

# David Sebberson

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

David Sebberson grew up near Oakland, Nebraska. His father was a farmer, his mother a one-room country schoolteacher. In an inspired moment on a trip to the family dentist in Omaha, David's parents took him to Joslyn Art Museum. Trips to the dentist were never a problem after that. He began to paint. He joined the Oakland Art Klub, organized by local artist Lawrence Faudel, and exhibited with it while in high school. He painted some in college, less in graduate school. And then he stopped for 14 years. He worked at the World Bank in Washington D.C. during the 1980s and then as an English professor at St. Cloud State University (SCSU) during the 1990s.

In 1997, he began studying art formally for the first time taking painting courses at SCSU. He began exhibiting regularly in 2000. With no one really wanting to be department chair, and seeing that David was spending way too much time in the art building anyway, the art department invited him to be chair. He accepted - and has become the guest who never left. For David, the return to art was a return to a beginning place, and so he paints the plains, that beginning place that shaped his eye.

## PIECES IN THE COLLECTION

### A History of the Plains CII: Extensive Landscape with Three Increasingly Distant Places

Oil on Panel

Entered into Collection in 2015

Purchased from Anderson O'Brien Fine Art  
Old Market, Omaha, NE

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My grandparents emigrated from Sweden in the first decade of the 20th century. By then the plains had been surveyed and gridded, prepared for dreams laid out in quarter sections.

When I visited what was left of the family farm, the land looked emptied out. Farm places had disappeared. Faceless structures of agricultural industry or the neo-clapboard homes of suburban sprawl framed the environment with blankness and shaped the plains (again) as isolated or empty. The past, too, became a sort of blankness.

A History of the Plains is an ongoing series of paintings that rearticulates the disjunctive vernaculars of luminism, precisionism, abstract classicism, and minimalism. Its subjects represent traces of human activity: sometimes highly stylized remains of barns or houses, country schools or churches; sometimes walls of new development or industrial agriculture. Abstraction and geometry counterbalanced by horizon and sky reflect the way we've shaped the plains into a place - poetics of space choreographed in horizontal and vertical, object and concept, surface and dimension, flatness and depth.

I do not present the plains as a site of enduring values, a nostalgic past, or awe inspiring nature, but ask why we continue to make the plains such a site. We embrace the environment but commodify the land. We pursue technological change but yearn for cultural stability. We seek individuality but construct brand identities. We value communities but market lifestyles. The work mediates on the continuities and discontinuities of the place where I grew up and the space that remains.