

## GUSTAV HJELMGREN



With a keen interest in visual expression, Gustav Hjelmgren finds inspiration in the works of the early abstract expressionists de Kooning, Kline, Pollack, Frankenthaler, Rothko and Joan Mitchell. Growing up in a family of painters—his great-great-grandfather was the renowned Swedish painter Richard Bergh and his grandmother painted her entire life—art was always a natural part of his life.

Working primarily with a squeegee, Gustav manipulates the newly applied paint, building up layer upon layer, working either while the paint is still wet or making a conscious decision to allow that particular layer to dry before moving on. Being able to step back and leave a piece for awhile gives him the chance to reflect and perhaps even rework his composition. Searching for his own unique expression, Gustav allows not only his instinct and subconscious feelings to guide him but he is also led by the nature of the medium itself and by the tools he has at hand.

These many layers symbolise for him the multiple layers of a lifetime—inviting the viewer in to wonder what lies beyond. They are also a symbol for diversity, as the various layers of paint and strokes of colour find harmony on his canvas in unexpected combinations.

Inspiration is also found in his deep and immediate connection with nature—be it a walk in the woods or the power of the open sea. Everything is connected and it is these connections that find their way onto his canvases.

Gustav Hjelmgren's work mirrors his perception of reality and his inner state in that precise moment of painting, sometimes revealing things that he was not immediately aware of. As Gustav himself says, the act of painting has a great healing effect, of being able to accept what is and what is not.



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