Ilene Sunshine
A is for alba, 2009
Acrylic paint
80” x 279”
Courtesy of the artist

Entering the center gallery, the terrace door frames one of the oldest trees on Wave Hill's grounds, *Quercus rubra* or red oak. It is one of nine different oak species that inspired Ilene Sunshine’s wall drawing. In the Fall she collected leaves from the many oaks found at Wave Hill: *Quercus rubra* (red oak), *Q. alba* (white), *Q. falcate* (southern red), *Q. coccinea* (scarlet), *Q. robur* (English), *Q. lyrata* (overcup), *Q. macrocarpa* (mossy-cup), *Q. cerris* (Turkey), *Q. muhlenbergii*, (chinquapin). Using the leaves as stencils, she began with several studies in her studio then worked on site in January and February. Viewing the red oak daily, observing the changing light, as well as the snow and ice floating on the river, all deeply influenced the outcome of her work. She used the time to experiment with color, form and pattern, and explore the tension between the view from the window and the gallery wall. The reductive concept of the final wall drawing underscores the range of leaf shapes found in the prolific oak family as their unique white contours penetrate rows of dark horizontal lines. The leaf edges almost become calligraphy, suggesting a penmanship primer or notebook. The work echoes the movement of the Hudson River and the experience of it will change greatly as the leaves appear on the trees in late April – early May.

A is for alba with Hudson River view and bare trees:

