

HIGH DESERT HOMECOMING



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September 1 - October 1, 2023

Saturdays & Sundays 12-5pm,
or by appointment

Opening reception Friday, September 1, 6-10pm

Bell Projects presents – **High Desert Homecoming** – a solo exhibition featuring organic, modern wall sculptures of wax and wood by **Jamie Gray**. This exhibition opens Friday, September 1 and runs through October 1, 2023. Please join us for an **opening reception on September 1st from 6pm until 10pm**.

Growing up at the 8000-foot base of the Collegiate Peaks in Buena Vista, CO gifted me an inherent love of nature. In contrast, living most of my adult and artistic life outside of Colorado deepened my sense of place identity. 2022 marked my homecoming with a move to Denver. A new location, new studio, and new beginning spawned the development of a new body of work (with selected works curated for a solo exhibition at Bell Projects). This body of work evokes the high desert landscape of my upbringing. The abstract wall sculptures and mono-prints are made with an intentionally limited approach to shape, color, mark-making, and materiality. My simple shapes and patterns are a visual manifestation of how I see and understand natural forms – from clouds to cacti, fungi to fossils, lichen to leaves, pinecones to pebbles, and seeds to streams. The work is deliberately ambiguous to allow the viewer space to bring their associations.

I primarily work with pigment and wax on wood. Specifically, I source locally reclaimed wood that I hand-cut and use as the substrate for my hand-carved encaustic surfaces (encaustic is a mix of natural beeswax and damar tree resin). I enjoy the transformational character of these materials, to alter the discarded into something beautiful and often unrecognizable. Also, my father is a fine woodworker, so growing up around his wood shop instilled a longtime kinship with the material that I enjoy incorporating into my art practice.

Mark-marking is a core aspect of this body of work because it's important to me that I create my work by hand and I enjoy the repetitive and meditative act. My purposely imperfect lines are evidence of my human hand in the making process; the totality of marks indicates the time I spend with each piece. More symbolically, the marks are a metaphor for my human presence in the environment. It is said "The path is made by walking" and like hiking a trail and placing one foot in front of the other, I carve one line carefully next to the other.

Jamie Gray is a mixed media artist living and working in Denver, CO. Her current practice melds abstraction and minimalism with flat sculptural forms, nature-inspired motifs, and a dedication to hand-crafted processes. Gray holds a bachelor's and master's degree in design, and this foundation deeply underpins her aesthetic choices and creative processes. Recent Denver-based group exhibitions include Arvada Center for the Arts, Curtis Center for the Arts, 40WestArts, and Spark Gallery. Previously, Gray exhibited in galleries & art fairs across the US & UK; had work commissioned for museum shops in London & Kansas City; has work included in hotel collections in NYC & Miami; and sold to collectors in Australia, Dubai, England, Germany, and the US. Find more about the artist at GrayjayStudio.com.