

Histories in Flux

Tim Kent disrupts traditional depictions of the interior space in his enchanting exhibition
Histories in Flux at Mayfair's JD Malat Gallery

2 May – 1 June 2024



Tim Kent, *Procession*, 2024, Oil on linen, 30 ¼ x 39 3/8 in, 77 x 100 cm

"I try to find ways to make sense of the things we can't see" – Tim Kent

Acclaimed New York-based painter Tim Kent will present *Histories in Flux*, a solo exhibition at Mayfair's JD Malat Gallery this May. Having exhibited in international galleries and collections, Kent returns to London for a second time to showcase his new body of work. On view from the 2nd of May until the 1st of June, *Histories in Flux* unveils Kent's depictions of vast architectural spaces which harbour deeper narratives of human history and our struggle to address self-implemented power structures.

Histories in Flux presents twelve psychologically charged portraits, architectural depictions of estates, and cultural institutions that highlight key issues pertaining to class, access, privacy and consumption. Kent resists and highlights the conformity presumed in traditional painting genres, attuned to the issues of the contemporary. His work sees Baroque and Georgian interior spaces transformed and dissected, revealing an ominous past that contains its own dimensional terrain.

Kent's inspiration stems from his time studying at West Dean College where he was invited to engage the legacies of historic homes in contemporary renderings, igniting his fascination with architectural space. His childhood also influences his artistry, as a first-generation American with a single mother, the constant movement and subsequent lack of continuity

allowed him to form places as memories to distinguish time, “My work attempts to express a narrative based around the mechanism of history and personal memory, which in turn are produced by the visual structures of power that inform our experience”.

Employing linear perspective, an artistic technique devised and documented by Brunelleschi and Alberti in the early 15th Century, Kent creates these geometrically symbolic illusions that exist in their own reality. *Histories in Flux* sees Kent playing around with genre, specifically the nude, portraiture, interiors, and narrative painting. His utilisation and simultaneous distortion of old Art Historical systems coalesce tradition with the contemporary, imbuing his work with subtle criticisms that sever the previously appendaged roles of authority. His grid-like fragmentations infer an empirical reaction to the viewer, rendering the once harmonious genre of chamber painting into a realm of architectural dissonance. As Kent states “The perspective grid becomes a visual metaphor for the interconnectivity of how we construct our visual world and its influences across every level of existence”.

The construction of these obscured historic scenescapes alludes to questions concerning our understanding of history. Busts, portraits, monuments, museum spaces, and estates, all serve as vessels for thematic parallels deeply rooted in classism, elitism, and power dynamics. Through his portrayal of these traditional art historical archetypes, Kent exposes the controversial and often overlooked narratives woven into the fabric of art history's canon. Institutional spaces proudly showcase their collections as symbols of cultural education and progress, yet beneath this veneer lies a concealed tapestry of colonial dominance, imperial knowledge systems, class stratification and labour obfuscation. Kent's compositions unearth the underlying complex networks, dismantling and deconstructing these familiar symbols of tradition. Layering their veneer of opulence and allure with shadows and uncertainties, he makes these once-celebrated spaces stark objects that challenge viewers to confront the uncomfortable realities obscured by centuries of glorification.

Kent's designs are inspired by estates, infrastructure and institutional spaces based on archival resources, found imagery and personal memory. His compositions are achieved through various artistic techniques such as scraping with a palette knife, brushing, ruling lines through hand-made rulers and splattering, all supported by underlying techniques of perspective. In Kent's hands, linear perspective transcends its technical origins, becoming a conduit through which the complexities of power and history are explored and laid bare. Through his masterful manipulation of this foundational artistic principle, Kent invites his audience to reconsider how material composes our perceptions of the world.

Displayed on the ground floor of the gallery, *Histories in Flux* showcases Tim Kent's artistic prowess, creating spaces that evoke a liminal presence, conjuring phantasmic psychological atmospheres that actively criticise and unearth hierarchical narratives of history. Tim Kent states “I hope the audience takes away how a painting provides a space of return to revisit older ideas, about oneself or the world, and so presents a space of recovery to re-engage with the complex world we inhabit”.

For more information, images and comments, please contact: press@jdmalat.com

Opening hours: 10am - 6pm Monday - Friday, 12pm - 6pm Saturday

JD Malat Gallery, 30 Davies St, Mayfair, London, W1K 4NB