

Jacob Ouillette: *Jupiter Rising*

April 8 - May 7, 2017

Opening Saturday, April 8, 3-6 pm



Paris, 2012. Oil on canvas. 30 x 45".

Jim Kempner Fine Art is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings and mixed media works by Jacob Ouillette. This will be the artist's first solo show at the gallery. *Jupiter Rising* will open on April 8 and run through May 7, 2017. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, April 8, from 3-6 pm.

In this exhibition, Ouillette draws on an array of subjects and influences that include landscape, poetry, music, mythology (ancient and personal), existentialism, the number 7 and the number 108. Despite the wide-ranging lineup of influences, the paintings all adhere to a basic set of rules that employ carefully planned out compositions, spontaneous brushwork and a musical approach to color.

Landscape, actual or romanticized, is a recurring source and theme for the artist, as exemplified in the paintings *Sea and Sky* (2015) and *Riptide* (2012). *Sea and Sky* refers to a hilltop where the ocean, sky and treetops can be seen in concert. The strong use of ultramarine pigments, the swirling dynamism and symmetry, the suggestion of landscape and the systematic execution situate the painting somewhere between Monet's impressionism, Joan Mitchell's abstract expressionism and Sol LeWitt's minimalism. *Riptide* recalls the light of a sunset on the Atlantic where the orange hues of the setting sun interact with the green sea. The painting contains 54 brushstrokes which is half of 108 (a special number to the artist).

The largest work in the show, *Jupiter Rising* (2012), is eleven feet wide and consists of 432 (a multiple of 108) individual brushstrokes. The title alludes to both mythology and an astrological sighting. The palette was influenced by NASA photographs of the planet Jupiter.

The most recent works in the exhibition depart from the purity of oil on canvas and utilize a variety of materials, including pencil, pen, watercolor, permanent marker, chalk pastel, acrylic paint, acrylic spray paint and shellac on book pages. These works utilize a specific set of rules, much like a game, for their execution. The number 7 plays a prominent role as well as the physical limitations of the materials. The book pages come from Soren Kierkegaard's first published work "Either/Or," in which he suggests that the way to live is integral to the aesthetic, a belief Ouillette shares with the author.



Sea and Sky, 2015. Oil on canvas. 34 x 68".

The title, *Byzantium (Falling Tower)* (2011), is a reference to *The Tower*, a book of poems by William Butler Yeats in which he tries to rectify the dichotomy between the body and the spirit. This painting suggests a similar dilemma but one that is more dystopian than romantic, envisioning a complex and unsustainable reality.

Midnight Oil (2009), the earliest work in the show with a simple two color palette, attempts to capture the glow of evening light. The title recalls many late nights in the studio. The idea of the artist working into the late hours is not only a romantic one, but also a matter of practicality because most artists have, or have had, a day job, leaving only evenings free for art making.

Jacob Ouillete was born in 1974 and grew up in Coastal Maine. He studied painting at the Rhode Island School of Design, moved to New York City in 1998 and worked as a studio assistant to the painter Sean Scully. He has had solo exhibitions in NYC at Open Source (2008), Dean Project (2010) and Nancy Margolis Gallery (2011) and has exhibited his work nationally and internationally in group shows and art fairs. He has received fellowships from the Edward F. Albee Foundation (2002) and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (2004).

For more information, please contact gallery director Dru Arstark at dru@jimkempner.com or associate director Sarah Bielicky at sarah@jimkempner.com.