

## Meditations

Mary Judge, Kathleen Kucka, Jeffrey Allen Price

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November 6 - December 15, 2014

Curated by Matthew Neil Gehring

On the cover (left to right):

Mary Judge, *Ariadne's Blues*, detail, 2014, flashe, graphite, and white charcoal pencil on linen on board, 48 x 48 inches

Kathleen Kucka, *Burn Thru 7-25-13 5:03*, detail, 2013, acrylic and burns on canvas/velvet, 70 x 50 in

Jeffrey Allen Price, *Merlon*, detail, 2012, wine with traces of corrosion on paper 16 3/8 x 25 3/4 inches

**Flecker Gallery**

Suffolk County Community College

Ammerman Campus, Selden, NY

## Director's Foreword

"Every work of art is the child of its time."<sup>1</sup>

-Wassily Kandinsky, *On the Spiritual in Art*, 1912

A synthesis has occurred within the field of abstract painting and sculpture. I use the singular, because these areas that were once separated by greater philosophical differences, competing for position and influence, have nearly merged into one. The boundaries that Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns began to blur more than 60 years ago are scarcely looked at today. The context of art has changed. In the 21st century, the distinctions between two and three dimensionality seem nearly irrelevant as compared to distinctions (and relations) between the plastic and the digital. Abstract painting and sculpture stand as a treatise on human values during a paradigm shift. It is stated in their very presence as objects with a single purpose; to be fixed in time, objects of contemplation and reflection. These are embodiments of a vision; end results of processes in which color creates light, mass has energy, texture is physical, and time is not linear. The assertion is that art is not only the product of humans; art of this kind is involved in preserving and promoting humanity.

In a recent statement posted to social media, art critic and notorious polemicist Dave Hickey lamented that he had predicted and hoped for an art of opposition: "...Once the digital future arrived, I was rather assuming the return of haptic, tactile, fractal in the art world. But no!... Facebook succeeded Press-Type, Digital printouts succeeded Xeroxed photographs..."<sup>2</sup> Dave must not get to Brooklyn very often. In this age of grand public spectacle, many of the artists I know and respect are diving into the visceral grit. Texture is paramount. Hand is ever-present. Shows of small works are abundant, both inevitable and charged. There are primitive, essential embodiments of anger, melancholy, and also joy, as well as loads of seeming and actual ambivalence. While culture is moving its stuff to the Cloud, the assertion in abstract art remains: *This is this. You are here. Here is now, and this is what it means to live.* Abstract art is vital.

The quiet, slow burn of abstraction gives rise to introspection, contemplation, and stillness amid a world of outward, superfluous, and furious movement. It asks you to slow down time and experience this moment. Hear your own breathing. See your own heartbeat in your *experience of vision*. Be still enough to watch a painting dissolve into the glow of color after-burns that come from your own active, yet staid vision.

Neither is this new (abstraction in art has been with us for over 100 years), nor is it necessarily in a mannerist phase; this is indeed a long game. While technology changes rapidly and drives mass culture, social progress grinds forward slowly and has us in the grips of what seems like endless war. Late capitalism has responded to labor movements by moving production to nations with fewer, if any, protections for workers. Social injustice and extreme and widening income inequality abound at home and abroad. Robert Motherwell states in a 1973 interview, "Abstract Expressionism was the first American art that was filled with anger as well as beauty."<sup>3</sup> The causes for their discontent and discord are still with us, and they have not withered, instead those roots have deepened. The rise of the digital surveillance state has made the dystopian novels

of the 20th century into millennial reality. The road is long and the project of Modern art, and abstract art in particular, is incomplete. Its *raison de'être* remains; it did not have an end, and therefore, no re-birth. This is not "neo." It has been ever present, if out of fashion in the late 20th century. But artists of this stripe have persisted. Some artists have stated their concern with such eloquence they resonate like tuning forks. Kandinsky, Gottlieb, and Lasker seem especially poignant and span a century:

"The role of the artist, of course, has always been that of image-maker. Different times require different images. Today when our aspirations have been reduced to a desperate attempt to escape from evil, and times are out of joint, our obsessive, subterranean and pictographic images are the expression of the neurosis, which is our reality. To my mind certain so-called abstraction is not abstraction at all. On the contrary, it is the reality of our time."<sup>4</sup>

-Adolph Gottlieb, 1947

"The project of art today is to locate boundaries of the real in a world where meaning, space and the effects of mortality have been neutralized by technology.... Nowhere is the human more empowered to have a direct and immediate effect on the image of his world."<sup>5</sup>

-Jonathan Lasker, 2008

The works included in this exhibition, *Meditations*: Mary Judge, Kathleen Kucka, and Jeffrey Allen Price, are markers residing at the edge of inner and outer realities. Each evokes a sense of time: the ancient, the interval, and the eroded. These works are visually rich, physically ebullient, born of evolved and specific processes, and maintain absolute balance within discordant elements. The artists presented here are a resonant ensemble. This work challenges you to meet its demands with slow and careful looking, attentive to the changes in your own vision and feeling. While it remains fixed, it palpably moves you. Art of substance is an embodiment of values and these are powerful works of art. Flecker Gallery is delighted to host this exhibition.

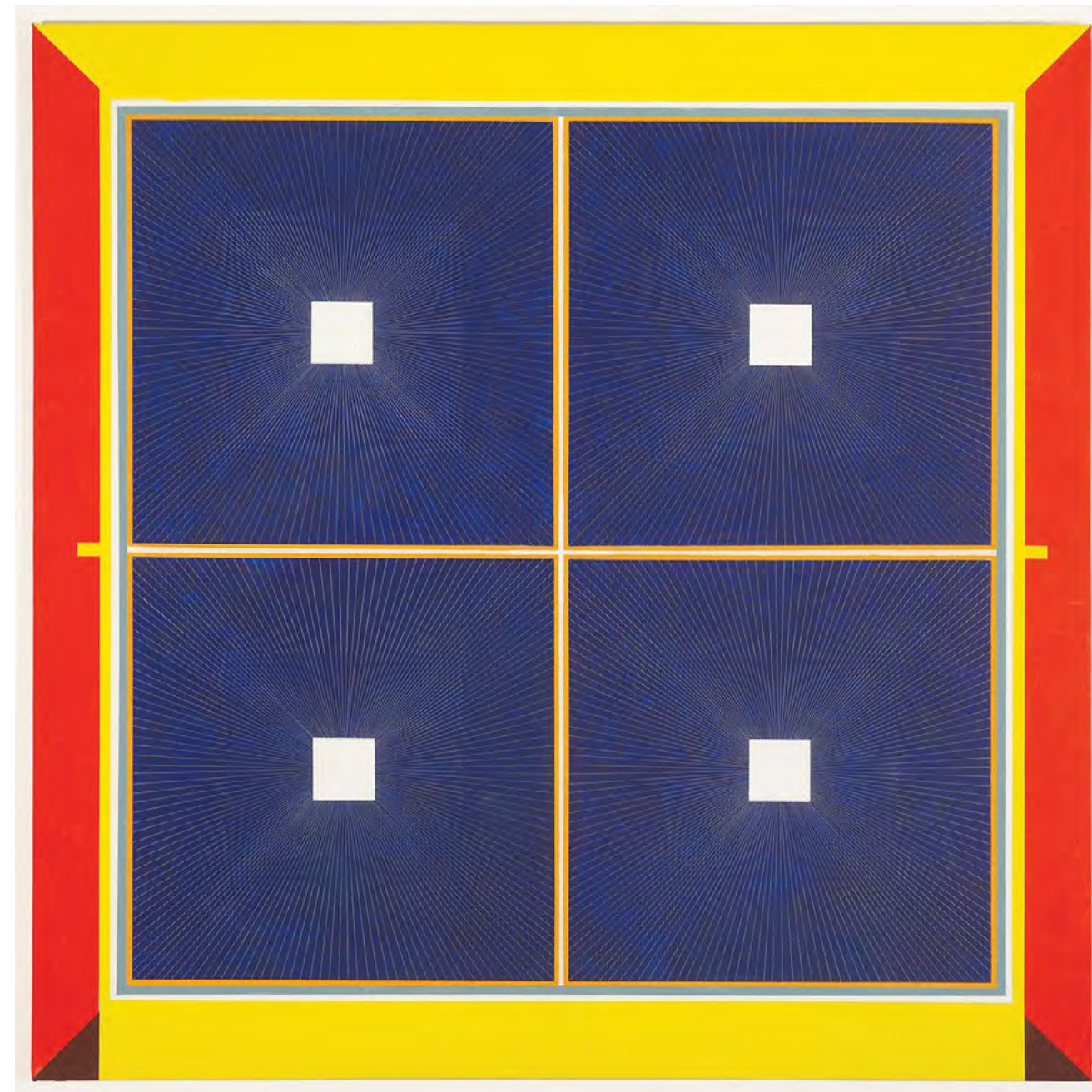
-Matthew Neil Gehring, Director and Curator



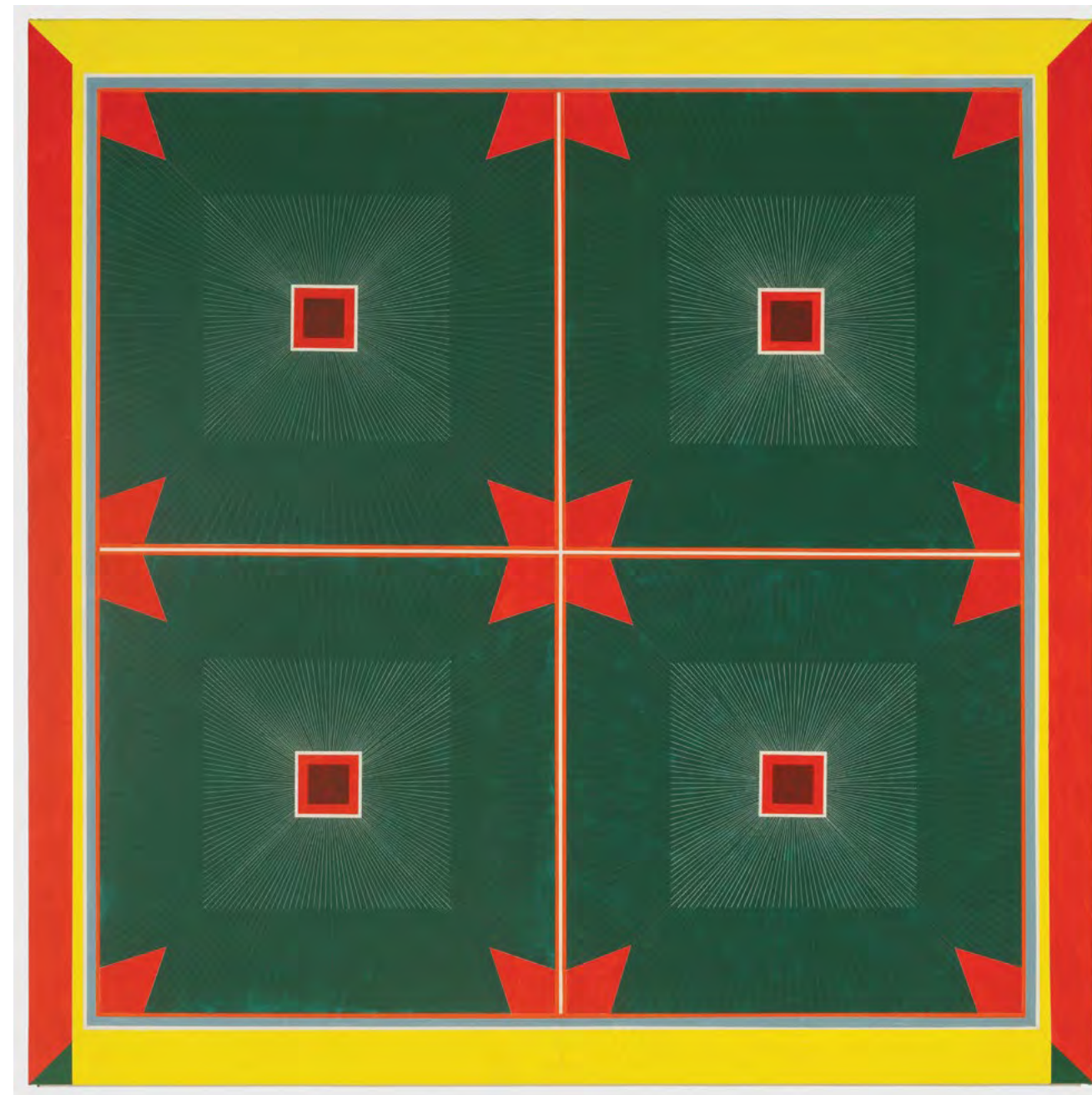
Adolph Gottlieb, *Bowery Burst*, 1970, oil on canvas, 90.6 x 60.2 inches. Private collection. Art © Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

1. Kandinsky, Wassily. "On the Spiritual in Art." *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*. Ed. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo. Paris: Editions Denoel. New York: G.K. Hall & Co. 1994. print.  
2. *Painters Painting*. Dir. Emile DeAntonio. Perf. Robert Motherwell, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, et al. Turin Film. 1972. DVD.  
3. Hickey, Dave. Web log post. *Facebook*. 2:21 pm. September 19, 2014. web.  
4. Gottlieb, Adolph. (Statement), in "The Ides of Art," *Tiger's Eye*, vol. 1, no. 2. December 1947. p. 43. print.  
5. Lasker, Jonathan, *Complete Essays: 1984 - 1998*, New York: Edgewise. 1998, p. 33. print.

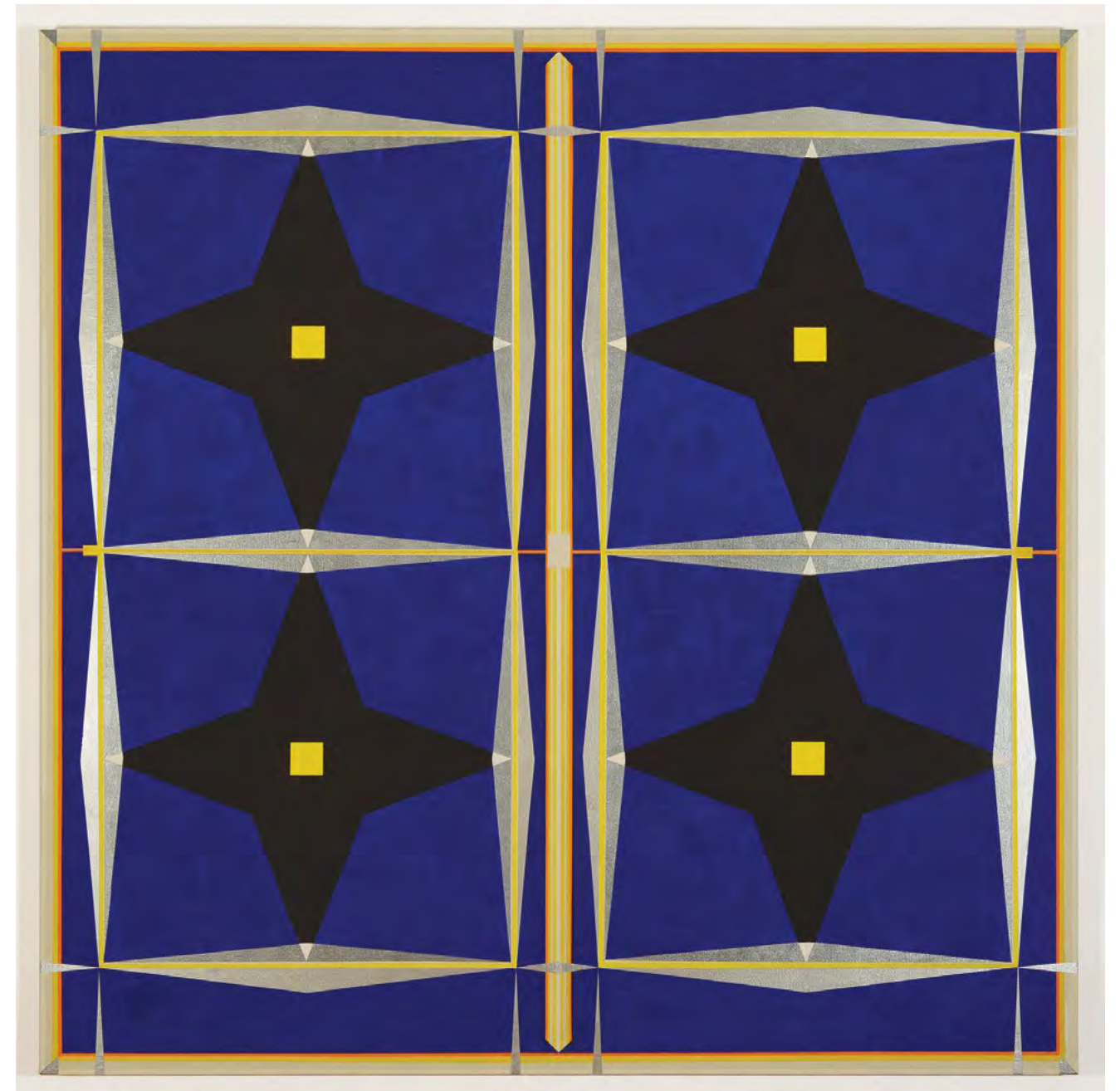
Mary Judge, *Ariadne's Blues*, 2014, flashe, graphite, and white charcoal pencil on linen on board, 48 x 48 inches



Mary Judge, *Diadema Red and Green*, 2014, flashe, graphite, and white charcoal pencil line on linen mounted on board, 48 x 48 inches



Mary Judge, *Night Stars*, 2014, flashe, graphite, and white charcoal pencil line on linen mounted on board, 46 x 46 inches



# Mary Judge

## Artist Statement

The inspiration for my painting is the architecture of ancient ritual spaces, such as subterranean tumulus, and a love of the constructs of traditional painting forms. Through the use of symmetry, that balances and multiplies an overall effect, simple motifs are transformed into complex gardens of hard edge color. These constructions of expanding and collapsing forms unfold like maps in flat, overlapping, ornamented layers. I think of it as a mash-up between the original garish polychrome colors of the Parthenon married with sacred geometry. The goal is to create a mystic and immersive experience created through taut color vibrations, sensual surfaces and a refined sense of craft and something that captures the echoes of great mural arts of the past, corralled and trained, for a moment, in my own personal painting arena.

## Artist Biography

Mary Judge attended Moore College of Art (BFA 1975) Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (scholarship recipient 1974) and Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia and Rome, Italy (MFA 1978).

Her continued travels to Italy precipitated a decisive break from traditional modes in the late 1980s and allowed Judge to build a deep relationship with contemporary Italian art and the artisans: she worked for several years with the Grazia factory in Deruta, an experience which permeated her work. It was during this time that The Drawing Center in NY presented her unique "spolvero" drawings, based on a technique derived from fresco painting.

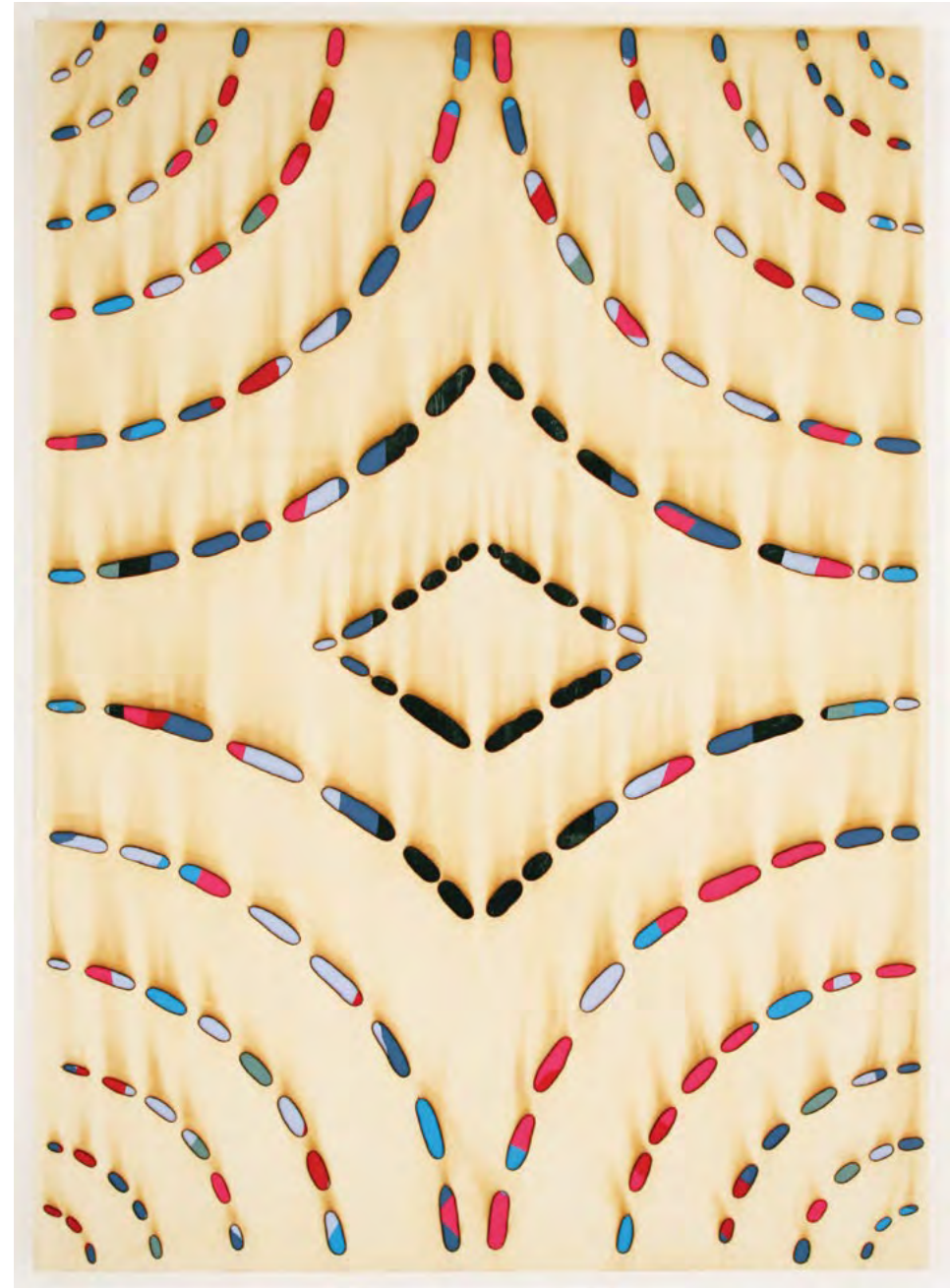
Her works are included in the collections of: The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Fogg Art Museum, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, The British Museum and The Victoria and Albert Museum among others.

She currently resides in Bushwick, Brooklyn, where she is Owner/Director of Schema Projects, a gallery dedicated to art on paper, and St Louis, MO where she maintains her studio and lives with her husband, architect Gyo Obata.



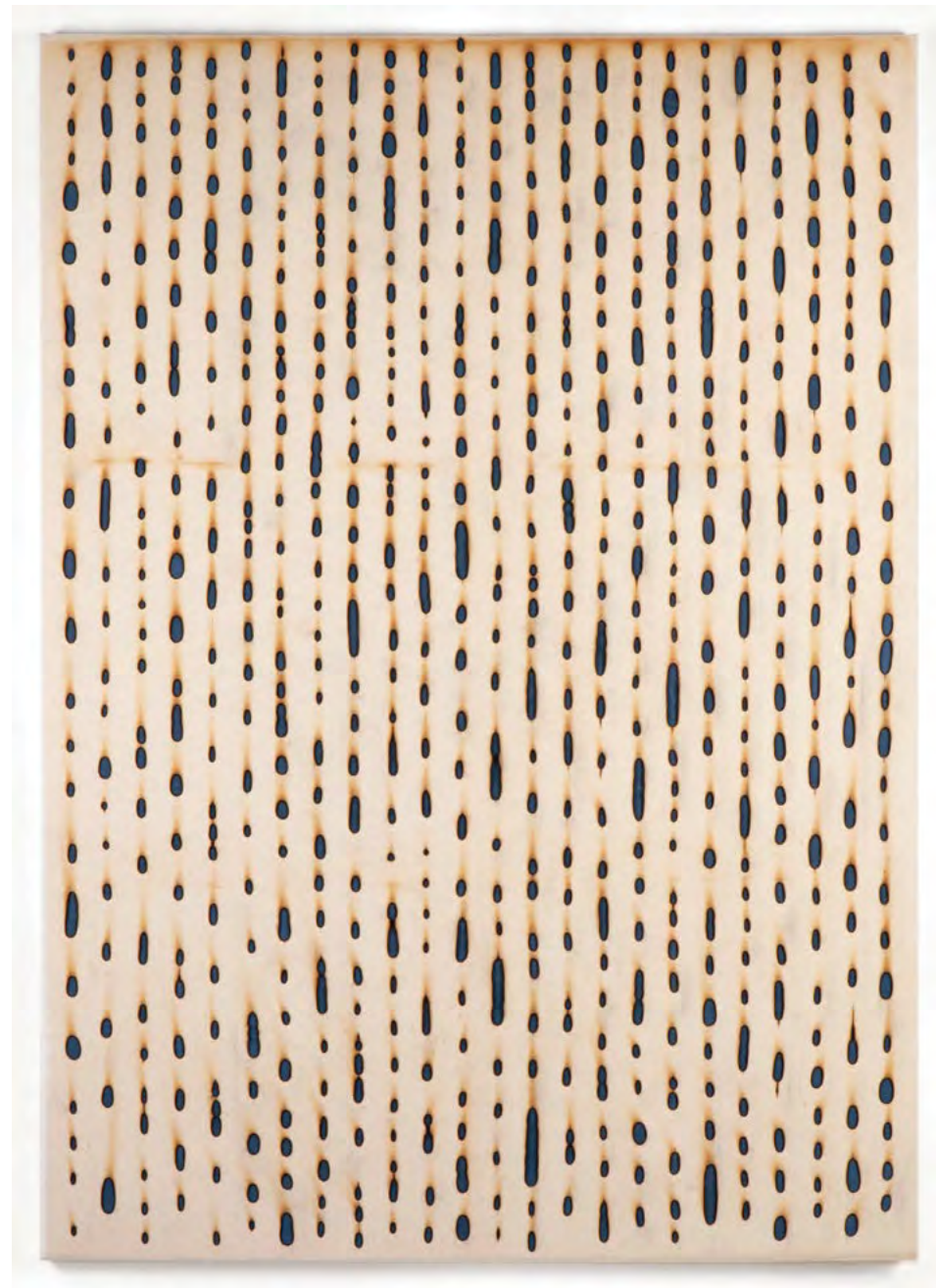
Judge in her studio, St. Louis, MO, 2014,

Kathleen Kucka, *Burn Thru 7-25-13 5:03*, 2013, acrylic and burns on canvas/velvet, 70 x 50 in

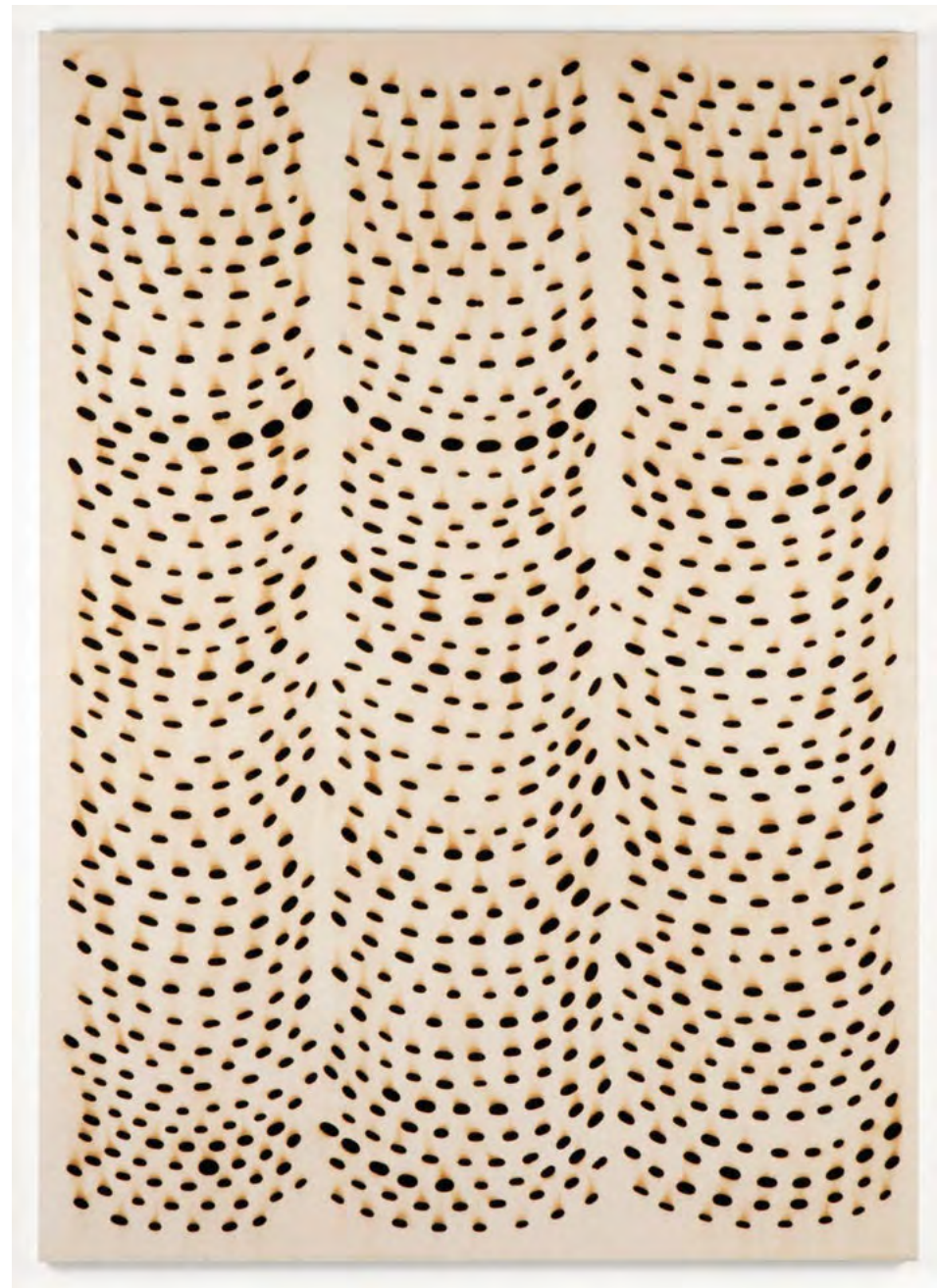




Kathleen Kucka, *Burn Thru 2-4-13 11:00*, 2013, acrylic and burns on canvas/velvet, 70 x 50 in



Kathleen Kucka, *Burn Thru 9-19-12 4:22*, 2012, acrylic and burns on canvas/velvet, 70 x 50 in



# Kathleen Kucka

## Artist Statement:

Since the early 1990's I have been investigating and working with the process of mark making and abstraction. I have explored the surface of canvas and paper through processes like: sewing, burning, and pouring. Mark making - using everyday elements like hot plates, irons, and charcoal lighters - keeps the dialogue of abstraction open and exploratory.

My work focuses on the relationship between organic image and process. Burning holes into the surface of paper and canvas marks an intervention. A physical cut into the fabric of painting. Marking time, marking our existence and journey. Individual marks become part of a complex whole.

## Artist Biography:

Kathleen Kucka was born in 1962. She received her BFA from Cooper Union in 1984, and her MFA from Hunter in 1995.

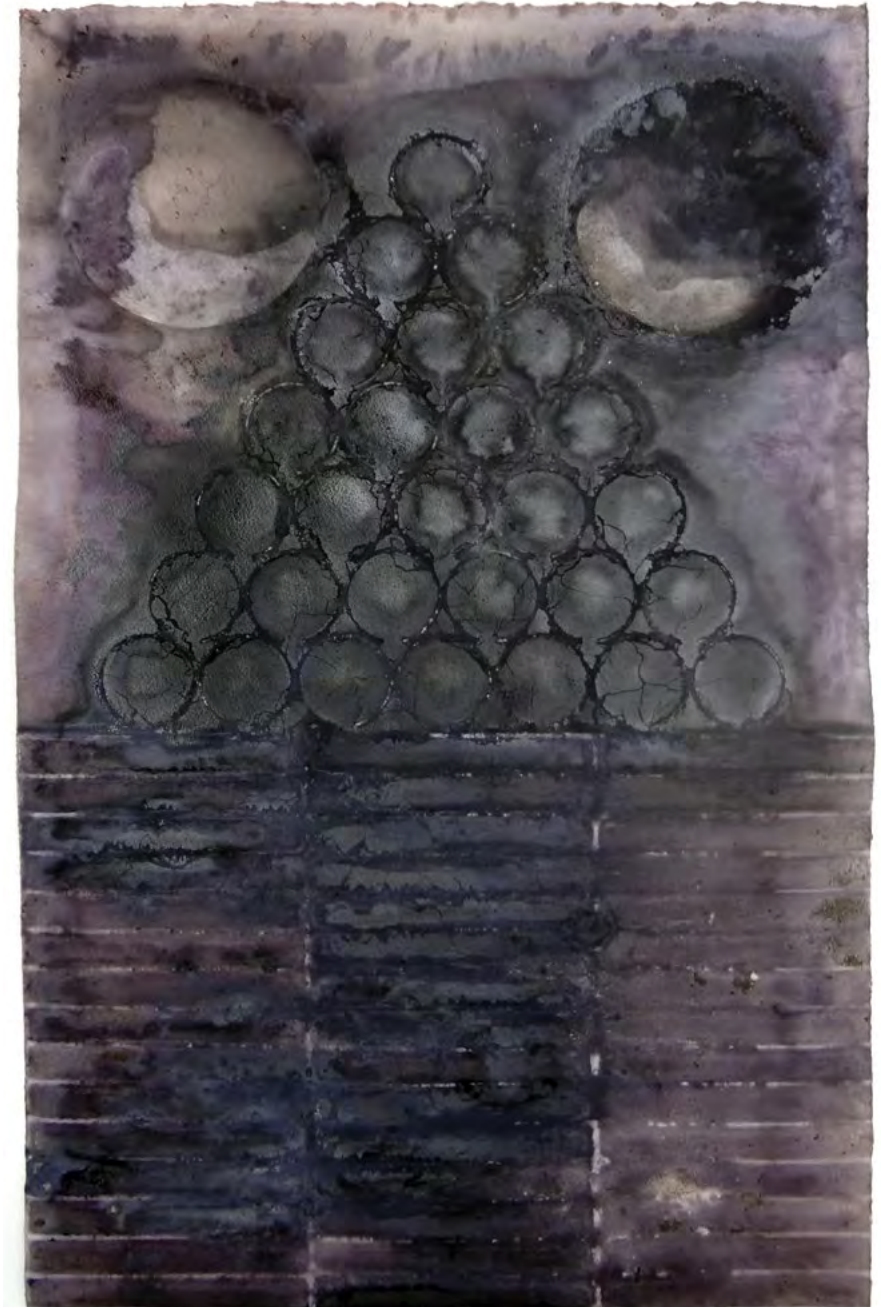
Kucka has exhibited in the United States and Amsterdam, including shows at Gallery Geranmayeh in New York, Marsha Mateyka Gallery in Washington D.C, and Roger Katwijk gallery in Amsterdam. Her work has been reviewed in Art News, The Washington Post, and the New York Times.

Works are in the collection of The Birmingham Museum of Art; Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey; The Norton Museum of Art; The Weatherspoon Art Museum; The Arkansas Art Center; and in the Franklin Furnace Archives at The Museum of Modern Art.

Kucka lives and works in New York City and Brooklyn, NY.



Kucka in her studio, Brooklyn, 2014.



Jeffrey Allen Price, *Merlon*, 2012, wine with traces of corrosion on paper 16 3/8 x 25 3/4 inches



Jeffrey Allen Price, *Rust Mandala*, 2014, rust on paper, 21x 21 inches

Jeffrey Allen Price, *Sound Wave Mandala*, 2014, rust on cloth on board, 24 x 24 inches



# Jeffrey Allen Price

## Artist Statement

As a kind of personal ritual, I have been making *AbMods* (short for Absorption Modules) on the grounds around my studio and garden since the mid-nineties. These consist of layered papers that have been weighted down by heavy objects and stained with natural agents such as coffee, tea, and wine. Over long periods of time they are exposed to the elements and their surfaces are weathered by the vagaries of nature. The modules become compacted, embossed, blemished and covered with accretions, dirt, leaves and other natural elements. Their slowly disintegrating surfaces parallel the process of death. *AbMods* absorb and are absorbed by time.

My interest in harnessing these energies led to another process I refer to as *Rustography*, whereby corroded found objects (old grills, grates, metal rings, nails, etc.) are configured to create oxidation patterns on wetted surfaces using my *Wet Burning* technique. The resulting *Rustagrams* take the form of mandalas, tablets and pictograms and are meant to evoke the look and feel of archaic writings or the fossilized remains of a forgotten civilization.

Using similar processes with a number of other natural ingredients, I have developed other works, such as *Enolograms* (using wine), and *ChaDaoGrams* (using tea). Often pieces from different series are combined to create wall and room-sized collages.

## Artist Biography

Jeffrey Allen Price received his BFA from Missouri State University in 1999 and his MFA from Stony Brook University in 2003.

Price is a multi-media artist with a conceptual and process-based approach to making art. For 20 years he has been exploring the effects of time and material interactions, mastering the balance between the interventions of staining and degrading absorbent surfaces with those of his own involvement.

His works have been exhibited nationally and internationally including shows at Valentine, Queens, NY; Islip Art Museum, Islip, NY; and Chicago Art Source, Chicago, IL. His work has been reviewed or featured in numerous publications and media outlets including The New York Times, Newsday, and the Huffington Post. His works are in the collections of the Islip Art Museum, The Williamsburg Art and Historical Center, and numerous private collections.

Price lives and works in Lake Grove, NY.



Price with installation of *Four Burned Out Suns* (Rustagrams), 2013 at Stony Brook University, 2014

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[www.sunysuffolk.edu](http://www.sunysuffolk.edu)

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Gallery Director and Curator: Matthew Neil Gehring

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Artwork and images for Kathleen Kucka appear courtesy of Gallery Geranmayeh and Museum Editions.

Artwork and images for Jeffrey Allen Price appear courtesy of the artist.

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