

James Herman

Biography

James Gregg Herman's practice encompasses fine art and design. He has exhibited his paintings and sculpture in New York City and Europe. The New York Times featured and reviewed his patented Champagne Stool design. His work is in numerous private & corporate collections. Born in Wichita, Kansas, he grew up in Saint Joseph, Missouri, studied at the San Francisco Art Institute and earned his MFA (painting) at the University of Oregon.

After a teaching stint, Mr. Herman moved to Tribeca, NY in 1974, where he maintained his art studio until a permanent move Upstate in 2010, with his wife, painter Lillian Voorhees. Prior to the move he was commuting, and had already become involved in local Upstate issues, including fracking awareness. He helped found Sustainable Otsego. His ongoing research and educational outreach about fracking earned him the Otsego County Conservation Association designation, Conservationist of the Year, in 2010.

Mr. Herman's self-described "peripatetic art career" encompasses product development for art manufacturers, technical lectures on color, a studio assistant position for Malcolm Morley, and architectural illustration work for Robert A.M. Stern. His virtuosity encompasses a broad range of art disciplines. Daily walks around his Hartwick property inform his artistic choices. He collects his materials mostly from local sources. Though ample, his studio leaves one just enough room to maneuver around a plethora of tools, branches and wood slabs — and objects not yet realized.

Artist Statement

About his recent work, he noted, "Bark shards bring our attention to things we usually throw away or burn— they are "nature's pottery shards." In some pieces, he carefully highlights bark patterns with paint "to reveal the tree's growth in ways that suggest pictorial structure. One can imagine them as abstract paintings," Herman suggested, or simply what they are; "a commonplace beauty revealed." In other pieces everyday materials such as thorns take on a threatening aspect "that reflects the ecological crises that we all are facing." His works range from a larger than life walnut sculpture, to diminutive marked forked twigs, to photographic works of "engraved" winter-crushed grass.