

PRESS RELEASE

Bill Jensen

Dark Paintings

ADAA: The Art Show / Park Avenue Armory

March 1–5, 2017



Hushed Mountains III, 2015-16, oil on linen 32 x 25 in

Cheim & Read is pleased to present *Hushed Mountains*, a new suite of paintings by Bill Jensen, at the 2017 edition of ADAA: The Art Show at the Park Avenue Armory in New York City.

Jensen's *Hushed Mountains*, which belong to the artist's acclaimed series of "dark paintings," are inspired by a lifelong obsession with Eastern philosophy and poetry, Chinese landscape painting, the visionary paintings of Albert Pinkham Ryder, and a recent sojourn to the Swiss Alps in Ticino.

Jensen, whose attention to materials is widely known, makes his own highly saturated paint, which he applies with mason's trowels to achieve lustrous, burnished surfaces. The darkly enigmatic works resulting from this often lengthy yet fully spontaneous process have been described by Martha Schwendener in *The New York Times* as resembling "slabs of oxidized steel."

The surfaces—made of traditionally primed linen stretched over wooden panels to sustain their resilience in the course of constant reworking— shimmer with veins, swirls, and slashes of black, bronze, and violet that fluctuate with the changing light of the day.

In an interview recently published in *The Brooklyn Rail*, Jensen told his friend, the poet and translator David Hinton, "A common idea is that an artist brings order to chaos. But I want art that brings chaos to our limited mannerist view of the cosmos, the cosmos within our conceptual framework. Art, especially in the 20th and 21st centuries, is like a Zen koan that jolts us towards enlightenment."

Bill Jensen was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1945, and has lived and worked in New York since the early 1970s. A central figure in the "return to painting" movement of the late 70's and early 80's, Jensen is celebrated for his unconventional, intuitive, and visceral compositions that shift between pure abstraction and his own individualistic approach to figuration. He has also been long admired as a teacher at the New York Studio School and a generous friend and mentor to younger artists.

His work has been included in notable group shows nationally and internationally, and it is held in the collections of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; and the Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna, Austria, among many others.

Organized by the Art Dealers Association of America, The Art Show will run March 1–5, with a gala preview on Tuesday, February 28.

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