

James C. Hillegass

Jim Hillegass is a native of Nebraska. He's lived in Minnesota for nearly 40 years.

A childhood interest in nature taught him to look closely. He looked at butterflies and bugs and sometimes the farms around Lincoln. College years were spent an hour outside New York City, and Jim spent a lot of weekends looking at art and architecture at the Met, MOMA, and others.

He was a casual watercolorist and illustrator from the time he graduated from college on the East Coast and headed west to California. The illustrations were often architectural or botanical.

Jim did several things that influenced his painting. At 40, he learned to sail on Lake Minnetonka, then did a little ocean sailing with friends in Holland and in the Caribbean. At 50, he learned to fly. After getting a pilot's license and an instrument rating, he began making cross country trips, first in rental aircraft, then in two planes he owned. He covered a lot of ground over the next few years.

Jim has always had a passion for the West. About ten years ago, he bought a small ranch in the Sandhills of Nebraska, which surprisingly looks a little like Cape Cod. It is pasture for cows in the summer. It has nice woods bordering the Niobrara River. These pastimes gave Jim a deep appreciation of landscapes and of the horizon.

When he began to paint more seriously, he thought he most admired Mark Rothko and Gerhard Richter. This led to a lot of experimentation with color. He usually listens to jazz while painting, often Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, or Django Reinhardt.

Jim is represented by Veronique Wantz Gallery in Minneapolis, MN.

Exhibitions

January 2013 – VWG Opening Solo Show, Veronique Wantz Gallery, Minneapolis, MN

July 2013 – Artifact Gallery Opening, Artifact Gallery, New York, NY

August 2013 – Group Show & The Artist's Studio, Veronique Wantz Gallery, Minneapolis, MN

Nov. 2013 – "Above & Beyond" Group Show, Veronique Wantz Gallery, Minneapolis, MN

February 2014 – "Introspective & Retrospective", Veronique Wantz Gallery, Minneapolis, MN

September 2014 – "Meditations", Veronique Wantz Gallery, Minneapolis, MN

April 2016 – "Beyond Memories", Rosebud, Paris, FRANCE

April 2019 – "Rue Vaneau", Veronique Wantz Gallery, Minneapolis, MN