



# Phoenix Artist Jake Beckman is "Scratching, Scribbling, Painting, and Coloring" her Way Through Life

*by David Charles*

**// I paint because I am insane—I have to. I think if you ask any artist you will get that answer."**

Everyone except the government and telemarketers call her Jake, even though the name she was given soon after she was born, "a military brat" in Spokane, WA in 1962 was Susan. Now Jake Beckman survives the heat in Phoenix, Arizona where she creates wonderful paintings.

Rumor has it that shortly after her birth, Jake was seen snatching a ballpoint pen out of the nearest doctor's shirt pocket and doing sketches in the maternity ward. Whether there is any validity to that story or not, it is true that Jake has "always been scratching, scribbling, coloring and creating."

Her Masters, of course, was in nuclear physics! Good training for an artist. After all, the artist who created this "rock" did quite a masterful job and any contemporary artist could benefit from a detailed understanding of its composition.

She describes herself as a self-realized artist. The art preceded everything else in her life, even if it was a fairly circuitous route she took to arrive at art as a way of making a living. The way stops included lead singer in a rock 'n' roll band, spacecraft technician, secret satellite builder, teacher... It wasn't till a few years ago, just at the turn of the millennium, that she started selling paintings as a profession.

To begin with her work was super-realistic: "Paintings so crisp that people thought I had pasted a photograph into them," she says. "

But I found the subject matter limiting and wandered off into fantasy for a while and then worked with many other media and explored many other genres."

Varied as her paintings have been, they have a common thread: "I have always looked for meaning, beauty and humor in the world," says Jake. "I find it is far too easy to create dark, moody and disaffected things; therefore I don't respect such work,



even when I create it myself. I find it is much more difficult to paint something pretty or joyful without coming across as trite, so I look for the edge, the ephemeral and the ethereal and I endeavor to create a positive mood in the works I create.” You can see this, for example, in her [Aerial series on her website](#).

Sometimes though, she confesses that the humor in her art leans toward the smartass and sarcastic (see for example her [series of Xmas cartoons](#)). But if it makes people laugh, that’s OK. She likes to make people laugh.

## **The Computer, Numbers and Other Things**

This is how Jake describes her approach to her art these days. It’s best told in her very own words:

“My process is very left-brained for an artist. Often, but not always, by the time I lay the first stroke on



the canvas I know exactly how it is going to come out. I start off with an idea, a sketch on paper, references I have photographed etc. I begin playing with the ideas by loading them into my computer. The computer gives me the ability to play with the colors, strokes, and composition; I can distort things, add things in, take them out, change the texture and generally revise until the idea is screaming to be let out. This process is much easier than gesso-ing over a large area of canvas that you can’t stand anymore. Then I let the concept out onto the canvas. Sometimes though the little kid gets carried away and the whole idea melts under the sway of the other half of my brain.

“I am currently exploring the idea of viewing things from extremes; I see mathematics in those extremes. I think that my thoughts there are a natural progression of my interest in both particle physics and cosmology, which both are extreme departures from the Euclidean/Newtonian world most of us live in. The beauty of the numbers creeps into my work, appearing as fractal designs, explicit superposition of the golden mean, tessellations etc. and it is always there in my structure and my process.

“I am finding my work becomes more abstract as time goes on, but never so abstract that there is not something there for everyone to apprehend; I don’t think I can stand to create a completely abstract piece, because I want that interaction with the audience. I find many people who enjoy art don’t like the conversation if they don’t get it. For me that conversation with the viewers is important; therefore I largely disregard the art for art’s sake view of the world.

“Still as an artist I am self-absorbed with my message to some extent. I have something I want to translate, to say, to be heard, to be understood; such is my desire to decode the beauty of the numbers into something that someone else can comprehend or at least identify with.”

When it comes to media, Jake describes herself as “2-dimensional acrylic at the moment.” She has drawn in pencils, pens, pastels, and charcoal, sculpted in metal, fiberglass and clay, used oil,

watercolor, ink, experimented with fiber, woven, created silver jewelry and has mixed various media together. She is drifting into digital art because the medium has such far-flung promise, but, she says, “there will always be a place for a pad of paper and a pencil or pen in my world and a place for the tangible.”

## Protecting her Art

At the tender age of 19 or 20 Jake got badly burned on the subject of copyrights and ownership and has been cautious ever since, registering most of her work with the US Copyright Office.

Then one day when Jake was President of Artlink, Inc., a non-profit Phoenix arts organization working to bring artists, business and the public together for better appreciation and enjoyment of the arts, she ran into Teri Franks, Founder of Global Fine Art Registry, Inc., and learned about the FAR system for tagging and registering artwork.

“The FAR tags, which are much less expensive than copyright registration, and the way FAR registration occurs looked to me like they would go a long way toward establishing my rights,” Jake recalls.



Since that time she has registered somewhere between 50 and 100 paintings and she continues to register all of her original art as soon as she deems the painting complete and formally photographs it. You can see all her registered art in her [FAR online gallery](#).

“Beyond the copyright issue, over the years my works have gone off in the world and I have no idea what has become of them,” she adds. “FAR addresses that issue and I think it is of great value to my collectors and to me. FAR has other services that are of value to paying members such as having an accessible online portfolio. Membership is more than reasonable at 10 smackers a year! Other online galleries are charging major buck-a-roos for this service.”

Jake also has her own website where she shows and sells her work: <http://www.akajake.com>.

## The Future

“In the long run I must keep creating,” says Jake. “I also want to license my designs. I do not object to my paintings/designs being on a coffee mug—in fact it pleases me that someone enjoys my work well enough to want to see it every day with their morning chai or java. I plan to keep showing, stay out there, be in the public eye.” Jake is seeking gallery representation, “but it’s fun to show and expose other people to my work in non-standard art venues.”

No matter what else she does, one thing’s for sure: Jake will continue to paint, scratch, scribble, color and create, just as she has done all her life. And the world is a more beautiful place as a result. 