Jane Everhart: Background

I had classical Western training growing up, including four hours of drawing each morning in a pre-college summer class with John Laska, and an apprenticeship during college in New York with Ruth Gikow who, with her husband Jack Levine, talked about masters like Rembrandt and Velasquez as if they were neighborhood friends. After college I became interested in mark-making and visual language, studied Linguistics and East Asian Language and Culture in graduate school at Indiana University. And I studied traditional Chinese painting with two teachers: Liang dan-Fong (Taiwan) and Jo Wang Hess (Bloomington).

Making marks in paint as if each mark were as energetic as the lift of a leaf is an aim. A painter “friend,” Tao-chi calls this **i hua**, “one stroke,” each stroke like the first stroke, vital. Often in one of my paintings the first or earliest layers of strokes can be seen.

Materials are important companions in my daily work. Sketches and small works often combine charcoal, pigment, gouache, and pastel. Larger works are usually in oil. Sumi ink comes in play. Recently I drew with mulberry juice, a bird. I do small bird paintings often; their format, small and with some decorative edges, nods to the Persian practice of bird and flower paintings in book illustrations.

My images have come from landscapes in the Midwest--Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Minnesota, and now Michigan have been places where I’ve lived--and from stays mostly in Colorado and New England. I still sketch on site; the works develop through memory and search, in the studio. Uncultivated (wild) views interest me more and more. I hope that the viewer can pause with my images and regenerate—co-mingling with Nature can do this; *I think paintings can help us regenerate*.

New Harmony Indiana was the first gallery venue for my work. Jane Blaffer Owen, significant contributor to the town’s spiritual and architectural reknown, became a friend and mentor, as did John Begley at the New Harmony Gallery. Also in Indiana, Mark Ruschman’s long-time gallery (in Indianapolis) carried my work; Mark’s assistant, Telene Edington, carries on and carries my work, in Indianapolis and for some years in Three Oaks Michigan. When Sazama-Brauer Gallery opened in River North, Chicago, they carried my paintings. When the big fire hit their block (just after my first solo show), I followed Susan Sazama to the Merchandise Mart (for a year) and back to River North, at 300 Superior, until she closed. Charlotte Brauer sold my work as a consultant after the fire; Peter Bartlow carried my work in Chicago at various locations and still maintains appointment hours. Treeline Gallery in the northern Michigan town of Suttons Bay had my work for all of its eighteen years, and when Alyce closed there, I found a wonderful gallery in Douglas MI, Michael Burmeister’s Button Gallery.

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