James Kent

I have always been creative. Born in Texas, I grew up in a small town in northeast Ohio near the shore of Lake Erie. Creative interests - art, music, and photography - were favored parts of my life from an early age. After receiving a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio and a Master's in Operations Research from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I settled in New Jersey in 1981 upon accepting a position as a telecommunications analyst with Bell Laboratories. As my time became crowded with the demands and diversions of adult life, I realized that my creative side was not as close to the surface of my life as it had been, and I missed that. So I decided to begin making changes that would ultimately allow me to create art full time. In early 1994, I left Bell Communications Research and immersed myself in painting for more than a year. I returned to the telecommunications industry, finally retiring in late 2013.

More than two decades ago, I moved away from geometric constructed paintings to painting in the lyrical abstract expressionist style. For me, this has been a way to expand my artistic language and revel in the possibilities of paint. The paintings are “non-representational”, meaning they are not meant to portray anything in the world we see around us. They require careful study on the part of the viewer, not just a quick glance. A long look will reveal details, textures, and perhaps the evocation of an object or a landscape.

For several years, my paintings have followed the fundamentally landscape-based abstract expressionist direction pioneered by artists such as Richard Diebenkorn. This has provided me with much inspirational territory. My recent work reflects a growing restlessness with working only in paint. Studying the works of Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, I have begun to explore using collage elements – everything from magazine and newspaper clippings to various found objects – to enrich the painted surface. These recent paintings are less referential to the landscape and more evocative of urban existence.

For Inquiries about this artist’s work please contact the Guild of Creative Art at 732-741-1441.