

**JEF GUNN****Bio**

I was born in Seattle when it smelled of rust, cedar and low tide. I moved back to Seattle in 1980 for the rain (really) and because of paintings I had seen at the Francine Seders Gallery (by Guy Anderson, Mark Tobey, Morris Graves and others). I didn't understand them, but when around them my inner life awakened with memories of my boyhood in the region of Puget Sound. I have lived up and down the West Coast and now make my home in Portland. Legend has it my maternal grandfather was born under the floorboards during an Indian raid in 1890s Saskatchewan. And Granny hailed from Scotland and was more than a little fey. My dad's father was a welder, a Choctaw-Scot from Alabama who worked on bridges and who won the hand of a southern belle in Mississippi. In the 1920s they moved their whole brood of seven to a logging camp near Spirit Lake on Mount St. Helens.

Both my parents had outsized personalities: Dad was an adman/radio man and mom was a charming lass from The Great White North. They met and married in dreamy 1950s Honolulu. I began this life there, and the sounds and smells of the Islands still run through me.

I studied drawing and painting in California through the 1970s, held residencies in Barcelona and Paris in the 1980s, and since the mid 1990s have engaged in a passionate study of Asian art. I began using encaustic in 1985, before there were any books or classes on it. With encaustic, I can bring together all of my other methods: oils, papers and inks, fabric, tar, and gold. My work draws on multiple lineages of art, culture and spiritual meaning.

In September 2006, I curated "Impulse," a national show of encaustic painting and sculpture at the Portland Art Center. I've participated in group exhibits at the Art Gym (Marylhurst University) and Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, and had a solo show at Oregon State University in 1995. I have taught painting and drawing in Seattle and Portland since the middle 1990s. In 2007, I led a group of artists on a tour of museums, galleries and artist studios in Barcelona. I was nominated for the 2013 Northwest Artist Awards. You can see my paintings at the William Traver Gallery in Seattle, at Cedar Street Galleries in Honolulu, and at Augen Gallery in Portland, Oregon.

**Statement**

Since the 1980s, I've made use of found materials in my work. In 2005, I began taking ink impressions from lines, shapes and textures found in street, sidewalks and walls. These paper were worked into paintings in wax medium on panels

Later, I began noticing that certain forms have an inexplicable presence. A hill, a rock, a drawing of a pig on a menu. They have a simultaneous gravity and levity. A letter or Chinese character can be executed with this certain quality. Or a drawing. Therefore, did the one whose hand made the object, the line, feel this quality? Maybe it's a change occurrence. It can just as well be felt in a sound or a touch.

It must be what architect Christopher Alexander calls "the quality without a name," which can be sensed in a portico, a doorway, a hall or a bench. The quality is often found in traditional architecture, made by the old methods and forms. Clearly I've felt it in a bowl or a vase. John Berger writes about certain paintings that have a face, which looks at you, as when you know that an animal is looking at you. There's silence in such objects.

In the way of Zen, there is talk of the such-ness of things. Only this. It seems to be understood that everything has this such-ness; everything will eventually pass away and I'm thinking this quality is the expression of its simultaneous presence and absence. Is this quality in the thing itself, or in my being? How is this possible?

Smaller things began to gather in the studio: seed and nutshells, stones, wood, bits of iron. I've been taking their impressions in ink on Chinese papers.