

JAY BELMORE

ARTIST STATEMENT / BIO

"My abstract paintings encourage a visual exploration that hinges on landscape and habitats with a fleeting nod to science. In recent work, I am attempting to transcribe the vision of other organisms as they look out onto our world. These organic forms are both revealed and concealed amidst layers of more geometric structured forms. The surface of the canvas is activated by the thick impasto and then is controlled or reigned in by the geometric forms. My paintings reveal themselves to me as I paint and are often reflections of nature, habitats, and memories. By using a combination of these references that are never allowed to fully manifest into recognizable objects, I attempt to maintain an open-ended dialogue with the viewer. This soft-focus organic approach must strike a balance with the more structured forms to be successful at creating secondary interests.

Painting has always been a good medium for me to experiment with the tensions between the real and the abstract, chaos and order, what we perceive, and that which truly exists. The texture and complexity of the surfaces often represent something active, unknown, while the geometric forms suggest structure and the quantifiable. Always remaining slightly detached from the outcome, I often work on a couple of paintings simultaneously. This way of working enables me to remove the preciousness from the work, opening the door for a new theme to emerge. I allow the surface, colour, and composition to navigate me. This lends itself to discovery rather than predetermination."

Jay graduated from the Alberta College of Art and attended the Illustrators Workshop in New York. After art school in Calgary, Alberta, Jay moved to Toronto to pursue a career in illustration. As a freelance illustrator, Jay has illustrated for books, magazines, newspapers, and posters. He has received numerous awards throughout his 25-year career. A selection of clients includes Esquire, Newsweek, Burns Fry, and Onex Corporation. In recent years Jay has set aside illustration allowing him to focus all of his creative energy on his fine art. His current series of impasto oil paintings on wood panel and canvas are painted using palette knives, brushes, and oil stick. He notes that one of life's great elations is to discover and learn through close observation. His paintings can be found in private and corporate collections in Canada and the US. Jay has shown his work in galleries in Ottawa and Calgary and is the Director of Muse Gallery in Toronto.