

Bernard Weston



Bernard Weston ArtI use beauty, a mechanism that invites people to slow down and allow their perception to become more sensitive, as my invitation to discover departing from ordinary perception and to bask in the perception of just now. It is a reintroduction to the everyday sublime, to that which is happening right now that we don't notice. It reintroduces us to a world we've become accustomed to, the boringly obvious, the sensory world in which we are embedded but take for granted such as the sky or trees. The most remarkable kind of transcendent experience is the one we're having right now. An experience free of memory or anticipation of the future. That's my intention as an artist.

My process is fairly simple. I apply Venetian plaster to canvas on board using plaster and drywall tools, brushes, baking and cake decorating tools, auto body tools and whatever else I might find to get the job done. My pigment recipes are proprietary. Sometimes I rescue damaged doors from the lumber yard and repair them; other times I make a frame to support the canvas. After the plaster cures it is burnished and then treated with a protective wax layer that bonds the plaster together and gives it a final lustre. My compositions and colors are inspired by ancient Chinese and Japanese brush work on paper. My Sumi-e studies in a Buddhist Temple and brush work with a contemporary Chinese Master, Yuebin Gong, are evident in my work. Sumi-e is a contemplative discipline in Japanese Buddhism and is practiced in the Zen and Shingon traditions. Chinese brush work from the 1200's onward was part of the "Literati" culture: Chinese Sages and their philosophies, Chinese poetry and calligraphy, Chinese Feng Shui and I Ching, Chinese meditation (Qi Gong and Tai Chi) and Chinese Qin Music.

More important than the physical process of producing the art, than artistic skill in color and composition, is my frame of mind or state of being. As a Zen Master or Chinese Sage would have done, I start my work day by emptying my mind of chatter or clutter, getting present to the process ahead. Meditation, Yoga and Chi Gong all give me access to clearing my mind. Then I begin my work. I feel like a little boy afraid of jumping into a chilly pool when I approach a blank canvas. Terror and exhilaration arise. And sometimes everybody I've ever known, loved, hated, wished things had gone differently with are there with me in my studio. Once I am "in" the piece I have a sense of disappearing, of "unworldly pleasure" where thoughts, the spoken word and time all lose definition for me. Terror becomes calm, exhilaration becomes focus and the crowd quietly dissipates.