

Philip Koch (pronounced like “watch”) never intended to become an artist. To his great surprise a required art history class his first semester at Oberlin College so fascinated him that he changed his major from sociology to studio art. And he never looked back.

A former abstract artist, Koch was inspired early in his career by the work of Edward Hopper to change to working in a realist direction. Since 1983 he has been granted 16 residencies to stay and work in the studio Hopper used for three decades on Cape Cod.

Koch is the great grandson of John Wallace, a Scottish landscape painter and the grandson of John Capstaff, the inventor of the world’s first commercially available color film, Kodachrome.

Ironically Koch avoids photographs as a source, relying on direct observation and memory to make his paintings. Says Koch “I like to think of myself as following the example of Edward Hopper and his friend the painter Charles Burchfield. Their paintings are about an inner response and imaginative invention rather than photographic description. For the last four decades that’s at the heart of my practice.”

16 American art museum’s hold Koch’s paintings in their Permanent Collections. He is a senior professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art. In 2015-2016 he was the Artist in Residence at the Burchfield Penney Art Center in Buffalo, NY.