

DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

Robert Kingston

March 7–30, 2013

Robert Kingston skillfully uses abstract visual cues to evoke shifting landscapes and dreamscapes upon which viewers can project their own meanings and mythologies. Kingston's arrival at these "scapes" is appropriately rooted in what he describes as "meandering journeys" that start with an initial, random mark. "I look at my work as the piling on of mistakes and hesitations," Kingston explains, "many artists are plagued by doubt, but I've learned to use mistakes and doubt as a source of power. For me, the more mistakes the better." The final paintings are a testament to these journeys of contemplation and discovery. Born of abundant layers of markings and gestures—as well as frequent erasure—Kingston's lyrical paintings present highly complex, fully resolved spaces.

Back in the '70s and '80s when Kingston first started painting, artists were preoccupied with creating thickly impastoed oil paintings. "Soho smelled of oil paint," he recalls, "it was a delicious, overpowering smell." Since Kingston's practice is predicated on spontaneous and improvised movements, he ultimately abandoned slow-drying oil paints in favor of water-based media. Acrylic paints are not only more conducive to his process of backing up and moving forward, they also enable him to move beyond questions of materiality and surface quality to focus instead on vision. Contrary to the practices of many abstract painters, Kingston foregrounds the effects of dematerialization in order to call forth his richly suggestive environments. He consequently likens himself to 18th and 19th century painters such as Tiepolo and Titian whose works are more concerned with realizing a vision of a given subject or scene than with the paint itself. Shedding light on his expectations for his own work, Kingston reflects: "I would like the painting to be like a hole in the wall where you might look or even fall into."

Kingston is drawn to references to ancient cultures, legends, and myths, as well as cryptic, long-forgotten systems of record-keeping and communication such as the scratches on the walls at Pompeii or Paleolithic cave paintings. The impact of paintings at Chauvet, Lascaux, and other subterranean spaces can be seen across Kingston's works, including the recent *I Have Forgotten the Voices of the Animals* (2012), which exhibits a frenzy of animal-like and organic forms that have been pared-down to their

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most basic, essential elements. As many of these markings are most accurately described as scrawls or scratches, Kingston is often likened to Cy Twombly. Twombly, like Kingston, was also captivated by the ancient world. His *Fifty Days at Iliam* (1972), for example, presents an abstract visual narration of the Trojan War as described in *The Iliad*.

Kingston's fascination with Greek history is likewise rooted in the myths and legends of the Homeric epics. Taken from a Robert Duncan poem written from the point of view of Achilles, the title of *I Do Not Know More Than The Sea Tells Me* (2012) confirms Kingston's affinity, if superficially, for the reputed seat of civilization. But this link is also deep and sustained. In Kingston's recent works, for instance, vibrant, crystal blues evoke the Mediterranean Sea and sky while an overall sun-bleached quality suggests blinding sunlight, whitewashed walls, alabaster beaches, timeworn temple columns, and tumble-polished rocks.

Though Kingston and Twombly share many similarities, Kingston's practice has taken a different path in recent years. While the older artist experimented with complex and unorthodox spaces, these spaces exist mostly on the surface of the canvas. Kingston's paintings, on the other hand, are more traditional in that they seek to open up broad swaths of deeply receding space. Space itself is structured in service of a vision—visions which ultimately manifest as dreamscapes and landscapes.

Robert Kingston was born in 1955 in Sungei Gerong, Indonesia, and currently resides in Los Angeles, California. He earned his BFA from California State University Long Beach in 1986 and his MFA two years later from Claremont Graduate University. In addition to exhibiting across the United States, his art has been reviewed in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Artweek*, *L.A. Style*, *L.A. Weekly*, and *Artscene*. This will be his third solo show at the Dolby Chadwick Gallery.

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Robert Kingston

b. 1955, Sumatra, Indonesia, resides in Altadena, CA

EDUCATION

1988 M.F.A., Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA

1986 B.F.A., California State University Long Beach, Long Beach, CA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 2009 Randall Scott Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 2008 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2007 Ruth Bachofner Gallery Santa Monica, CA
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- 2006 Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
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- 1996 Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 1994 Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
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- 1990 Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 1988 East Gallery, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA
- 1987 DA Gallery, Pomona, CA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 *White*, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 2008 *Four Abstract Painters*, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 2007 *Out of Line*, California State University Stanislaus, Turlock, CA
- 2005 *Out of Line*, Riverside Art Museum, Riverside, CA
- 2004 Abstract Los Angeles, curated by Andi Couwenberg, Gensler, San Francisco, CA
Los Angeles Abstract, curated by Andi Couwenberg, Soho Myriad, Atlanta, GA
Dialogue: Abstract, curated by Gayle Ruskin-White, Space, New York, NY
Continental Divide; curated by Mark Zimmermann, Planet Thailand, Brooklyn, NY
Abstractions - Five Gallery Artists, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 2002 *New Mid-Century, Contemporary Interpretations of Organic & Geometric Abstraction*, New Urban Art, Phoenix, AZ (two person exhibition)

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- 2002 *Conspiracy II, New Paintings*, L.I.C.K..Ltd. Fine Art, Long Island City, NY
- 2000 *The Significant Pursuit*, Smack Mellon Studios, Brooklyn, NY
- 1998 *A Slice of Apple, A Cross Section of Abstract Paintings From New York*, Curated by Robert Kingston, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
Contemporary Art Works, Antelope Valley College Art Gallery, Lancaster, CA
- 1997 *Recurrence*, Gallery Korea, New York, NY
- 1996 *Formal Abstraction / New York*, Curated by Robert Kingston, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
A Salon, Room, New York, NY
Pattern and Relief, Smack Melon Studio, Brooklyn, NY
- 1994 *East - West*, E. S. VanDam, New York City, NY
Accrochage, TennisportArts, Long Island City, New York
Credo, (curated by John O'Brien) Brand Library, Glendale, CA
- 1993 *polyABSTRACT*, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
Galerie Behemot, Prague, Czech Republic
- 1992 TBA Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
World News, Muckenthaler Cultural Center, Fullerton, CA
- 1991 *World News*, Onyx Cafe, Los Angeles and Beyond Baroque, Venice, CA
- 1990 *Dialogue/Prague/Los Angeles: Monotypes*, Arroyo Arts, Los Angeles CA
Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA
Spokane Art School Center for the Visual Arts, Spokane, WA
Timeless Impressions, The Art Works, Riverside, CA
- 1989 *Recent Paintings*, East and West Galleries, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA
Variations Los Angeles: The Form, Group Show, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 1989 *Prague/Los Angeles Exchange Show*, Prague, Czechoslovakia
- 1988 *A Downtown Art Odyssey*, Gallery at the Plaza, Security Pacific Corporation, LA, CA
Eight Artists, Mt. San Antonio College, Walnut, CA
Visual Exchange, Harris Gallery, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
- 1987 *Artists for the Homeless*, SPARC Gallery, Venice, CA
Salon des Independents, Richard Bennett Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Second Fall, East Gallery, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA
Fringe Festival, Hinshaw Gallery, Pitzer College Claremont, CA
Ten Year Anniversary Exhibit, Century Gallery, Sylmar, CA
- 1986 *DA Collage Show*, DA Gallery, Pomona, CA
EarlyNeoPostism, West Gallery, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA
Fresh Paint, Gallery C, California State University Long Beach, Long Beach, CA
- 1985 *Group Show*, Brooks Street Gallery, Venice, CA
- 1984 *Selected Works*, Santa Monica College, Santa Monica, CA

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PUBLICATIONS

- Cullum, Jerry, "Sensuous Abstracts Full of Energy", *The Atlanta Journal – Constitution*, August 29, 2004
- Rose, Joshua, "Lurking Below The Surface - New Paintings By Robert Kingston," *Shade*, November & December, 2002
- Frank, Peter, "Art Pick of The Week", *L.A. Weekly*, March 7, 2002
- Zimmermann, Mark, "The Stillness of Painting, Robert Kingston and His Contemporaries," *PAJ, A Journal of Performance and Art*, September 2001
- Irwin, Oliver, *Artweek*, March, 1999
- "Best Bet", *Los Angeles Times*, January, 1999
- "Continuing and Upcoming", *Art Scene*, October 1996
- New American Paintings*, catalogue of the thirteenth open studios press competition, December, 1997
- Butler, Brian, "The Acceptance of History, the Building of Hope", *Visions*, Summer 1992
- Barrie, Lita, "A Memory Lost in Time", *Artweek*, October 1991
- Brumer, Andy, *L.A. Style*, September 1991
- Butler, Brian, *Artweek*, September 1989
- Clarke, Jr., Orville O., *Artscene*, June 1990
- Clarke, Jr., Orville O., *Southern California Home & Garden Holiday*, 1990.
- Frank, Peter, "From Main to Santa Fe: A Downtown Art Odyssey", *L.A. Weekly*, September, 1989
- Frank, Peter, "Pick of the Week", *L.A. Weekly*, Calendar, June 1990
- Geer, Suvan, *Los Angeles Times*, June 5, 1990
- Melrod, George, "Openings", *Art & Antiques*, September 1996
- Simcoe, Duncan, *Artweek*, February 22, 1990
- Welzenbach, Michael, "From Main to Santa Fe", *Artscene*, October, 1988