

2 MAY – 1 JUNE 2024

# TIM KENT

HISTORIES IN FLUX

JD MALAT  
GALLERY

# TIM KENT: *HISTORIES IN FLUX*

## ***Fucking with Genre***

by William Corwin, Writer & Sculptor

Being transgressive in contemporary painting presents a problem similar to being a teen rebelling against permissive parents: the more leeway you're allowed, the less you can find to push back against. Still, you want to, and you should as well, as complacency is the gateway to oppression and boredom. Tim Kent is a very rebellious guy—questioning everything and taking nothing for granted. Thus he finds himself in a bit of a tight spot when it comes to painting. Abstraction is no longer a mode of rebellion, while painting realistically ends up being a milquetoast statement of even greater conformity. Instead Kent slides down a slippery passage that initially seems to present us with what we always thought we knew, at least in the West, the genres of painting, but like a cardboard cutout of a celebrity with which we might pose for a selfie, we look at it from the side or from the back and we see that there's nothing really there, or we get an inside view of the structure holding it in place. Kent's current exhibition of recent paintings at JD Malat, *Histories in Flux*, continues the painter's trajectory of creating works which are both anarchic—in that they present a political viewpoint that is basically across-the-board skeptical, trusting no one—and also question the very structure through which we view space and imagery. Flux means many things—it's about flow and movement, but also excising poisons (the medical definition) and, in metallurgy, about enabling a substance to melt, shed its existing structure, and aspire to something new. Kent has parked himself in the 18th and 19th centuries for myriad good reasons: they were a subtly transgressive time, and much of how we define our own set of tastes arose then: certainly in architecture, fashion, interior design, and a rigorous ordering of painting styles that we now see as received wisdom, and have only done a moderate job of exorcising from the collective unconscious.

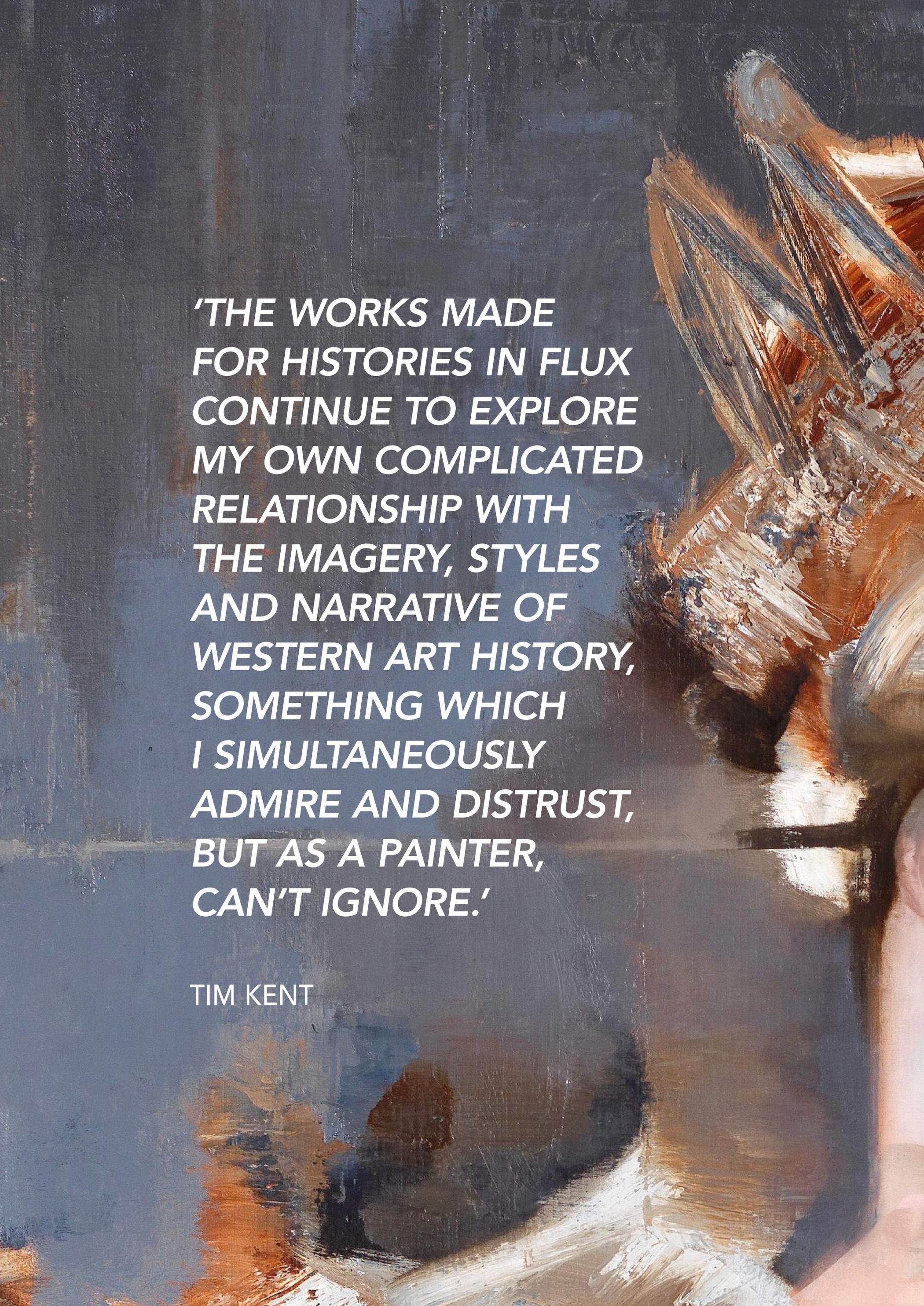
In *Histories in Flux*, Kent toys with Portraiture, the nude, interiors, as well as history/narrative painting. And contained within these highly regimented tropes are embedded critiques. Kent's variation on the theme of Ingres' *Odalisque* maintains the eroticism of the original, but it exchanges Ingres' enigmatic background of pure (and impossible) darkness for the somewhat bleak interior of an artist studio; which is probably more accurate. Kent has also shortened the model's famously serpentine back—not literally, but simply by smearing paint across her lumbar region, solving a problem of realism through abstraction via the medium. In most of Kent's paintings, perspective makes its presence known: of all the conceits of Western painting, and David Hockney would back me up on this, perspective is the most insidious. It insistently reminds us that what we are looking at is real. In Tim Kent's painting, perspective instead makes it very clear that what we are looking at is not. Kent's *Odalisque* sits on an uncomfortable conceptual scaffold of perspectival lines, angles and intersections.

In the painting *Procession*, perspective lets us down again: a marvelous interior from Castle Howard has been rendered to be the set of a comedy of manners, à la Sheridan or Congreaves, but the convincing series of perfect details: receding doors en filade; is subverted by the fact that the painter has decided that the characters of his comedy exist only in pieces, in fragments. The line of subservient footmen, also in a line, fizzle in and out of our presence, and one seems to have burst in a spattering of ink. So nothing is really there. Say that again, Nothing is *really* there.

The comedy of manners is a gentler setting for Kent's philosophical transgression, and his sweet spot actually manifests most presciently in terms of our notions of collecting, monumental sculpture, and what martial objects represent even in today's contemporary culture. In *Archive II*, a sculpture of an overturned horse rests atop a grandiose

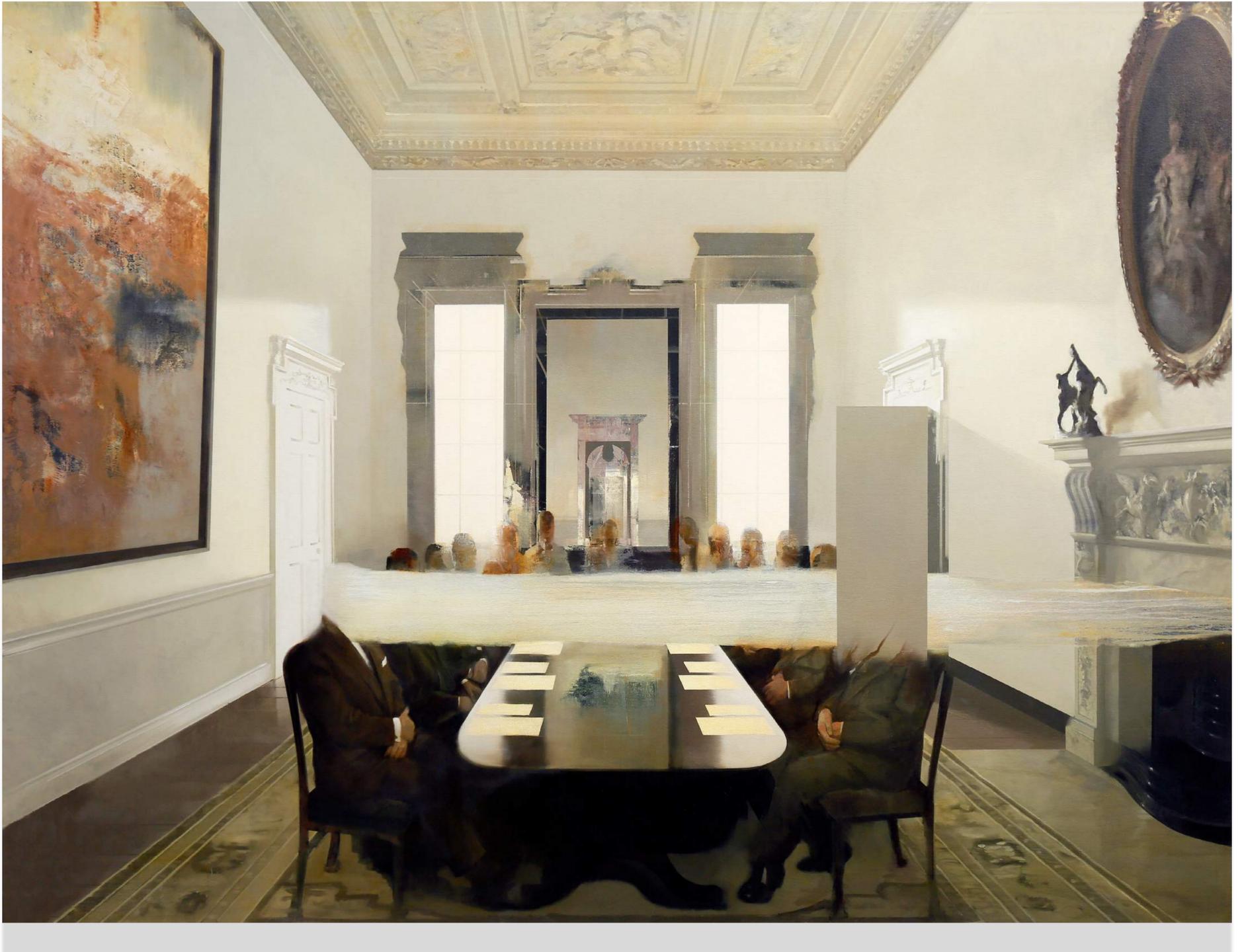
plinth in a gallery filled with other similarly epic sculptures and majestic paintings. We imagine that the sculpture is part of an equestrian typology, sans rider, but the horse also seems to be descending precipitously from a luminous skylight. The plinth itself is an altar rather than simply a support for a sculpture. While indistinct, it seems to have an image playing on the surface facing us. Screens and images seem to flicker in and out of our perception, a canvas lying against a wall in the background is only half there. *Muniments II* is more staid in its energy, but the disintegration of our perception is more prominent than *Archive II*. Another rider-less but this time more docile equestrian statue dominates the picture plane; the muzzle and forehead of the horse pressed against the wall, as most of the head and forequarters have dissolved to expose a skeleton of perspectival lines and shadows. Kent highlights the unity of the statue and the space around it with these lines, again implying that the presence of objects is merely a serendipitous visual manifestation of hidden ever-present geometries. These regulating lines also appear in the marquetry of the wooden floor and the grid of the skylight.

Decidedly nihilistic in its politics, the missing rider, his horse, and even the museum itself are in the process of disappearing before our eyes. As an antidote to this entropy of human involvement, the state of nature seeps into the picture, as we saw in Kent's cycle of paintings exhibited in the show *Dark Pools and Data Lakes* (2018), and we see this happening in *Histories in Flux* in *Muniments II* at the base of the horse in the form of a cascade of flooding water emerging from the left. For Kent, at some point, the illusion stops, whether this is in the bleak landscape of a now devastated earth, or the equally grim back walls of an artist's studio. There is something underneath the illusions: regardless of how much devastation and slight-of-hand we inflict. Nature will persist, regardless if we package our own realities in portraits, landscapes, history paintings or nudes: it transcends genre.



**'THE WORKS MADE  
FOR HISTORIES IN FLUX  
CONTINUE TO EXPLORE  
MY OWN COMPLICATED  
RELATIONSHIP WITH  
THE IMAGERY, STYLES  
AND NARRATIVE OF  
WESTERN ART HISTORY,  
SOMETHING WHICH  
I SIMULTANEOUSLY  
ADMIRE AND DISTRUST,  
BUT AS A PAINTER,  
CAN'T IGNORE.'**

TIM KENT



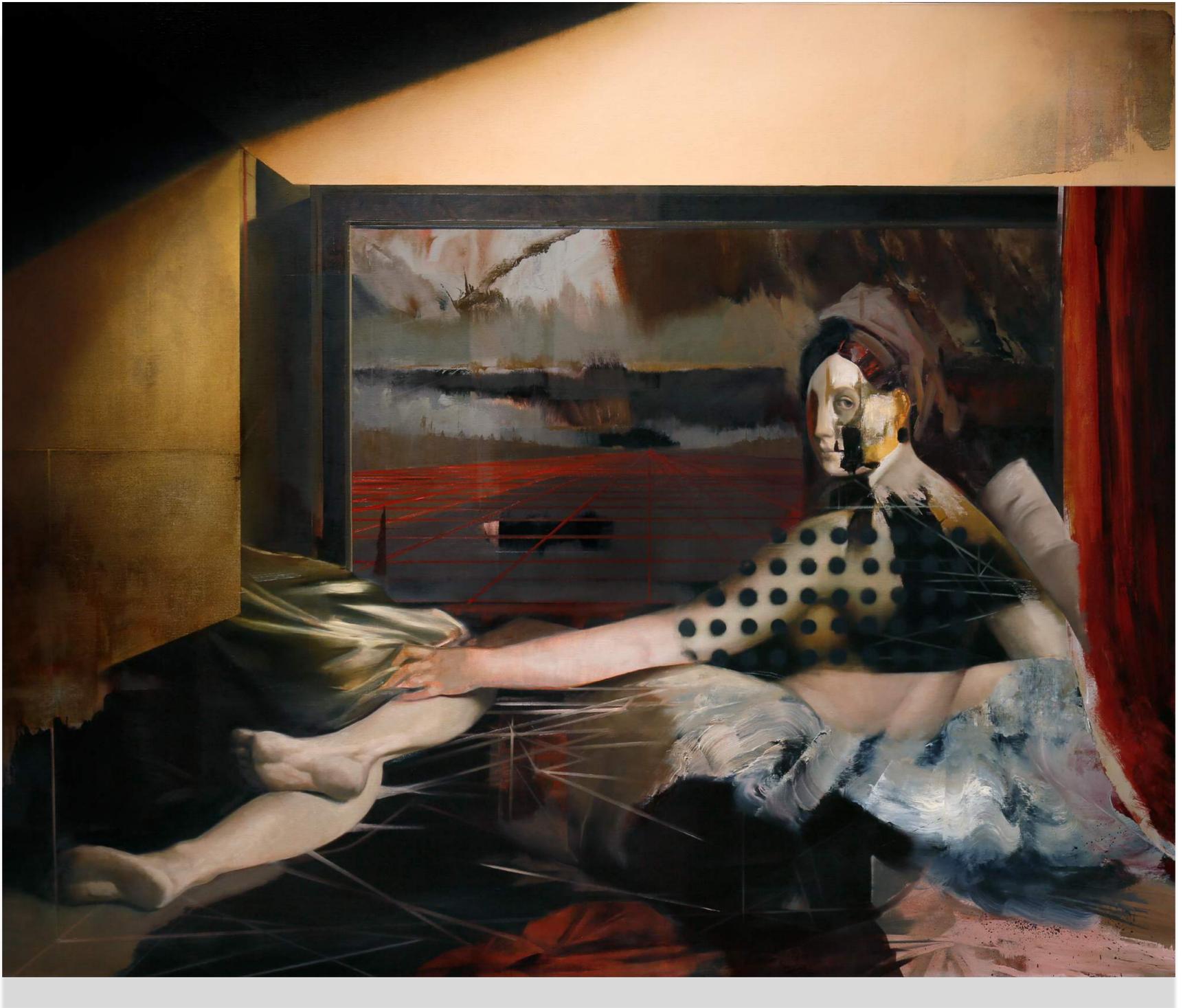
*By Careful Design, 2024*  
Oil on canvas

60 1/4 x 80 1/4 in  
153 x 204 cm



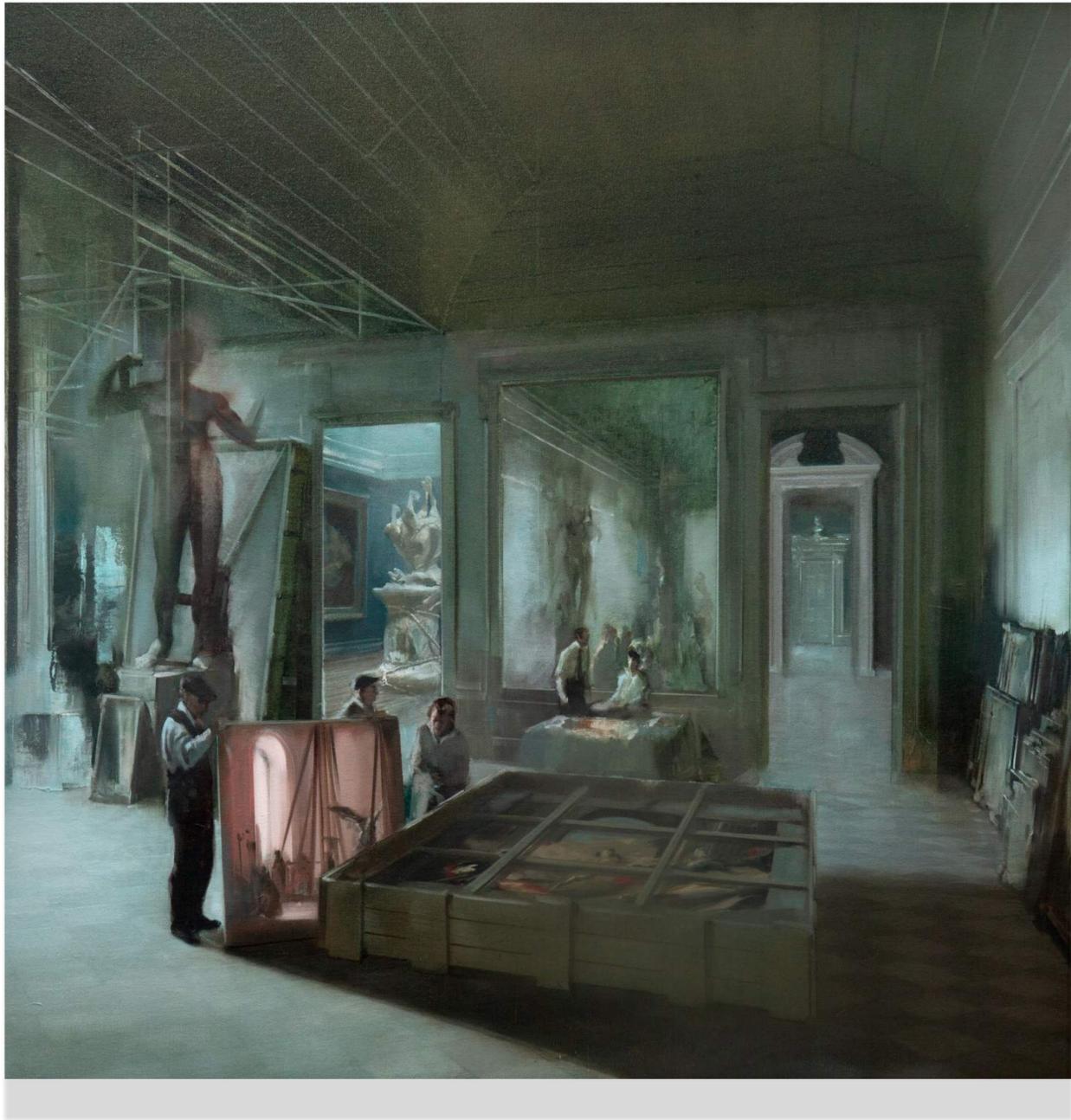
*Past Again and Again, 2024*  
Oil on linen

58 5/8 x 77 1/8 in  
149 x 196 cm



*Inclinations, 2024*  
Oil on linen

64 3/4 x 78 in  
164.5 x 198 cm



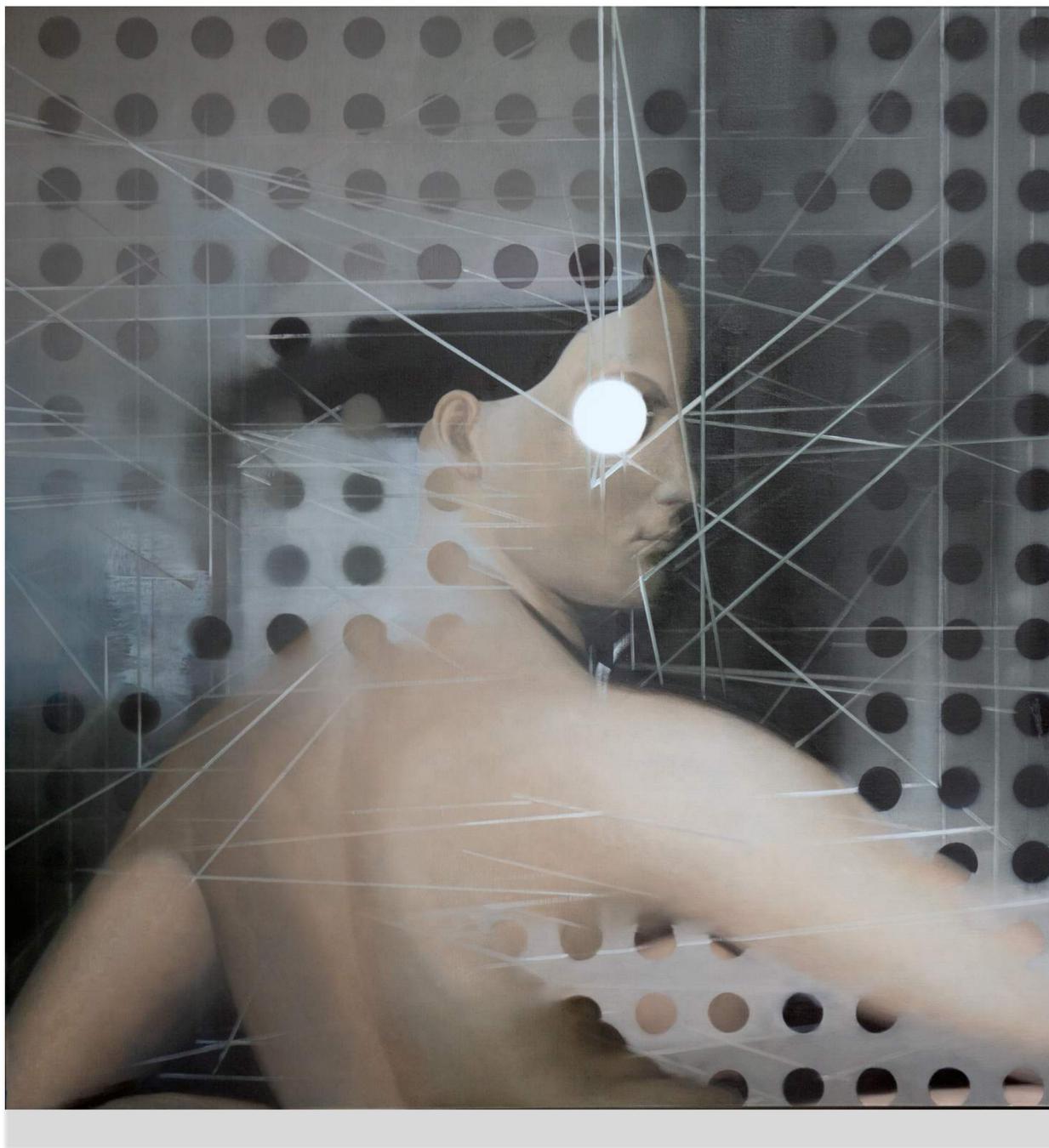
*Arts Work, 2024*  
Oil on canvas

40 1/2 x 40 1/8 in  
103 x 102 cm



*The Lacquered Screen, 2024*  
Oil on linen

50 x 49 5/8 in  
127 x 126 cm



*The Reproduction's Gaze, 2024*  
Oil on linen

47 7/8 x 45 7/8 in  
121.5 x 116.5 cm



*Menagerie*, 2024  
Oil on canvas

60 1/4 x 53 3/4 in  
153 x 136.5 cm



*Odalisque, 2023*  
Oil on canvas

53 1/2 x 50 3/4 in  
136 x 129 cm



*Procession, 2024*  
Oil on linen

30 1/4 x 39 3/8 in  
77 x 100 cm



*Muniments II, 2023*  
Oil on linen

40 x 35 in  
101.6 x 88.9 cm



*Archive II, 2023*  
Oil and acrylic on linen

76 x 76 in  
193 x 193 cm



*Muniments I*, 2023  
Oil on linen

40 x 38 in  
101.6 x 96.5 cm

# TIM KENT: CV

**b. 1975 in Vancouver, Canada**  
**Lives and Works in Brooklyn, USA**

## Education

- 2005 MA Visual Art, University of Sussex at West Dean College, West Dean, UK
- 2004 MA Post Graduate Diploma in Painting, University of Sussex at West Dean, College, West Dean, UK
- 2001 BA Studio Art / Hunter College, City University of New York, New York, USA

## Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2024 *Histories in Flux*, JD Malat Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2023 *Chronos and Kairos*, Pilevneli Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2023 *Possession Pt.I*, Pilevneli Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2022 *Between the Lines*, Hollis Taggart Gallery, New York, USA
- 2021 *Ghost of An Idea*, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Montreal, Canada
- 2020 *Enfilade*, Slag Gallery, New York, USA
- 2018 *Dark Pools and Data Lakes*, Slag Gallery, New York, USA
- 2017 Tim Kent, Kunstverein Viernheim, Viernheim, Germany
- 2016 *Terra Infirma*, Brandt Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2016 Tim Kent, Volta, New York, USA
- 2015 *A World After Its Own Image*, Slag Gallery, New York, USA
- 2014 *Temporal Strata*, VOLTA, Basel, Switzerland
- 2013 *The Gambit*, Slag Gallery, New York, USA
- 2010 *The Best of Times*, Moncrieff-Bray Gallery, London, UK
- 2009 *All That is Solid Melts Into Air*, Factory Fresh, New York, USA
- 2007 *Camera to Camera*, Moncrieff-Bray Gallery, Petworth, UK
- 2006 *Transience of Being*, Queen Street Gallery, Chichester, UK
- 2003 *Primer Drawings*, Gallery 800, New York, USA

## Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2024 *This We Believe*, curated by Alice Gray-Stites, 21st Century Museum Hotels, Louisville, KY
- 2023 *Artweeks Artekuler*, Pilevneli Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2023 *Contemporary Istanbul*, Pilevneli Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2023 *Of the Past and Present*, Hollis Taggart Gallery, New York, USA

2023 *Land of Honey* curated by Emann Odufu, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, USA

2022 *Digital Combines* curated by Claudia Hart, Honor Fraser Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

2022 *Artweeks@Arkaretler*, Pilevneli Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey

2021 *ABSTRAKSHN*, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Montreal, Canada

2021 *Reunion*, Hollis Taggart Southport, Connecticut, USA

2020 *Pilevneli@Contemporary*, Pilevneli Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey

2020 *Art Miami (online)*, Hollis Taggart Gallery, New York, USA

2020 *Figure as Form*, Hollis Taggart Gallery, New York, USA

2020 *Artweeks@Arkaretler*, Pilevneli Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey

2020 *This We Believe*, 21st Century Hotels Gallery, Chicago, USA

2019 *Art Now 2019*, Heart Foundation, New York, USA

2019 *Structures of Power*, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Montreal, Canada

2017 *Art Now 2017*, Heart Foundation, New York, USA

2017 *Kunstverein Worms*, Worms, Germany

2017 *ART@SAP Foundation*, SAP Foundation, Walldorf, Germany

2016 *Pulse*, Miami, USA

2016 *Hieronymus Bosch: Contemporary Artists Celebrating the Master*, The National Arts Club, New York, USA

2015 *Artmix*, Boulder MoCA, Colorado, USA

2014 *Tim Kent and Tirtzah Bassel*, VOLTA 10, Basel, Switzerland

2013 *A Pile of Clowns*, Centotto Galleria, New York, USA

2012 *GREY AREA Instagram Project and Studio Party*, Whitney Museum, New York, USA

2012 *Theriomorphus Entourage*, Centotto Galleria, New York, USA

2012 *Courtesy Roman Abramovich: The First Unveiling*, Centotto Galleria, New York, USA

2012 *Nautical Notes: Mari, Navi e Naufragi*, Centotto Galleria, New York, USA

2010 *Good Vibrations*, MK Gallerie, Rotterdam, Netherlands

2010 *Among Darkened Woods*, Factory Fresh, New York, USA

2010 *Stand Clear of the Closing Doors*, Pandemonium Gallery, New York, USA

2010 *Hinterland and the Hegemon*, Centotto Galleria, New York, USA

2010 *Terrae and the Ether*, Centotto Galleria, New York, USA

2009 *Gallery Benoit*, Boston, USA

2009 *Wild Garden Brooklyn*, New York, USA

2007 *Momento Mori*, The Artist Network, New York, USA

2007 *Pallant House Gallery*, Chichester, UK

2007 *Moncrieff-Bray Gallery*, Petworth, UK

2005 *(T)Here Galleria Na Solyanke*, Moscow, Russia

2005 *Flux Project*, Moncrieff-Bray Gallery, Petworth, UK

2005 *Reclamation*, West Dean College, West Dean, UK

- 2004 *Death to The Fascist Insect that Preys on the Life of the People*, TAG Projects, New York, USA
- 2004 *Small Works Show*, Washington Square Galleries New York University, New York, USA
- 2004 *What the Whitney Don't Know*, TAG Projects, New York, USA
- 2003 *D.U.M.B.O. Works on Paper*, TAG Projects, New York, USA
- 2003 *Five Degrees*, Whitecouch Contemporary, New York, USA

### **Selected Collections**

Edward James Foundation, UK  
Museum of Contemporary Art Beijing, Tongzhou, Beijing, China  
The Rockwell Museum, New York, USA  
21st Century Museum Hotels, USA

### **Awards**

2005 Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Masters Thesis  
Thesis - *Studio Practice: Anselm Kiefer and Jeff Koons*  
Exhibit - *Reclamation*

