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Jesper Blader's worlds are startlingly different from ours yet surprisingly similar. A magenta cloud hovering above a house and the rectilinear shape of another house repeated in a green sky bring us up short but then become perfectly harmonious with what we "know."

"Color, I think, is what's most important in my paintings," Blader explains. "I like to tell stories with what I paint, but it is how I paint them that, in my eyes, makes them good. I often have tried to decide colors that a painting shall have in the beginning of the painting process, but now I know that is impossible for me. I change colors all the time and I always get the paintings finished by trial and error. So my painting is a lot about mixing colors on the palette to get them to what feels right and then put them in a relationship with other colors on the panel. That many layers of colors in every painting is also very important for the final result, especially when you see them in the real."

His latest paintings can be seen in the real in his first U.S. solo exhibition, *Beyond the Edge*, through July 6 at Dolby Chadwick Gallery in San Francisco, California.

The Swedish painter often paints houses, which helps ground them in the familiar. "I really like houses," he says, "and I often think of them as big sculptures, so the form, the box, appeals to me. But what really makes houses interesting is the people who live their lives in them. People and how we connect to ourselves, each other or/and the environment is my main topic. I do think it is interesting that we all bear a lot of secrets, and that life itself is full of secrets and things that are hard to understand. I do like when I can sense something but not grasp it in total. I think that houses are like people with a public exterior and something even more fascinating, hidden, secret, inside."

In *Meanwhile*, uncharacteristically monochromatic, the people gaze out questioningly like Grant Wood's sister and his dentist in *American Gothic*—two ordinary people in front of their ordinary house, but, in this case, shoebox midcentury. The magenta cloud appears above the house in *Far*, far away with a figure gazing into the far distance. The gallery notes, "This and other paintings are composed of multiple panels to form an irregularly shaped canvas, emphasizing the borders themselves and, in so doing, the circumscribed nature of knowledge in general. What we see is only part of the story. It is our job to fill in the rest."