

## Artist Statement — Darla Bjork

In her most recent body of work, Darla Bjork returns to encaustic painting as both material and metaphor—layering, obscuring, and revealing in response to a period of profound personal loss and change following the passing of her partner. These works inhabit a space of transition, where form dissolves and re-emerges.

Rendered in deep, resonant tones, such as Egyptian purple that at times reads as black, Bjork's paintings reveal their complexity slowly. Amorphous silhouettes appear and recede within veils of haze, suggesting figures that are both present and hidden, in a threshold between visibility and disappearance.

This body of work engages the etymology of the word *person*, from the Latin *persona*: a mask. Some scholars connect it to *per* (through) and *sonus* (sound), meaning to sound through, and relating the mask as an object used to resound an actor's voice. Here, the figure becomes a vessel rather than a fixed identity, a site of transition through which the unseen moves into form.

Bjork's paintings hold space for what cannot be fully seen or named, inviting the viewer into a quiet attunement with grief and transformation.

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Darla Bjork is a painter who has exhibited in the United States and Europe. Her work has evolved from abstract portraits that reflected her "other life" as a psychiatrist working closely with the inner lives of her patients, to abstract landscapes influenced by her childhood in rural Minnesota and the view of the Catskill Mountains from her studio in Woodstock, NY. In her most recent body of work, she has returned to encaustics, creating layered compositions in which amorphous, often obscured silhouettes emerge through deep, resonant fields of color. Over the years she has worked with encaustics as well as oil stick on wood panels, developing a process rooted in layering, scraping, and revealing. In 1984 she was a founding member of Ceres Gallery, a women-run, non-profit collective gallery in downtown Manhattan. In 1996 she left this gallery and joined SOHO20 Gallery, a women's collective founded in 1973. She has had several solo shows, participated in numerous group exhibitions, and served in administrative capacities in both galleries.