

James Brems practices the art of simplicity. He lived in Japan for several years while studying ceramics, and has a background in Asian languages and literature. He is a Seattle artist known for large carvings, and simple shapes and colors in his painting, ink and prints.

Simplicity carries a meaning of being uncompounded or uncomplicated. Perhaps closer to the essence of something. Unadorned. It can bring about a deep focus or intentionality and even thoughtfulness.

In the exhibit, " Blue", Brems has been exploring the color we see when an ultra marine oil paint is absorbed in layers on wood panels. The wood is arranged in patterns of basic grids. He also uses an umber oil paint to shift our perception when it is juxtaposed to the blue. Simple but not spare. The panels glow with a richness and subtlety allowing us to drink in the color. In the indigo ink drawings on Japanese paper we see the pen markings build to create a space or movement of color. These works can transport us to a quieter, slower realm outside of time. The way only a meditation or deep involvement can.

*"the blues. layers of thought on layers of paint I often catch these totemic artifacts staring out of themselves imagining what it must be like to be me. of course it is mutual, contagious and somewhat funny. which of us is more alive?"*

James Brems, 2025