**Jane Michalski – Bio**

Jane Michalski is a versatile artist working in pastel, oil, and mixed media, and for the past ten years, the medium of encaustic. In her current work, Jane continues the exploration of this versatile medium incorporating silk screen elements, ink jet prints and using personal photographs as sources for abstraction. A resident of Chicago for many years, she often returns to her native state of Wisconsin. Her creative energy is fueled by the presence of Lake Michigan and her love for the natural world.

Jane has exhibited in the Chicago area, and in regional and national exhibitions. Her paintings are included in many private collections and have received several awards. She has received grants from the City of Chicago and the Illinois Arts Council.

In addition to her studio work as an artist, Jane is active in Chicago’s Logan Square Community and is a former board member of the Logan Square Chamber of the Arts. She has produced and curated exhibitions for The Hairpin Arts Center. Her education includes a BFA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and an MA degree from the University of Illinois.

**Artists Statement**

As an abstract painter I believe in the power of painting to communicate ideas and emotions without words. In 2006, I fell in love with the medium of encaustic and since then have focused on mastering this medium. As my work in encaustic evolved, I searched for sources for content. I turned to photographs of a place familiar to me: North Point along the shores of Lake Michigan in Wisconsin. North Point is an outcropping of very old limestone, located close to my parent’s home in a neighborhood where my father grew up.  Conditions along the shoreline change over the seasons as the lake water rises and falls.  I have returned to it many times taking photographs, often aiming the camera down to photograph algae covered pools of water among the bedrock and places where the limestone drops off into the lake. The organic nature of the algae and lake debris contrasts with the hard surface of the limestone.

My observations provided a means of structuring my paintings, taking into consideration formal elements and the expressive characteristics of the medium of encaustic which can be both fluid and solid. As the work progressed, I became fascinated with the presence of the bedrock and looked for other methods to build my paintings. I began to use manipulated photographs of the bedrock printed onto rice paper and incorporated into the surface of the wax.

Lately, I have used a photo-silkscreen technique over and under the wax to add reductive elements of the features of the bedrock. This combines the suggestion of the physicality of the rock with abstract forms, lines and color creating a layered space. I have a fascination with structure; the visible structure in the world around us and the structure created within a painting. I see beauty in the balance between horizontal and vertical lines, the contrasts of light and dark, complementary colors and the opposition of hard and soft edges.

Through my work, I seek to make sense of this world, to feel myself as fully present and to ground myself in the experience of being alive.  The physical nature of the world captivates me.  I feel the presence of a past that is revealed through structures, landforms, rock, water, and earth.  Looking down at the ancient bedrock I recognize the forces of nature and the enduring presence of the earth compared to the fragility of my own body.