

MARTIN CID
MAGAZINE

Jordan Kerwick: Pink sunsets, cigarettes, 3 regrets.. Vito Schnabel Gallery

by Lisbeth T
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Jordan Kerwick, *3 Angels Versus 3 Saviors*, 2022 Oil, acrylic and spray paint on canvas 94 1/2 x 177 1/8 inches (240 x 450 cm) © Jordan Kerwick Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery

Beginning May 19, 2022, Vito Schnabel Gallery will present *Jordan Kerwick: Pink sunsets, cigarettes, 3 regrets and hope to haunt the future* at the Old Santa Monica Post Office, in collaboration with Alexander Dellal. The twenty-four new monumentally-scaled paintings on view comprise the first Los Angeles solo exhibition for the critically admired Australian-born Kerwick, who lives and works in the South of France.

On view through June 26, *Jordan Kerwick: Pink sunsets, cigarettes, 3 regrets and hope to haunt the future* will be the artist's largest U.S. presentation to date. Replete with outlandish, commanding figures drawn from his imagination, Kerwick's paintings will find a counterpoint in the classic lines of the Old Post Office's Streamline Moderne architecture.

The paintings on view have been selected to introduce Los Angeles visitors to Kerwick's fantastical visual style, expressed in scenes of menacing beasts and predatory animals rendered in an intense, vibrant palette of electric color. Executed in oil, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, Kerwick's paintings are characterized by an unselfconscious

approach to naive mark-making- a disregard for academic tenets and rules of perspective and structure- and a heavily textured application of paint that boldly flattens form and the perception of pictorial space.

Kerwick's oeuvre revolves around recurring iconographic elements and identifiable symbols- a striking visual language that deliberately tangles art historical references, ancient iconography, and images inspired by the artist's domestic life at home with his wife and two young sons. Kerwick's figurative tableaux offer up playful, absurdist narratives of interactions between a rotating cast of hybrid creatures- double headed cobras, fanged tigers, feather-maned unicorns, snarling wolves and skeletal faces in wide-brimmed hats. His distinctive visual vocabulary is flattened into deceptively complex compositions, where the illusion of depth has been collapsed and compressed, and hard edges give Kerwick's figures the aspect of cut-outs. The artist claims as a key influence the late work of Henri Matisse, with the revolutionary use of large, flat color-forms - an innovation that resonates in the decorative patterning, contours of line, and solid planes of color that fill Kerwick's canvases.

JORDAN KERWICK

Expanding upon and beyond the still-life paintings that comprised some of Kerwick's first bodies of work, some of the canvases on view in this exhibition feature tiger pelts, upholstered chairs, and ornamental rugs with geometric markings that harken back to those early domestic compositions but emphasize a penchant for the abstract that has come to the fore more recently.

In other paintings such as *High Time* (2022), a hybrid creature- one-part double-headed hissing serpent, one-part roaring wolverine- hovers before a blazing red monochromatic field accentuated by graffiti-like marks and thick, impastoed strokes. Pushing his compositions further, Kerwick also presents here large-scale exterior scenes that engage complex, perilous battles in imagined landscapes. Some of these feature saturated blocks of blue and green to denote land and sky; others are anchored by an atmospheric ground of pastels that is punctuated by a haze of swiftly sprayed lines. Plants and flowers that once symbolized the domestic bloom and flourish in expansive *plein-air* works. All the while, the inhabitants of these scenes, beast and human alike, seem to express a thicket of moods and sensations- freedom and danger, foreboding and joy.

About the Artist

Jordan Kerwick (b. 1982, Melbourne, Australia) is a self-taught artist who began his painting career in 2016. Recent solo exhibitions include Woaw Gallery, Hong Kong (2022); Vigo Gallery, London (2022, 2021); Vito Schnabel Gallery, New York, NY (2021); Allouche Benais Gallery, Athens, Greece (2021); Galerie Julie Cadet, Paris, France (2021); Union Gallery, London, England (2021); Pt. 2 Gallery, Oakland, California (2021, 2019); Piermarq*, Sydney, Australia (2020, 2018); Anna Zorina Gallery, New York (2019); a dual show at Masahiro Maki Gallery, Tokyo, Japan and Paris, France (2019); TW Fine Art, Brisbane, Australia (2019); and Delphian Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2018).

Kerwick lives and works in Albi, France.

About the Old Santa Monica Post Office

A striking example of the Streamline Moderne architectural style that emerged in the 1930s, the Old Santa Monica Post Office was designed by Louis Simon and completed in 1938. The building was a commission of the Public Works Administration (PWA), a national recovery program established during the Great Depression. The building is distinguished by its sprawling interior and soaring ceiling with raw industrial beams, and its end-grain wood floors. Its white stucco façade and paneled lobby were granted Santa Monica Landmark status via preservation covenant by the Santa Monica City Council in 2014.

This noted historic building was acquired by Alexander Dellal of UK-based Allied Commercial Exporters Ltd (A.C.E) in 2017. Throughout the year, Vito Schnabel Gallery will present subsequent temporary exhibitions of modern and contemporary art in the space in collaboration with Alexander Dellal.

A.C.E's LA office is focused on the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic and Landmarked buildings in the greater Los Angeles area. In addition to the old Santa Monica Post Office, A.C.E has acquired and is currently developing the old Venice Post Office.area. In addition to the old Santa Monica Post Office, A.C.E has acquired and is currently developing the old Venice Post Office.

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