

the Art Cellar

Herb Jackson's Process

"Before I begin a painting, I try to be as blank as the raw canvas. Of course I bring to the act of painting years of experience that will shape to a degree the end result, but I remain open to the direction that the painting will suggest as it becomes a more active participant in the process. I build up and scrape away the paint in many layers. The first layer is put on with no expectations as to the finished work, and even the color is selected in an arbitrary manner; however once the second layer has been carefully laid on, it becomes necessary to consider each layer as possibly the last. As the painting progresses, forms, marks, signs and gestures begin to appear from within, and they may last for twenty or so layers, or be gone during the



application of the next layers. Some survive to become part of the painting's surface; however, I make no attempt to save or protect any area of the painting unless it seems necessary to the life of the whole.

At a certain point, usually weeks into the life of a painting, the canvas will begin to exert more influence over the direction I must take, and at that point, it is often unclear where I stop and the painting begins. We are as one in the effort to make this new presence manifest. Decisions are made in response to the emerging painting, and they are determined non-verbally, so that it is possible to have a session lasting several hours without a verbal thought.

I want the information in my painting to be released slowly, like a quiet flute growing louder. This becomes a kind of archaeology, both in terms of the process as I explore the images of my experience, and the reverse decoding of information that the viewer accomplishes by spending time with the work of art.

For me, painting is an act of meditation. By doing it daily, I am made re-aware of the unity of all things. I consider my work as part of nature, rather than a statement about nature, and as such, I would not be surprised to enter a deep forest and find one of my paintings among the trees." - Herb Jackson