed from one angle, they suggest landscape; from another, they shimmer like atmosphere. Ambient light is essential. “They change throughout the day,” she said. “There’s no internal light. Just what the world gives you.”



One of Hutchison's pieces in her studio, which shifts in appearance with ambient light and invites quiet reflection. *Michael Sofronski/The Overlook.*

Next year, Hutchison joins three fellow painters—Joseph Marioni, Jane Swavely, and John Zurier—in a major four-person exhibition at the Currier Museum of Art in New Hampshire. Titled “Painting in Color,” the show runs March 5 through August 9, 2026, and brings together artists whose work, like Hutchison’s, treats color and perception as lived experiences.

“I’m excited to be included in such good company,” Hutchison said. “We’re all working in abstraction, but there’s a real emotional undercurrent to what we’re doing.”

Though her work is often associated with Minimalism, there’s nothing cold about it. Her pieces are warm, contemplative, and, increasingly personal. In recent years, Hutchison has channeled the grief of losing several family members into a new series inspired by clouds, fog, and the atmospheric light of the Southwest. “These are coming off the idea of clouds, mountains, and waves,” she explained. “Clouds move water as much as rivers do.”

She describes herself as a one-woman band, and her daily rhythm is as grounded as her work is ethereal. “I try and get four hours in the studio a day,” she said. “Sometimes it’s broken up. Sometimes it’s after dinner. But that’s the minimum. That’s what I need to give the work to get something back.”

Hutchison continues to build each piece by hand, measuring, sawing, layering. “I could probably bring in an efficiency expert and save some time,” she joked. “But I think I’m addicted to the process. The highs and the lows and the learning each time.”

Her practice has evolved over the years, she’s moved from beeswax to custom acrylic mediums, from flat panels to cantilevered bent Plexi, but the focus remains the same: chasing light.

“I don’t always know what I’m making when I start,” she said. “But I know what I’m trying to feel.”

*Noah Eckstein is the editor-in-chief of The Overlook. Send correspondence to [**noah@theoverlooknews.com**](mailto:noah@theoverlooknews.com).*