



ZEN SEKAI GALLERY

# JED IRWIN



## A LIFE IN ART

March 9 through May 31, 2024



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In loving memory of my step-sister,  
Glenna Ross, January 2, 1941 -  
January 15, 2024, New York, NY. A  
creative soul, sorely missed.





## Introduction

I was in high school in the mid 1960s when I first met Jed Irwin. He had been newly hired as curator, by what was then called Cheney Cowles Museum (now Museum of Northwest Art and Culture) in Spokane WA. As curator he had instituted an outreach program called the “Intercampus Arts Association” which brought together area university, college and senior high school students, to explore networking, discussion and other art related projects. Jed offered me my first real job, as assistant to the curator, sparking a lifelong interest in curatorial issues and museology, of which this virtual gallery is but the latest instance. Jed was also my first big art influence, and I am still continuously amazed by the richness and variety of his pictorial strategies. Although this exhibition is focused on *A Lifetime in Art*, for me it also represents a lifetime of friendship; of many years of visits, conversations, and of exposure to Jed’s wide range of intellectual interests, wit and compassion.

This show would not have been possible without the dedicated work of Evy Wessel, Jed Irwin’s wife and partner in life.

– *William Elston, 2023*



### ARTIST STATEMENT JED IRWIN

My early painting influences were the pioneers of lyrical abstraction Klee and Kandinsky, the surrealists Ernst and Matta, and the mid-century organic abstractionists Gorky and Tobey. Despite their many differences, these artists had at least two major commonalities which attracted me to them: the consistent and effective use of line (eschewed by many other modern painters) as a formal and expressive component; and the compelling need to reveal a private personal vision (Kandinsky's "internal necessity") through a process-conscious relationship with the working media. I also greatly admired - among others - Jean Debuffet and Alfonso Ossorio, both of whom pushed tactility beyond painting, into assemblage. All of these influences have been assimilated and continue to inform my work, but there have been other, different ones as well, most notably the visual wit, so closely linked to language, of Duchamp and William Wiley, which slants painting toward criticism (of art or culture history or of the art making process itself); and also the High Modernist minimalism of such artists as Robert Ryman and Brice Marden, whose work can be seen as the ultimate glorification of purely formal values in painting. Perhaps it is the mixture of the two groups of influences - the first subjective-intuitive, lyrical and visceral, the second rational, intellectual, relatively disengaged - that gives my own work and unsettling feeling of ongoing struggle, of edginess.

But isn't this just another take on the old dualistic discourse on the classical and the romantic, the Apollonian and the Dionysian? I have always been comfortable with and interested in notions of dualism in art, in psychology and in life. The union of opposites - especially order and chaos - is the goal of art. The artist functions much like the alchemist, who sought pure illumination at the intersection of magic, science and religion (ostensibly to turn base metals into gold - an early and ambitious attempt at recycling). We push coloured mud around with a hairy stick, in search of the shapes of memory and dream that when rightly balanced will bring into focus a resonant new image of interior reality.

I am very interested in the surface of a painting - how the paint forms a "skin" on the picture plane. My paintings don't usually have much sense of spatial recession, or depth: forms and colours tend to sit on or advance forward from the picture plane. My colour is not bound by drawing, but is used as a more independent element for the creation of shape and pattern. There is a range of colour, and colour relations are not always kept harmonious.

In my work - with certain exceptions - what the painting is "about", in my mind, emerges as the painting develops, not before. It is the result of the interaction of two primary factors: process, (how the actual tools and materials are employed and manipulated, through both conscious and subconscious impulses); and happenstance (the intervention of seemingly arbitrary or gratuitous experiences external to the studio process). The intervention of happenstance can be a revelation that focuses process, giving an additional layer of meaning. In turn, the painting gives meaning to experience. Therefore, for me the business of painting is an end in itself, an access route to discovery rather than a means of reproducing an experience already completed.

Since I prefer not to utilize explicit imagery, I can only hope that the paintings evoke in the viewer something curiously familiar, some general sense of narrative action, a frozen moment in an archetypal dream.



## Concise Resume of JED ANTHONY IRWIN

### Personal Data

547 Rainbow Way  
Parksville, BC, Canada V9P 0G8

tel: (250) 586-0245  
email: jirwin@ucalgary.ca

Born: New York, N.Y., February 26, 1941.  
Canadian Citizenship 1975

### Education

M.F.A., Mills College, Oakland, California, June 1966. Major in Painting  
under Rafael Canogar Minor in Art History under Alfred Neumeyer

B.F.A., Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, February 1964. Major in Painting  
under David Pease Minor in English under Gerald Stern

University of Rochester, 1959-1960. Major in English.

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

November 2018 The Hive Gallery, Gabriola Island, BC

June 2006 Comox Valley Art Gallery, Courtenay, BC

February 2005	Oceanside Gallery, Parksville, BC
April 2004	Devonian Gardens Gallery, Calgary, AB
February 2002	Afrikadey Gallery, Calgary, AB
July 1999	The New Gallery, Calgary AB
November 1997	Mark Ruschman Art Gallery, Indianapolis, Indiana
June 1997	Domino Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic
February 1997	Deacon Ulrich Fine Arts, Calgary, AB
June-Sept. 1995	Czech Republic, Three Cities Traveling Exhibition
April 1995	Maya Plastic Art Centre, Istanbul
February 1994	Triangle Gallery, Calgary AB
March 1992	Haynes Fine Arts Gallery, Bozeman, Montana
December 1991	Galeri MD, Istanbul
June 1987	Pitt International Galleries, Vancouver BC
March 1987	Virginia Christopher, Calgary AB
May 1984	Langham Cultural Centre, Kaslo, BC



September 1983	National Exhibition Centre, Castlegar, BC
January 1983	Virginia Christopher Gallery, Calgary, Alberta.
March 1981	David Thompson University Centre Gallery, Nelson, BC
January 1981	Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey, BC
April 1979	Malaspina College, Nanaimo, BC
March 1979	Media Gallery, Victoria, BC
March 1978	Vancouver East Cultural Centre, Vancouver, BC
September 1977	Open Space, Victoria, BC
May 1977	Malaspina College, Powell River, BC
April 1970	Grassroots Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan.
November 1968	Zalamea Gallery, New York.

## Represented in Public Collections

Canada Council Art Bank	Vancouver Civic Art Bank
Alberta Art Foundation	Saskatchewan Arts Board
Norman McKenzie Art Gallery	Regina Public Library Collection
Mount Royal College	Museum of Painting & Sculpture, Istanbul
Calgary Civic Art Collection	Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary
National Gallery, Ostrava,	Glenbow Museum, Calgary
Czech Republic	

## Represented in Corporate Collections

Shell Canada	RGO Corp., Edmonton
MAS Printing, Istanbul	Fairmont Hotels
Eczacibasi Foundation, Turkey	Husky Oil
Air Canada	

## Employment

Current: Professor Emeritus, Art Department, University of Calgary

1984-2003 Associate Professor, Art Department, University of Calgary.  
Teaching painting and drawing at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.  
Area Coordinator for Painting 1985-88, 1994-95. 1997-98; Graduate  
Program Coordinator 1998-2000

1980-1984 Assistant Professor, Visual Arts Department, University of  
Victoria at David Thompson University Centre, Nelson, B.C.



Taught Painting and Drawing at all undergraduate levels; responsible for development of new B.F.A. program

1978-1979 Part-time teaching, as follows:

University of British Columbia, Continuing Education Dept. Burnaby Arts Centre.  
Peter Aspell School of Art, Vancouver.

1977-1978 City of Vancouver: Artist Employed (having been selected by city-wide  
juried competition) under the Civic Art Bank program to create works for the  
City's collection.

1974-1976 Central Island Arts Alliance, Courtenay, B.C.  
Co-ordinator/Curator, Founding President.

1970- 1974 Self-employed, Denman Island and Cumberland, B.C.

1969-1971 Regina Public Library, Regina, Saskatchewan Curator, Dunlop Gallery.

1968-1969 Kingdom of Morocco: Artist in Residence, Fes, Morocco, federal grant

1967-1968 Self-employed, New York City: operated an independent transport  
service for artists and art dealers.

1966-1967 Cheney Cowles Museum, Spokane, Washington Curator of Art.

## University of Calgary Functions

2004	Guest Curator, Nickle Arts Museum, for "Visions of Paradise", Oriental Carpet Exhibition
2002 - 2003	Painting Area Coordinator
2001	Art Fundamentals Area Coordinator
1998 - 2000	Master of Fine Arts Program Coordinator
1995 -1997	Senior Studio Coordinator and Division Representative to Department Head's Advisory Committee
1995 -1997	Coordinator, Visiting Artist Program
1996 -1998	Fine Arts Representative to the University of Calgary International Centre
1996 -1997	Project coordinator, 30th Anniversary Juried Alumni Exhibition



## Artist Residencies

2002	Albuquerque, New Mexico, Visiting Artist, U.N.M.
1998	Heredia, Costa Rica Self funded sabbatical residency, painting and lecturing
1991	Istanbul, Turkey: Artist in Residence, Academy of Fine Arts, 4 months
1987	Banff, Alberta: Residency, Leighton Artists Colony at The Banff Centre, 3 weeks.
1968	Fez, Morocco: Residency, Government Cultural Centre Studios, 4 weeks

## Foreign Travel

2019-20	NYC, Spain, Turkey, Colombia
2008-15	Mexico, southern US, NYC, eastern Canada
2009	Turkey, Mexico
2008	Mexico
2006	New York
2005	Mexico. New York
2004	Mexico
2003	Southeastern U.S.
2002	Southwestern and Northeastern U.S.
2001	Southwestern U.S.
2000	Northeastern U.S., Eastern Canada
1999	France, Turkey
1998	Residence in Costa Rica
1996	Ireland, Holland, Turkey
1995	Hungary, Czech Republic, Turkey
1994	Holland, Czech Republic, Turkey
1993	Turkey
1991	Residence in Istanbul; Artist in Residence, Academy of Fine Arts, Mimar Sinan University
1989	Britain, Western Europe, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Bulgaria
1979-1980	Residence in Spain; travel in Britain, Holland, France
1971	Mexico
1968	Britain, Spain and North Africa



## **Special Research Activities:**

### **Artists' Colonies**

- 1997 - 2003      Consultant to the Director, Centre d'Art Marnay, Marnay-sur Seine, France
- 1995 - 2003      Member, Board of Directors, Gumusluk Academy, Mugla, Turkey
- 1994 -1996      International Development Officer for the Degirmendere Project in Kocaeli, Turkey; research and development toward the establishment of an international, multidisciplinary artists' residential work center.
- 1994-97      Member, Alliance of Artists' Communities and Res Artis (an Association for International Artists' Residential Work Centres and Networks)

### **Oriental Carpets**

- 2004 carpet      Guest Curator, Nickle Arts Museum, for "Visions of Paradise", exhibition
- 1997-2002 Calgary      Teaching Introductory Carpet Studies courses for University of Faculty of Continuing Education
- 1996-1997      Operated Jed Irwin Tribal Textiles, a gallery featuring changing exhibitions of textiles presented as works of art
- 1992-2003      Founding member and Vice-President of the Calgary Rug Club; Membership Secretary for the New Calgary Rug and Textile Club
- 1994-1997 and      For the Calgary Turkish Canadian Cultural Association, initiated coordinated visiting speakers, and exhibitions of Turkish Art and carpets
- 1994      Nickle Arts Museum, Guest Curator. Organized and curated the exhibition "Rugs as Art," 1994 and ancillary feature activities

### **African Art**

- 2002 - present      Independent studies in African tribal art



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## A LIFE IN ART

March 9 through May 31, 2024



JED IRWIN  
Low Horizon, 2007  
acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches



JED IRWIN  
Do Not Go Gentle, 2020  
acrylic on canvas  
40 x 84 inches



JED IRWIN  
Klunderspoons (or Klunder's Poons), 1999  
acrylic on canvas  
66 x 56 inches





JED IRWIN  
Gumball Madness, 2002  
acrylic on canvas  
56 x 40 inches



JED IRWIN  
Viking War Dance, 2022  
acrylic on canvas  
36 x 72 inches  
\$ 4,500



JED IRWIN  
New Dream City, 2007  
acrylic on canvas  
55 x 48 inches  
\$ 3,500





JED IRWIN  
Untitled, 2015  
acrylic on canvas  
75 x 56 inches  
\$ 4,500



JED IRWIN  
Before the Carnival, 1990-2007  
acrylic on canvas  
56 x 48 inches  
\$ 3,000



JED IRWIN  
Funny Setup, 2015  
acrylic on canvas  
48 x 40 inches





JED IRWIN  
Getting to the Point, 2014  
acrylic on canvas  
60 x 40 inches  
\$ 4,000



JED IRWIN  
Green Painting, 2023  
acrylic on canvas  
64 x 51.5 inches  
\$ 4,500



JED IRWIN  
Equipoise, 2001-07  
acrylic on canvas  
40 x 56 inches  
\$ 3,800





JED IRWIN

Keys to the City, 2011

acrylic on canvas

48 x 40 inches

\$ 3,800



JED IRWIN

Pink and Yellow, 2002

acrylic on canvas

46 x 59 inches

\$ 3,000



JED IRWIN

Triptych, 2023

acrylic on canvas

60 x 144 inches

\$ 6,000





JED IRWIN  
Double Sunrise, 2018  
acrylic on canvas  
36 x 24 inches



JED IRWIN  
The Crowd, 2012  
acrylic on canvas  
42 x 66 inches  
\$ 4,800



JED IRWIN  
White Painting, 2023  
acrylic on canvas  
42 x 40 inches  
\$ 4,500





JED IRWIN  
My Life in the Bush of Ghosts, 2002  
acrylic on canvas  
72 x 54 inches



JED IRWIN  
Dark Vision, 2023  
acrylic on canvas  
36 x 60 inches  
\$ 4,500



JED IRWIN  
Winter Bells, 1988-99  
acrylic on canvas  
68 x 60 inches





JED IRWIN

Grandfather's Song, 1995

acrylic on canvas

42 x 63.5 inches

\$ 4,800



JED IRWIN

Blue Ceremony, 2007

acrylic on canvas

60 x 48 inches

\$ 4,000



JED IRWIN

Mahone Bay Blues, 2015

acrylic on canvas

35 x 59.5 inches

\$ 3,600





JED IRWIN

First Nova Scotia Painting, 2012

acrylic on canvas

42 x 66 inches





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