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December 5, 2019

Meet Virginia Katz

VoyageLA



Today we'd like to introduce you to Virginia Katz.

So, before we jump into specific questions about your work, why don't you give us some details about you and your story.

I was born in Brooklyn, New York, and raised upstate in the Hudson Valley. The northeastern mountainous and densely wooded environment, coupled with the influence of my father, who was a Forester, left an indelible impression on me. Ever since then, I have returned to the landscape again and again as a source of inspiration.

In 1978, I moved to Los Angeles. Subsequently, in college, I was immediately drawn to the clarity and careful consideration of Philosophical inquiry and its expansive reach across many fields of study – I believe Art shares this same interdisciplinary course. Philosophy became my undergraduate major and it continues to be a guiding force in my life and all my art-making today. Many years later, I decided to attend graduate school to study Art. In 2004, after two years of prerequisite Post Baccalaureate study and two years of graduate study, I received my MFA from California State University, Long Beach. I have been making art, full-time, for 23 years.

Overall, has it been relatively smooth? If not, what were some of the struggles along the way?

Your use of the word *road* is coincidentally a good fit here ... I now live in Orange County and commute weekly (sometimes several times a week) to Los Angeles to participate in Art-related events and activities. Frequent driving between these two counties is an arduous task in Southern California traffic; but, I do appreciate the interaction it provides me with a vast art community and abundant gallery and Museum exhibitions there that, to me, makes the drive well worth the effort.

In terms of making my work, I have been fortunate in that I have been prolific; but, at the same time, I also consider struggle, across the board, to be part of the process. Various art trends come and go and, depending whether one fits into the current mold, obtaining exhibition exposure and attention can be challenging at times – especially if one lives outside of Los Angeles, even in nearby Orange County.

Living and working between these two counties has been an interesting exercise in adaptation. Los Angeles, an energizing metropolitan area, is a place often full of unexpected surprises and is very different from suburban Orange County. What they share, other than congestion and traffic, is the Southern California landscape – diverse, wild, and unpredictable. Really, as an artist, there isn't any other region in which I would rather live and work.

Please tell us about your work and what you are most proud of as an artist.

My investigations into natural form have resulted in a progression of series on various elements in the landscape: *Land, Place, Atmosphere, Wind, and Ocean*. The communication of these environmental inquiries through Visual Art is my focus. Something learned from one series informed the next.

As a conceptual painter, systems and constructs underpin the processes in my work. In other words, it is important for me to understand in detail, beforehand, the why and how I am making a work. It is a common thread that runs through all my series of Paintings, Drawings, Installations, and Interventions. Through the process of visualizing these natural phenomena in my art-making, my intention is to bring their forms, which we share, to the Landscape Painting genre.

My current work is under the heading *Land*, which I began in 2006 and consists of four interrelated series that deconstruct Landscape and Landscape Painting: *Relief Paintings, Interventions, Mixed Media Debossed Prints, and Watercolors*. Each series in *Land* begins from the standpoint of the picture plane: the *Relief Paintings and Interventions* create form from the surface outward; the *Mixed Media Debossed Prints* excavate below the surface of the paper; and the *Watercolors* attempt to disperse physicality into transparency.

In addition to introducing form to the genre, I also am interested in the association between landscape's cycles of flux, upheaval, and regeneration and their affinity to our lives as a metaphor. Since we are form, what has become clear to me is that the upheaval and regeneration found around us may also be understood in human life, not only literally, but also symbolically. Within the rubric of Art, these ideas of physicality,

entanglement, loss, and regeneration are reflected in my works through choices of media, materials, processes, techniques, and subject, which directly relate to the meaning of the art.

What was once a two-dimensional painting practice, Landscape Painting, now can be viewed as possessing the form that is landscape itself – a major differentiating factor in my work.

I am most proud of what I have been able to achieve in my artwork. It has given me tremendous personal satisfaction through the years, and I think it sheds a unique perspective on our understanding of the life around us as observed through art. Also gratifying is that my work has been shown in Museums, Colleges, Universities and Galleries nationwide and is included in various public and private collections – domestically and internationally.

What are your plans and what are you looking forward to?

In January, I am once again traveling to Santa Fe, NM to work with Master Printer, Ron Pokrasso, in his print studio, to continue development of my mixed-media series. Also, I will be participating in various group exhibitions, including *Five Facets of Humanity*, Fellows of Contemporary Art (“FOCA”), Los Angeles, curated by Khang B. Nguyen; *Elemental Landscape*, Brand Art Center, Glendale, curated by Noel Korten and Greg Rose; as well as *LA Stories* at Brenau University in Gainesville, GA, curated by Paul Paiement.

In addition to my studio work, since 2010, I have been curating an open forum, round table Art Discussion in downtown Los Angeles. The discussions are typically held on a six-week schedule. An invited guest initiator, usually an artist, curator, critic, or art dealer, briefly opens the discussion by introducing his or her topic to those in attendance. Then, shortly afterward, all become active participants in the conversation. It is an evening in which those interested in art and art-related issues can, and do, regularly come together to analyze and discuss. It is done on a volunteer basis by all involved and is free and open to the public.

Contact Info:

- **Website:** www.virginiakatz.com
- **Email:** vkatzart@aol.com
- **Instagram:** virginia_katz_
- **Facebook:** virginia katz



Land – Relief Painting Relativity

Acrylic on Panel Formed by Hand on Panel with Wire Fencing 24" x 15" x 5" panel dimensions 30" x 19" x 5" complete dimensions, 2019



Land – Relief Painting Relativity

detail Acrylic on Panel Formed by Hand on Panel with Wire Fencing 24" x 15" x 5" panel dimensions 30" x 19" x 5" complete dimensions, 2019



Land -

Intervention

Intervention – Hollyoak Avenue, Irvine, CA

Acrylic Paint Formed by Hand and Incorporated (temporarily) on Site Dimensions Variable, 2019



Land – Intervention

Intervention – 4th and Garfield, Santa Ana, CA

Acrylic Paint Formed by Hand and Incorporated (temporarily) on Site Dimensions Variable, 2019



Land -

Mixed Media Expanse III

Mixed Media Debossed Original Print on Paper 66" x 36", 2019



Land – Mixed Media Into the Light III

detail Mixed Media Debossed Original Print on Paper 66" x 36", 2019



Land – Watercolor Treading the Unknown

Watercolor on Paper 9" x 12", 2017



Land – Watercolor Rebirth

Watercolor on Paper 9”x 12”, 2017