

Jess Beyler was born in Urbana Illinois. The light and the empty space of that landscape was her first formative visual experience and it has remained an important component of her work ever since.

Jess's father, a working class veteran of the Korean War, brought home a deep respect for Korean inventiveness and a love of Japanese art. He made both of these a part of the family's daily life via the stories he told, the gardens he planted, the art he hung on the walls, the houses he built, and the connections he sought out in the local community. The quality of local Japanese cultural experiences was unusually high for small Midwestern city in the 1960s and 70s because of Shozo Sato, a professor at the University of Illinois who "brought ikebana, calligraphy, black ink painting, kabuki theatre, and the Way of Tea to generations of students and community members through his tireless teaching, performances, exhibitions, and cross-cultural engagement." This, along with regular trips to the Chicago Art Institute with her Mom, formed the foundation for Jess's vision, long before she encountered academia.

Jess studied art at Schiller European University in Strasbourg, France, where she was surprised to find out that a whole culture could be unapologetically serious about beauty and physical delight. She earned a BFA in painting at the Maine College of Art, and an MFA at the University of Iowa. Because her making practice draws heavily on physical thought, she also studied and danced with Chester Wolensky of the Jose Limon Company, at the Ram Island Dance Co. of Portland ME, and earned a 2nd degree black belt from the Japan Karate Association in Chicago, where she also taught. The karate permanently changed how she handled a paint brush.

Ms Beyler has shown her paintings in galleries across the country, including Chicago, New York, Portland ME, New Jersey, Denver, the Kansas City area, and Champaign-Urbana IL. Her practice has been sustained by residencies in North Adams MA, and the Vermont Studio Center as well as by time spent in Lisbon, Venice, Munich, and Vienna. For a decade, she taught art at the locale center for the developmentally disabled, where she learned some things from her students about how to experiment with sheer abandon.

Ms Beyler has shown large scale work at Prairieland Mediation Center, and at the M2 Building in downtown Champaign IL, which recently acquired *100 Famous Views of the Universe*, for their permanent collection. Her work can also be seen at KoFusion Restaurant, an award winning Asian fusion restaurant in downtown Champaign.