



WALTER WICKISER GALLERY INC.

210 Eleventh Avenue Suite 303
New York, NY 10001

T 212-941-1817
wwickiserg@aol.com
www.walterwickisergallery.com

ROSELINE KOENER

Though constructed of handmade paper, pastel, and ink, Roseline Koener's colorful abstractions evoke the opulent hues and warm, spiritual glow of stained glass. But unlike the chapel windows they conjure up, Koener's compositions don't dim interior light; instead, they project light from within.

Equipped with a sense of wonderment inherited from her painter mother and a woodcock feather brush used by 15th-century Flemish painters given by her grandmother, the Belgian-born artist began to record from nature at an early age. She went on to study art history, archaeology, and the classics, as well as in the studio at home and abroad. It was not until 1992, however, when Koener became acquainted with the PRH Institute, a school for adult development, that her art changed direction. It was no longer the object or model that consumed her, but the movement of the light revealing them. And soon it was the internalization of the light, feeling the sensation, that became her true subject.

The shift was also prompted by Koener's increasing fascination with the pigments and patterns of indigenous art, initiated by her travels in Africa. The primitive markings, the scratches and squiggles across the surfaces of her works, are informed as much by tribal cultures, however, as by local influences on the South Fork of Long Island, her current home. They are like traces in the sand, imprints made by seaweed, shells, and shoreline birds. (The region's expansive light and the dancing movement of the water are conveyed as well.) The primal marks also evolve from what the artist terms her inner child. To be sure, the notions of play and the unexpected are integral to Koener's exuberant patchwork paintings. Her working process is intuitive; elements appear and then disappear according to dictates of color, shape, and texture. Pillowcase snippets, bits of cardboard, scraps of wool overlay, peek through, and juxtapose paint

and ink. Aqua collides with indigo, chalky pink upstages tangerine, a shower of midnight blue dapples lavender and then acid yellow.

Koener's free-flowing process and pictures anchor in solid ground. The single-color bases give the works depth, connect their parts, and circulate the energy. Acting as a type of frame in many of the works, they also contain energy, as does the thick black border in *At Night* *A Royal Dress from Origins* and the medley of purples defining the edges of *Sonatas for A Dancing Heart*. Koener's titles often reflect the lyricism of her compositions, melding passages punctuated by staccato rhythms, layers upon layers of color building to a harmonious crescendo.

Throughout, Koener nods to big-name abstractionists: the musicality and childlike imagery of Paul Klee, the fluidity and expressive color of Henri Matisse. For qualities beyond the formal she looks to Mark Tobey's mysticism and to Joan Miró and Robert Motherwell's illumination of the subconscious.

Koener's works shine from within. They celebrate life, they celebrate light. They offer spiritual refuge.

Deidre S. Greben