

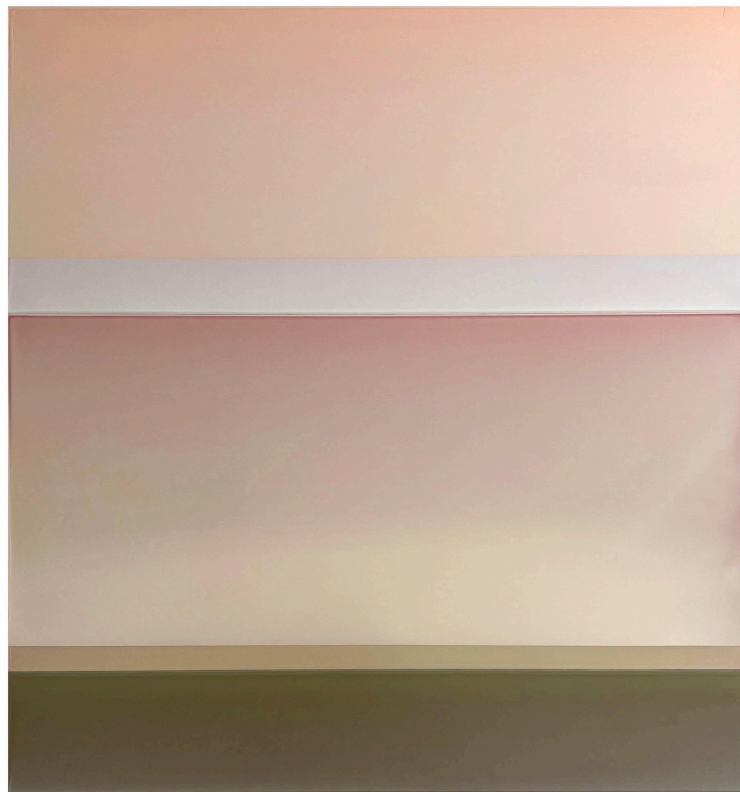
## Meet Susan English

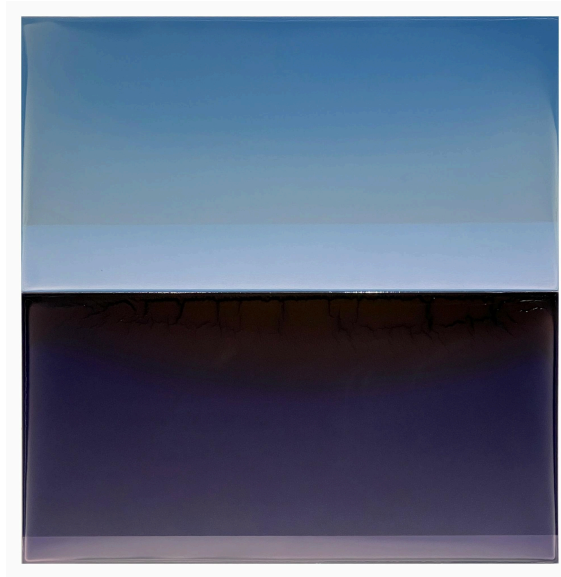
JUNE 26, 2025

We were lucky to catch up with Susan English recently and have shared our conversation below.

**Alright, Susan thanks for taking the time to share your stories and insights with us today. Can you tell us about a time that your work has been misunderstood? Why do you think it happened and did any interesting insights emerge from the experience?**

The most frequent comment I get about my work is that it is calm. I understand the comment, but it surprises me because I'm not a particularly calm person and I think people might jump to a conclusion that I am in a serene or zen state while making the work. I do have my zen moments, but there is plenty of struggle and frustration in my studio as well. I am always trying to push the work, make the best work I can and to continue to evolve and develop as an artist. The paintings have a tautness to them and a darker resonance that might not be immediately apparent. The color relationships are very specific and hard won, it can be hard work to get there!





**Susan, before we move on to more of these sorts of questions, can you take some time to bring our readers up to speed on you and what you do?**

I am a painter living in the Hudson Valley. I moved up here from Brooklyn 27 years ago with my husband and two sons. I love this area as it is a small town with a dynamic artist community adjacent to one of the greatest cities in the world. I have a light filled studio that is a three-minute walk from house where I go daily to work. I currently show my work nationally with galleries in New York City, Connecticut, Houston, the Bay Area and Seattle – but it has taken me many years to get to the point where I can work full time on my painting.

For many years, I showed my work locally in the Hudson Valley area and had a “day job” running a decorative painting business with my husband. We worked for architects and interior designers in NYC and the surrounding area. The value of this work for my painting practice is that, over the three decades, I made hundreds of color samples for wall glazing techniques and then realized these colors on walls; seeing color ideas on a large scale, in specific light and space environments. My signature work in the business was creating beautiful and unique colors for clients. In the last seven years, I have had representation with Kathryn Markel Fine Arts, a gallery in the Chelsea area of NYC. This changed my life – raising my profile as an artist nationally and even globally.

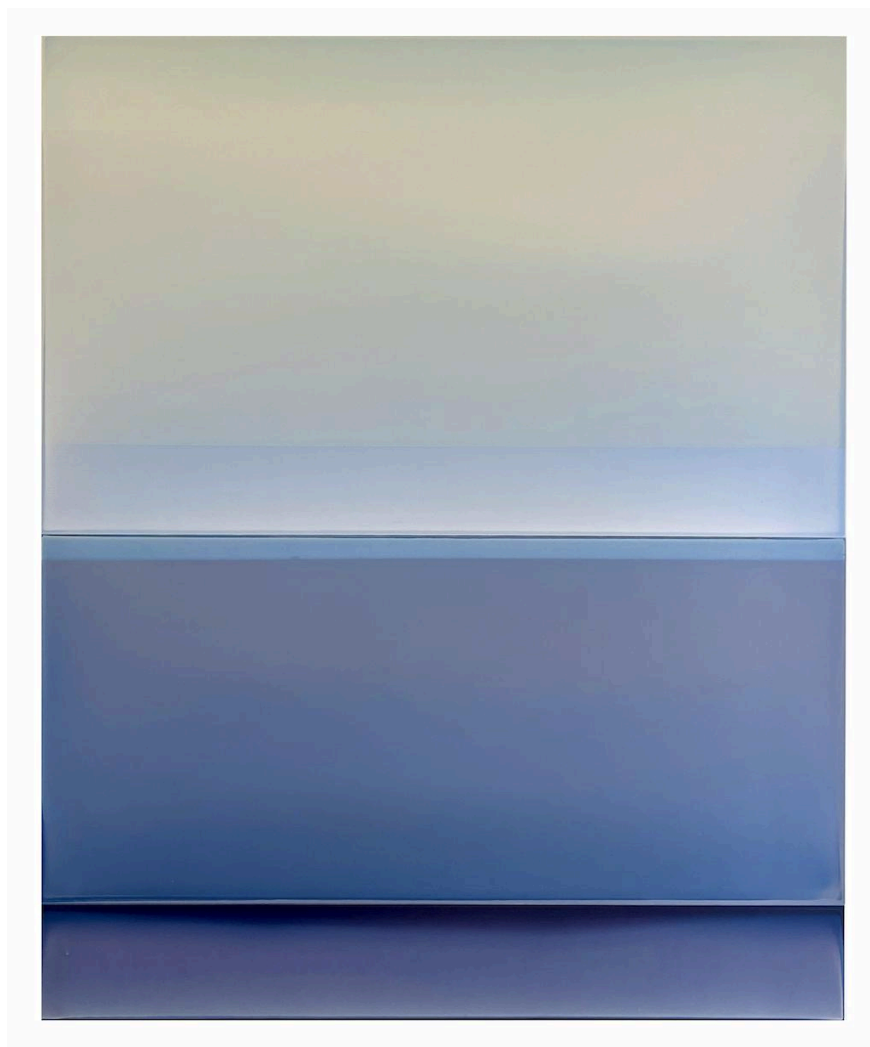
Representation by other galleries around the country followed. I recently had my 4th solo show, STILL LIGHT at Markel Fine Arts.

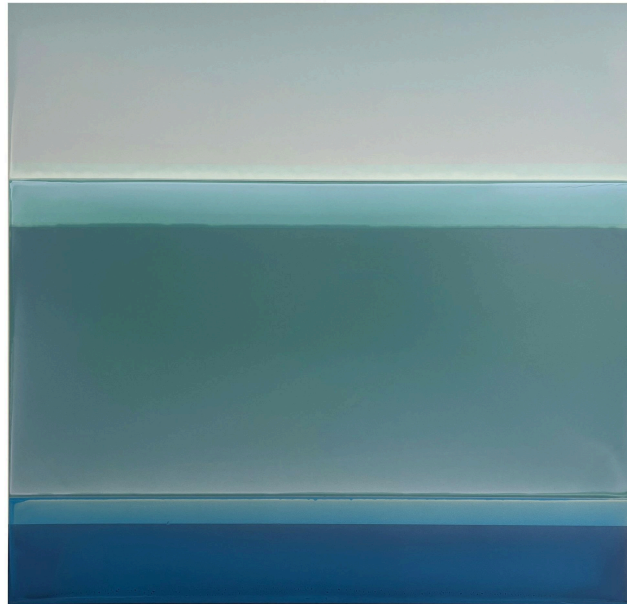
My abstract work is about color, light and surface and is inspired by my relationship to landscape. Over the past 15 years, I have developed a process of pouring layers of tinted polymer on panel that has expanded the breadth of what I can achieve with color and surface. After pouring the tinted polymer, I manipulate the panel so the paint collects or cracks. I do multiple transparent or semi opaque layers which create a depth and complexity to the color. The poured polymer mimics nature: a layer of polymer

hardens like ice or mud —its thickness and viscosity impacting how the surface dries. The variations on the surface and the quality of the color are the result of a delicate and flexible relationship between control and accident. I assemble the poured panels into specifically calibrated horizontal or vertical sequences, creating a narrative of color, space, and light. The surfaces range from dull to glossy, either absorbing or reflecting the light, existing always in relationship to the light in the room and the position of the viewer.

My color choices represent an intersection of outside and inside. Specifically, the landscape at my grandparent's camp on the Maine coast, where I have spent time in my entire life is a primary source of inspiration. While up there, I do plein air watercolors which I bring back to the studio. As a point of departure, color ideas and moments in time from the watercolors enter the internal world of a painting and begin a life of their own. Inside the highly charged relational realm of color, my responses and choices are visual, emotional, and intuitive. I play with the phenomenon of a color at the limit of itself. How far can green be pushed before it becomes blue? How many infinite directions can you push a brown or a gray or a white? In this tertiary area, colors hum in multiple ways like a harmony contained in a single note.

I am so grateful at this point in my life to be able to work full time as an artist.





**Is there something you think non-creatives will struggle to understand about your journey as a creative?**

I think non-creatives might struggle to understand the selfishness necessary to make art. It is a strange activity – spending a lot of time alone in a studio, making largely useless items... or it can be hard to determine what their usefulness is. It is something I struggle with myself; feeling self-critical that I don't do something that is more obviously helpful for the world. I have to remind myself that making art is important, even essential. But it does require an intense internal focus – I think in order to make something real, something that speaks to people you have to go deeply inside of yourself and this requires a kind of selfishness that might not be understood from the perspective of someone not involved in a creative pursuit.







**For you, what's the most rewarding aspect of being a creative?**

The most rewarding aspect of being a creative for me is that the world of my studio is a place where I make the rules – there are generally so many responsibilities and constraints in life and in my studio, I am only responsible to myself, to the integrity of my work and ideas. For many years, I worked as a commercial artist and although I enjoyed aspects of the inherently collaborative process of commercial work, I am most happy in a situation where I have autonomy in my decision making. Each painting I make is an investigation, an exploration and in some ways an invention. The excitement of this keeps me stimulated and engaged.



