

Dan Berkeland



After I graduated with a degree in Architecture from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in 1996, I traveled abroad for the first time. What was meant to be a short backpacking trip around Europe turned into something more when I took a volunteer position at Casa Cares - a retreat center of the Protestant Church of Italy - near the town of Reggello, in the hills outside of Florence. The time at Casa Cares gave me exposure to guests and staff from around Europe and beyond. It was in the nature of the center to attract an eclectic range of visitors - art groups, musicians, writers, architects, ecology advocates, and religious groups of all faiths. These meetings only reinforced my firmly held notion that there were an infinite number of ways to lead a meaningful life. This is where I started painting.

In 2000, I worked to convert an old chapel on the Casa Cares property into a gallery/ studio where I worked with other local artists to put on group shows. The gallery was also put to use by different visiting groups to the guesthouse. When not being used as a gallery, I used the space as my studio, often tacking large canvases to all of the walls of the chapel and working on several large landscapes at once. The space became a popular stop for tourists passing through the area, and in this way, I began to establish relationships with collectors throughout Europe and the States.

In the period from 1996 to 2007, aside from my home in Italy, I spent considerable amounts of time in San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, Greece, and Sweden. I traveled extensively throughout the States and Europe and also made trips to Turkey, Jamaica, Thailand, and Cambodia. All along the way, I worked to gain visibility for my work by showing my paintings in cafes, athletic clubs, city halls, hair salons, art boutiques, and restaurants. In 2003, I began showing my work permanently at the Sutter Gallery (formerly known as The North Beach Gallery) in San Francisco, CA.

In 2006, I returned to the Central Coast, about 10 years later than originally planned, and opened my studio in Morro Bay, CA. I currently live with my wife, Caroline, in Morro Bay.