

IAN BUSHER

Toronto, ON

ARTIST STATEMENT

Born in the suburbs of Toronto, I began my art training by enrolling in the Ontario College of Art at the age of 19. My education was short lived however, when faced with mounting debt, I made the difficult decision to quit school and begin working. The separation between art and myself was short lived. As a professional carpenter I found myself working in urban and industrial landscapes that I felt compelled to capture with my camera.

In the photographic work I was creating over the past few years, I captured textures and colour; form, line and accidental composition, and printed that work to a two-dimensional surface and framed and mounted it in a number of ways. In the middle of 2013 I realized this way of working was not satisfying me in the way it had. I was having a harder and harder time finding new places and things to photograph that satisfied my need to move forward as an artist, to advance and adapt to where the work wanted me to go. And the camera and printing process put the work at a distance from me as the hunter/gatherer, and from the viewer, who could only sense the tactile nature of the subject.

The first step to becoming more in touch with what I wanted and where the work wanted to go was to personalize the images with something I had added. I missed paint. Photography is a wonderful medium, but coming from a background in painting, I wanted to create and play, as well as photograph and display. This process began with some older work I had in the studio. One day, in September, I started to paint on the images. Brushing, spraying and splattering. It was very cathartic. Freeing.

But I wanted one more thing. I wanted to give the viewer the texture. I wanted to cut out that section of floor or wall and recognize it as the beautiful detail it was. The reproduction was no longer enough. I needed to display the actual item. I experimented with steel sheets, rusting them, adding the paint, adding the reclaimed up-cycled lumber to add depth and support the steel. My canvas was not going to be a paper print of the decaying and distressed materials, my canvas was going to be *made* of these materials. The viewer can see and touch and be with the actual elements I was presenting to them in the previous photographic works.

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Most recently, I have returned to painting full time, in a style that is influenced by visits to galleries from my youth: paying homage to abstract expressionism and colour block study: Modrian, Rothco and Bush are all at play in the new works. Using the most basic colours and shapes to attempt to convey emotion, tension, drama, weight and movement. I am asking the viewer: what do you see in what you do not see?

ARTIST STATEMENT – PROCESS

Sept 14 – 28, 2024

When you search for a definition of Process online you will find several that all revolve around the same theme, here are a few:

- Noun - a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end.
- Verb - perform a series of mechanical or chemical operations on (something) in order to change or preserve it.
- Verb - deal with (someone or something) using an official and established procedure.

I always enjoy when a word can mean more than one thing based on how it is used, just as an artist's materials can become so many things, depending on how *they* are used. To summarize the definitions above, this show is called Process because making my work is a process for me, and digesting the work as the viewer is a process.

When conceiving this show at the start of 2024, I had no idea that I would be processing so many personal events at the same time. My wife was badly injured in an accident and we lost a loved one who was very dear to us, all at a time when we were very, very busy. I wanted to use this title because this year has been very much about processing everything that was going on all at once, processing emotions, struggle, and balance while going through the creative process of making new work.

After many years experimenting with mixed media elements such as resin, steel, reclaimed materials, I have returned to painting full time, in a style that is influenced by visits to galleries from my youth: paying homage to abstract expressionism and colour block study. Using the most basic colours and shapes to attempt to convey emotion, tension, drama, weight and movement. Three works in a new style are featured as a

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part of the Process show. These pieces are a new experiment into adding a dimension of depth and shadow to the work.

When I show abstract works to the public and I am present with the works, I will often get the questions:

- Why do you paint this way?
- What do these mean?
- Why don't I 'get' abstract art?

Abstract painting is a difficult thing to explain because it works on two levels: both emotional and principle.

"Abstract art has helped us to experience the emotional power inherent in pure form."
Anton Ehrenzweig

When I say emotional, I mean that because the imagery and use of the medium is not figurative or representative, it should cause the viewer, to have an emotional reaction. And that can go in many directions. Some people are drawn to abstract works because the piece makes them feel balanced, composed, comfortable. People may say 'It speaks to me' or 'I am drawn to it'. Some works attract an audience who like to feel off balance, uncomfortable, unsure of what they are feeling at all.

When I say principle, what I mean is that an abstract piece should still adhere to the same principles of composition, colour study, form, shape, rhythm, balance as a non-abstract piece. Generally, even when it appears there is no 'artistry' within an abstract work, if it comes together for the viewer and makes them feel and react to the piece, then there is still something, or many things, from the basic principles of art within the finished work.

'Abstract artists tell their stories with shapes, color, edges, movement, and value - just like when one is painting a beautiful scene. The difference is, of course, there is no scene. The scene is within the artist. I often get asked, 'How do you know when you are done?' I am done when the story is told.'

Gwen Fox

I like to say that abstract paintings answer a question that no one asked. But now that the answer has been revealed, the viewer is left to ponder what the question might have been, and why no one had thought to ask it before. And I don't want to tell you

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what kind of reaction I want, I want you to have to think about what questions the work makes you ask yourself.

I hope you enjoy them and feel moved in some way. I hope they inspire you to process what you are seeing on your own.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT – PROCESS

Wall Space Gallery is proud to present, *Process*, a new series of hard-edge, geometric abstract paintings by Ian Busher. Busher balances form and colour in crisp two and three dimensional compositions that hint at everyday moments, objects and emotions. Parred down to squared and rectangular colour blocks Busher pushes the relationship between visual imagery and the natural desire to assign meaning.

Strategically selected titles, such as 'Rose', 'The Local Scene', and 'Random Access Memory', offer glimpses into the suggested forms and concepts captured by Busher; their meanings slipping between names, physical objects, album titles, and colloquial sayings. Seemingly untethered from a specific theme, the process of meaning making becomes the crux of Busher's project. Leaning into the failure of 'pure abstraction', this body of work playfully acknowledges the impossibility of unassociated colour and shape – even when stripped bare of its form.

Process introduces 3D paneled paintings into Busher's lexicon of abstraction. Pieces like 'Finding Your Way' and 'Polynucleotide' protrude from the wall like cubic topographies. The varied depths of their planes and incongruent edges appear like building blocks; segments of information combining into a greater whole like strands of DNA or the construction of a map. Their sculptural presence places physical space in competition with the illusion of space within his two-dimensional works. The pull between the illusionary and the real across this body of works – combined with the slippery multitude of possible readings – emphasizes the flexible nature of how we categorize information and assemble it into resonant references; whether it be memories, friends' faces, or the hopeful feelings of things to come.

Tiffany April, Curator

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CV

EDUCATION

1992-93 Foundation Studies, OCAD

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2024 *Process*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON.
2020 *Eunoia*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2014 Co-solo, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2013 *Solo Exhibition*. Communication Gallery, Toronto, ON
2010 *Solo Exhibition*. Communication Gallery, Toronto, ON

JURIED EXHIBITIONS

2020 *Toronto Outdoor Art Fair*. Toronto, ON
2019 *Toronto Outdoor Art Fair*. Toronto, ON
2019 *Riverdale ArtWalk*. Toronto, ON
2018 *Toronto Outdoor Art Fair*. Toronto, ON
2018 *Riverdale ArtWalk*. Toronto, ON
2017 *Riverdale ArtWalk*. Toronto, ON
2016 *Riverdale ArtWalk*. Toronto, ON
2016 *The Artist Project*. Toronto, ON
2015 *One of a Kind Show*. Toronto, ON
2015 *Queen West Art Crawl*. Toronto, ON
2015 *Riverdale ArtWalk*. Toronto, ON
2015 *Exhibition*. Navillus Gallery, Toronto, ON
2015 *The Artist Project*. Toronto, ON
2014 *Affordable Art Fair*. New York, NY
2014 *Love Art Fair*. Toronto, ON
2014 *The Artist Project*. Toronto, ON
2013 *The Artist Project*. Toronto, ON
2012 *Queen West Art Crawl*. Toronto, ON
2012 *Square Foot Show*. AWOL Gallery, Toronto, ON
2012 *Toronto Outdoor Art Fair*. Toronto, ON
2012 *Contact Festival*. Studio Vogue Gallery. Toronto, ON

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2012 *The Artist Project.* Toronto, ON
 2011 *Retrospective Show.* Communication Gallery, Toronto, ON
 2011 *50//50 Show.* Queen Gallery, Toronto, ON
 2011 *Toronto Art Expo.* Toronto, ON
 2010 *Exhibition.* Sunrise Gallery, Hamilton, ON
 2010 *50/50 Show.* Toronto, ON
 2010 *Queen West Art Crawl.* Toronto, ON
 2010 *Contact Festival: Beaux-Arts.* Brampton, ON

AWARDS

2015 VIP Award, The Artist Project
 2014 VIP Award, The Artist Project
 2010 Best Photography In Show, 50/50 Show, Queen Gallery

FUNDRAISING DONATIONS

2019 Peggy Baker Dance Projects Benefit Art Auction, Toronto, ON
 2019 Teddy Bear Affair Gala, Children's Aid Foundation
 2019 Waterkeeper Gala, Toronto, ON
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 2016 Waterkeeper Gala, Toronto, ON
 2015 Teddy Bear Affair Gala, Children's Aid Foundation
 2014 Buy Art Not Kids Auction, Toronto, ON
 2010 Second Harvest, Toronto, ON

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