

# KOHN GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## LITA ALBUQUERQUE *EMBODIMENT*

**Opening Reception: January 9, 2016**  
Exhibition on view through February 27, 2016



*What is that color at the Particle Horizon, at the furthest point that we can see? Between Heaven and Earth? ...I started by pouring pigments on the earth, and from that to a sculptural space, the earth as a sculpture moving in space. – Lita Albuquerque*

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**Los Angeles, California** – Kohn Gallery is pleased to present a new body of work by Lita Albuquerque – composed of new pigment paintings and sculpture installations, *Embodiment* continues her investigations into space, color, materiality and the body. For decades, Albuquerque has been working in remote locations and deserts as sites to execute artworks that mark time and space, and in so doing our relationship to light, matter and one another. Often working with materials as raw and essential as her subject matter, Albuquerque's work, whether on the Ross Ice Shelf in Antarctica, the Pyramids at Giza, or taking her graduate students to the ancient Mayan temples and sacred cenotes, elucidates an intense participatory experience.

In response to research on pigments and an obsession with the vibratory quality of color on the perceptual system and the body, Albuquerque's choice of color for the exhibition embarks upon a new horizon for the artist. Subtle variations of rose madder (taken from lake roots), soft purple vesuvianite (originally found on Mt. Vesuvius) and pigments used in centuries-old Japanese painting technique called Enogu form the main gallery's palette. Executed on layers of black and white pigment backgrounds, the paintings' top layers of colorful pigment begin to vibrate and form a tonal language. Light is at once absorbed, reflected and refracted – perhaps metaphors for light as consciousness. And if we can consider light equivalent to consciousness, than these paintings highlight our collective awareness so that perception is made possible. It is no surprise that Albuquerque's choice of pigment takes us from lake waters to volcanoes, from the roots of plants to the roots of the earth's core, materials that are at once below and above the earth's surface.

## **About Lita Albuquerque:**

Lita Albuquerque is an internationally renowned light and space artist who, over the course of her 40-year career, developed a strong visual language and an expansive body of work ranging from sculpture, poetry, painting, photography, film, and multi-media performance to ambitious site-specific ephemeral projects in remote locations around the globe.

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Albuquerque's art practice was greatly influenced by her childhood years spent in a Tunisian fishing village, a Catholic convent in Carthage, and Paris. Beginning in the 1970s, Lita Albuquerque started working in remote locations and deserts as sites to execute large-scale, ephemeral sculptures composed of rocks and pigments. These installations incorporated other natural elements such as the horizon line, alignment to stars, wind and light which situated her alongside contemporaries in the **Land Art** and **Light and Space** movements, but also established her as a unique visionary. Through out her career her pilgrimages to sacred sites around the world resulted in these projects on a scale viewable from the heavens. These large scale ephemeral pigment pieces in desert sites include the Pyramids of Giza, Death Valley, the Mojave Desert and the ice desert of Antarctica that culminated in the first art work created on the continent.

Albuquerque's continued development materialized into performance. She gathered several hundred participants to engage in what she calls, "performative sculpture" – most recently, *Spine of the Earth 2012*, for the Getty's Pacific Standard Time Performance and Public Art Festival and, *An Elongated Now*, for the Laguna Art Museum's 2014 Art and Nature festival.

Winning accolades for these evocative environmental works, she continues to receive attention and recognition for her many other exhibitions as well. Her work has been exhibited at numerous museums including **Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Musee d'Art Moderne, Paris; National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi; SFMOMA, LACMA and MOCA** in Los Angeles where she consulted on the early vision for the inception of the museum. In addition to her exhibitions, she has been highly successful in winning public art commissions including the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, the Saitama Guest Center in Saitama, Tokyo; and the state capital in Sacramento at the Capitol Area East End Complex, to name a few.

Recently, Albuquerque received the **Distinguished Women in the Arts Award from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles**. She was the recipient of other numerous honors

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and awards including three National Endowment for the Arts, the Cairo Biennale Prize and a National Science Foundation Artist Grant. **Her impressive career even inspired a mural tribute to her by Kent Twitchell at the 101 North Hollywood Freeway at Hope in downtown Los Angeles. Created in 1984, this mural was part of the 7th Street Altarpiece and is still viewable today.**

Albuquerque's work is included in collections at the **Whitney Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Getty Trust, and The Los Angeles County Museum**, among others.

Her long running career also comprises her position on the core faculty of the Fine Art Graduate Program at Art Center College of Design.

Albuquerque's work will also be on view at USC Fisher Museum from January 26 to April 10, 2016 in an exhibition titled *20/20: Accelerando*. As part of the USC Visions and Voices initiative, a live performance with singers and performers activates the exhibition at its opening from 4-6 pm on January 24, 2016. Capacity is limited, to RSVP please visit <http://visionsandvoices.usc.edu/2020-accelerando-an-art-opening-and-performance-by-lita-albuquerque/>

## About Kohn Gallery

Since its establishment in 1985 by former Flash Art editor Michael Kohn, Kohn Gallery has presented historically significant exhibitions in Los Angeles alongside exciting contemporary exhibitions, creating meaningful contexts to establish links to the greater art historical continuum. Significant exhibitions include Andy Warhol's Campbell's Soup Boxes in December 1986, which opened just weeks before the artist's untimely death; *She: Works* by Richard Prince and Wallace Berman which brought together—for the first time—two generations of leading

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artists from different coasts; Bruce Conner: Work from the 1970s, which inspired the artist's first solo retrospective in Europe at the Kunsthalle Wien and Kunsthalle Zurich (2010). Exhibitions of important New York-based artists have included new works by Christopher Wool, Richard Tuttle, Mark Tansey, Kenny Scharf, and Keith Haring. Kohn Gallery represents important West Coast artists with long careers and rich histories such as Larry Bell, Joe Goode and Lita Albuquerque, as well as the Estates of Bruce Conner, Wallace Berman and Charles Brittin. Finally, Kohn Gallery boasts an exciting roster of emerging and mid-career artists including Simmons & Burke, Ryan McGinness, Rosa Loy, Dennis Hollingsworth, Mark Ryden, Eddie Martinez, Tom LaDuke and Troika. Visit [kohngallery.com](http://kohngallery.com) for the latest information on upcoming exhibitions.

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**Join the “Lita Albuquerque: Embodiment” conversation on social media by mentioning @KOHNGallery and using the #albuquerqueKohn hashtag when posting.**

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