
Editorial Feature

Jay Bolotin in his studio, Cincinnati, Ohio
Photograph by Michael Wilson

Biography

Jay Bolotin (b. 1949, Fayette County, Kentucky) is a prolific visual artist, writer, composer, musician, set designer and filmmaker who resides in Cincinnati, Ohio. While growing up on a farm in rural Kentucky, Bolotin immersed himself in music and storytelling and made sculptures from fallen trees. Later he studied art at the Rhode Island School of Design and became an apprentice to the late sculptor Robert Lamb. However, concentrated his study of fine art, he never abandoned his interest in literature, especially biblical stories and those by the Grimm Brothers and William Blake, all of which have inspired his art. During the 1970s, Bolotin also pursued his love of music while working as a songwriter in Nashville. An accomplished musician, he has worked and performed with artists who include Merle Haggard, Dan Fogelberg, Kris Kristofferson, and Porter Wagoner, and continues to perform regularly in the U.S. and abroad. In the early 1980s, Bolotin began making prints. He uses a variety of media to produce those works, but the directness of woodcut appeals to him most. It remains a constant in his practice, which involves the development of complex, ambiguous dramas that feature an array of recurring characters. Bolotin also expands his imagery into performance-based works, including films, plays, and operas. The realization of those productions can take several years; however, their elaborate and meticulous nature prove to be worth the wait.

Jay Bolotin has had solo shows at institutions including the Samek Art Gallery, Bucknell University; Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati; Joslyn Art Center, Omaha; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; Vanderbilt University, Nashville. His woodcut prints and sculpture are included in numerous public and private collections including Australian National Museum; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; Georgia Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego; Smith College Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; New York Public Library; and Seattle Art Museum.