

## **Wish You Were Here: *Jesse Mangerson***

### **When did you live in the Bay Area, and what brought you here?**

My wife and then one year old son and I moved to SF from Boulder, CO in the summer of 2005. We moved into a little one bedroom with an office in Pacific Heights and stayed put until the spring of 2010. The move was specifically for grad school at AAU. We left a good life in Boulder in pursuit of bigger things and found them in SF.

### **What prompted you to leave?**

In the 5 years that we lived in SF, I completed grad school and we had our second child (almost at the same time) and I began my teaching career at AAU. We were outgrowing our small apartment and moving to a bigger space was increasingly less feasible given the cost of renting a larger space. After a few distasteful events (car window smashed for the third time and multiple packages of gifts from family being stolen out of our entry way) we started looking to leave the city. Although I had gained a lot from school and was adjunct teaching, the quality of life didn't match what we had experienced in other places. The school agreed to give me online courses that evolved into full time work helping to run the MFA Fine Art Painting Dept.

### **Where did you end up?**

We found a rental house on the West side of Madison, WI with a big yard in a neighborhood with lots of other young families. Because our lease in SF was up in March and the house in Madison wouldn't be ready until July of that year, we stayed with family in the north woods of Wisconsin in a town of 500 people. It was a bit of a culture shock given the two extremes of the energy of SF and total seclusion in the woods of Northern WI during late winter.

### **Has your artwork changed or evolved since you left the Bay Area?**

For a number of years I continued to paint SF, as I would travel there to shoot demos for courses I was writing for the Academy and I had amassed a ton of references from my time there wandering the city, mainly at night. For me, leaving SF was really hard. It took me about 4 years before I was alright with Madison as my new home. I started painting on location here and exploring the area through those paintings. I become more interested in landscape and small studies that helped me to find the beauty of this place. Trips to the South Shore of Lake Superior both in the dead of winter and midsummer helped to re-invigorate my love for Wisconsin.

### **What are you up to now?**

The past few years have been a balance of several commissions with an increase in teaching. I've been taking on private students locally, teaching a small group of high school students drawing, and maintaining my role as full time online faculty at AAU. I've done a few portrait commissions of retiring judges, landscape commissions of favorite local spots, and am now working on a series of commissioned figure in environment paintings for a regionally local private prep school. I find small windows to paint for myself between other people's ideas and fostering young artist talents.