

# KOHN GALLERY

## CAROLINE KENT

Born 1975, Sterling, IL  
Lives and works in Chicago, IL

Caroline Kent explores the relationship between language, translation and abstraction through her enigmatic paintings and drawings. Beginning with all-black surfaces, Kent's mark-making conjures pre-linguistic symbols, whose fleeting shapes and shifting perspectives suggest both the power and the limitations of language, and ultimately questions the modernist canon of abstraction. Kent received her MFA from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, in 2008, and a BS in Art at Illinois State University, Normal, IL, in 1998. Caroline Kent is the recent recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2020) and the Artadia Award (2020), as well as the McKnight Fellowship for Visual Arts (2016); Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2015); and a Jerome Fellowship in Fine Art (2009). In addition, Kent is an Assistant Professor of Painting at the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. Kent's work is included in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; and New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; among others. Recent and upcoming exhibitions include *Chicago Works: Caroline Kent*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL (2021); *LatinXAmerican*, DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL (2021); and *Recent Acquisitions*, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2021); as well as a solo exhibition at Illinois State University, Normal, IL (2021).

### ARTIST'S STATEMENT

In my practice I am driven by a curiosity to discover where language, abstraction and painting converge. This curiosity takes the multiple forms of drawings, paintings, text, sculpture and performance.

### I. LANGUAGE

I am focused on building an abstract painting language that expands beyond the frame and beyond the form. All of the paintings I produce have a beginning in a catalogue of works on paper started back in 2014. This catalogue is an investigative measure that contains over 200 paintings on paper that all adhere to the same size and start, 22 x 30" and a foundational layer of black gesso. As an on-going endeavor the catalogue serves as a jumping off point to make other works from. Painting is not a means to an end but a beginning, through which I can freely consider how producing pictures in the world can potentially operate and stimulate how we think about communicative structures. One question that drives my inquiry in the studio is, "How can language be constructed that is not restricted to the same communicative means that are common to everyday life?" "What constitutes

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language when limitations are removed for understanding?" Much like watching a foreign language film without subtitles, I ask, what are the registers for relating word to image and language to form.

## II. ABSTRACTION/ALTERITY

Forms and shapes are potential signifiers of their former lives as things in the world, formerly as objects, symbols, or architecture, now stripped of their identifiable thingness, and yet in this state, retaining a quality of their familiarity. Improvisation and invention are modes I often find myself working in as I make the work as well as how I move beyond it. By move beyond, I mean, how I keep pushing the inquiry-asking the absurd-- and unfolding and refolding the kinds of images I produce; defining and defying dimensions spatially and metaphorically. Abstraction here functions as a means to side step this world and enter a different one. The façade of the painting is merely a veil, an icon, a Twilight Zone entrance, or an exit, into perceiving, without the trappings of-being able to or having to-name a thing. If we are talking space and place, we are talking geography, a kind of geography that is not mapped by means of surveillance instruments but one that is accessed, imagined, possessed by situating within ourselves an understanding of a kind of geography that does not confine itself, submit itself to this world, but the next, or the beyond.

## III. TRANSLATION

The move from a 2-dimensional pictorial space to painted objects that hang on the wall, to free standing sculptures- are all acts of translation -and these are just the ones that are noticeable upon first looks. I see the act of translation as a means to expound upon the content of the work. I am interested specifically in what is gained in an act of translation as opposed to what is lost, and when varying forms of the work exist together, how the multiplicity of forms can create a kind of cacophonous affect- a chorus, an argument, or a call and response. Developing a new kind of cadence for talking that has yet to be pronounced, in a way that requires a new kind of saying and a new kind of interpreting; an outside the way kind of reception is necessary. Performance is a vehicle for this new kind of saying. This new kind of saying emerges when conditions for its reception have been prepared; where shapes can stand up and learn to be spaces and spaces can teach new bodies how to be. This process of building future architectures and ways of being calls on the viewer to contemplate origin, the where of this language. I consider this process the "gaining" in translation.

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## EDUCATION

- 2008 Master of Fine Arts, University of Minnesota, MN  
1998 Bachelor of Science, Art, Illinois State University, IL  
1998 Study Abroad, University of Wolverhampton, England, UK

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *Caroline Kent: What the stars can't tell us*, University Galleries, Illinois State University, Normal, IL  
*Chicago Works*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL  
*Proclamations from the deep*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY  
*Victoria/Veronica: Making Room*, The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL
- 2020 *A Sudden Appearance of the Sun*, Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*Victoria/Veronica: The figment between us*, Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Chicago, IL  
*A Form Walks Toward You In The Dark*, The College of New Jersey, Ewing Township, NJ  
*Writing Forms*, Hawthorn Contemporary, Milwaukee, WI
- 2018 *Beyond the Kármán Line*, Saint Catherine University, Saint Paul, MN  
*How Objects Move Through Walls*, Company Projects, Minneapolis, MN  
*Disappearance of the word, Appearance of the world*, Union for Contemporary Art, Omaha, NE
- 2016 *Joyful is the Dark*, Public Functionary, Minneapolis, MN
- 2014 *When You're Not Looking, I'm Loving You*, Bethel University, Saint Paul, MN  
*The Height of Fiction*, Nemeth Art Center, Park Rapids, MN
- 2013 *How I Tell It to Myself*, Elephant, Los Angeles, CA  
*St. Wilma and the 4th Dimension*, Juxtaposition Arts, Minneapolis, MN
- 2010 *Romanian Palimpsest*, Rochester Art Center, Rochester, MN

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *Recent Acquisitions*, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
*Otherwise/Revival*, Bridge Projects, Los Angeles, CA  
*Where the threads are worn*, Casey Kaplan Gallery, New York, NY  
*LatinXAmerican*, DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL  
*Otherwise/Revival*, Bridge Projects, Los Angeles, CA
- 2020 *Constellations*, Tiger Strikes Asteroid Greenville, Greenville Center for Creative Arts,

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Greenville, SC

- Duro Olowu: Seeing Chicago*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL  
*all this and not ordinary (the difference is spreading): An Exhibition of Women's Studio Practice*, The Maxhausen Gallery of Art, Concordia College, Omaha, NE
- 2019 *Five Ways In: Themes from the Collection*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN  
*It grows between: Amalie Jakobsen, Caroline Kent, Jerónimo Reyes-Retana, Alan Ruiz*, Efrain Lopez Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2018 *On the Road: Caroline Kent, Basil Kincaid, Esau McGhee*, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, NY  
*So close, far away*, Sector 2337, Chicago, IL  
*Out of Easy Reach*, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN  
*Paint School*, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY  
NAVA, Napoleon, Philadelphia, PA  
*Up close, Step Back Further*, Studio 1469, Washington, D.C.  
*Group Exhibition*, Monique Meloche Viewing Room, Chicago, IL  
*Out of Easy Reach: DePaul Art Museum*, Chicago, IL
- 2017 *Midnight Sun, Triumph*, Chicago, IL  
*It will be more like scratching than writing*, Goldfinch, Chicago, IL  
*Dull Magic*, UNISEX, Brooklyn, NY
- 2016 *Axes for Abstraction*, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN
- 2015 *Imaginary Landscapes*, Mana Contemporary Chicago, IL  
*What is "American Art,"* Minnesota Museum of American Art, St. Paul, MN
- 2014 *Full House (west) MSP/NYC*, David Rich Space, St. Paul, MN  
*How to Make a Hood*, Washington Arts Incubator, Chicago, IL  
*Objects for Consideration*, SOOVAC, Minneapolis, MN  
*Doubleplusgood*, Tuck Under Projects, Minneapolis, MN
- 2013 *Nate Young and Caroline Kent*, The Suburban, Oak Park, IL  
*Works on Paper*, Burnett Gallery, Minneapolis, MN  
*Josephine Lutz Rollins Exhibition*, Katherine Nash Gallery, Minneapolis, MN
- 2012 *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA
- 2011 *Place*, SUNY Dutchess Community College, Poughkeepsie, NY
- 2010 *Jerome Fellowship Exhibition*, Minneapolis College of Art & Design, MN  
*Greater Minnesota Biennial 10*, Soap Factory, Minneapolis, MN
- 2008 *Open Door 4*, Rosalux Gallery, Minneapolis, MN  
*[ ]scapes, M.F.A. Thesis Exhibition*, University of Minnesota, MN
- 2007 *Drawing and Painting*, Larsen Gallery, St. Paul, MN

## VISITING ARTIST TALKS/LECTURES

- 2021 *Caroline Kent with Jadine Collingwood*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL

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- Virtual Conversation: Caroline Kent - Not buried, just under the surface*, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- 2018 Artist Talk, LatinXAmerican Podcast, Episode 6, DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL  
Visiting Artist Lecture, St. Catherine's University, St. Paul, MN  
Creative Practices Public Panel, The Minneapolis College of Art & Design, St. Paul, MN  
Visiting Artist Lecture, Oxbow Residency, Saugatuck, MI  
Artist Talk, Northwestern University, Art, Theory and Practice, Evanston, IL
- 2016 Artist Talk: *Axes for Abstraction*, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN
- 2015 Artist Lecture, *How I Tell It To Myself*, Bethel University, St. Paul, MN
- 2012 Artist Lecture, *Sacred Space/Contested Terrain*, Yesomi Umolu, Walker Art Center  
Curatorial Fellow and Artist Caroline Kent, Regis Center for Art, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
- 2011 Romanian Palimpsest, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, WI
- 2010 Romanian Palimpsest, Rochester Art Center, MN
- 2008 Symposium, *Displacement*, University of Glasgow, Scotland
- 2007 4th Romanian Conference, *Romania through the eyes of a Young American Artist*, Columbia University, NY
- 2006 *Crafting a Vision for Art*, Equity and Civic Engagement Workshop, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA

## AWARDS, GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2020 Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant  
Artadia Award Chicago
- 2019 Artadia Finalist Chicago
- 2018 Shandaken Projects, Paint School Fellowship
- 2016 McKnight Fellowship for Visual Arts
- 2015 Pollack-Krasner Foundation Grant  
MN State Artist Initiative Grant
- 2013 Creative City Making Grant
- 2011 MN State Artist Initiative Grant
- 2009 Jerome Fellowship

## COLLECTIONS

The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL  
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN  
Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN

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Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL  
Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL  
Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX  
New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA  
DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL  
Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, MN  
Macalester College, Saint Paul, MN  
Joyner/Guiffrida Collection (Pamela Joyner)  
Danjuma Collection, London, UK  
New Century Art Foundation, Shanghai, China

## TEACHING

2021-Pres. Assistant Professor of Art, Theory, Practice at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

## PROJECTS

2020 Upcoming Project The Shed Museum, NYC  
2018 Avant Garden Artist Print, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN  
2011-16 Co-founded The Bindery Projects, a visual arts project space, St. Paul, MN

## RESIDENCIES

2018 Amy Marie Sears Visiting Artist, St. Catherine University, St. Paul, MN  
Visiting Faculty Artist, Oxbow Residency, Saugatuck, MI  
2009 NES Artist in Residency, Skagaströnd, Iceland

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

2021 C. Force, "Caroline Kent Practices the Joy of Painting," *Sixtysix Magazine*, November 14  
B. Sutton, "Artsy Insider: Frieze Week's Breakout Artists," *Artsy*, October 24  
R. Archambeau, "The Art of Not Communicating," *Hyperallergic*, August 28  
C. Acosta, "Caroline Kent's 'Victoria/Veronica' at MCA Chicago Explores the Secret Language of Identical Twins," *BlackBook*, August 25  
R. Pride, "Today in the Culture, August 16, 2021: Ta-Nehisi Coates Headlines Printers Row Lit Fest | Caroline Kent Gets MCA Show | CTA and Parks Get Amazon Lockers," *New City*, August 16

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- 2020
- K. Olsen, "Frieze New York 2021: Colorful Abstract Artworks: Paintings and Sculpture that Captivated at the NYC Event," *Cool Hunting*, May 12
  - L. Preston Zappas, "Female protagonists and villains center in an artist's imagined Western", *KCRW*, December 8
  - J. Pelly, "An Artist Who Paints in Cryptic Pastel Symbols", *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, November 16
  - D. Rockett, "Uptown, Garfield Park artists Eliza Myrie and Caroline Kent win \$10K from national arts nonprofit Artadia", *Chicago Tribune*, July 8
  - K. Aziz Oghily, "This Non-Profit Organisation Has Helped Launch A New Initiative To Support Artists Affected by COVID-19", *Harpers Bazaar Arabia*, July 2
  - C. Sanders, "Art Department Draws Inspiration from Quarantine", *The Signal*, May 5
  - A. Berman, "Breakout Artists 2020: Chicago's Next Generation of Image Makers", *Newcity Art*, May 1
  - S. Indrisek, "How 10 Artists Are Staying Creative During COVID-19", *Artsy*, March 23
  - S. McAdams, "Caroline Kent 'Writing' Visually at Hawthorn Contemporary", *Shephard Express*, March 10
  - C. Goldstein, "Price Check! Here's What-and for How Much- at the 2020 Armory Show in New York", *Artnet News*, March 9
  - A. Cohen, "10 Best Booths at The Armory Show" *Artsy*, March 5
  - J. Purcell, "Fine Arts: Caroline Kent exhibit opens at TCNJ", *The Times of Trenton*, February 26
  - The editors of *Artnews*, "Kohn Gallery Now Represents Caroline Kent, *Artnews*, February 25
- 2019
- A. Cohen, "The Artists Everyone Talked about during Art Basel in Miami Beach", *Artsy*, December 9
  - E. Kinsella and N. Freeman, "'People Get Into The Rhythm': Here's What VIPs Were Buying During Art Basel Miami Beach's Leisurely Preview Day", *Artnet*, December 4
  - C. Moreira-Brown, "The Top Five Gems at EXPO Chicago 2019", *Fad Magazine*, October 8
  - T. Nudd, "Can Adding Sound to Paintings Change the Way You Feel About Them?", *Muse By Clio*, July 16
  - C. Selvin, "Artadia Names Five Finalists for 2019 Chicago Awards", *Artnews*, June 21
  - S. Abare, "How Can Sound Change the Way We Experience Visual Art?", *Walker Art Center Blog*, April 10
  - F. Fernandez, "Five reasons to see 'Five Ways In: at the Walker", *The Mac Weekly*, February 28
  - P. Espeland, "'Five Ways In' at the Walker", *Minnpost*, February 13
- 2018
- K. Anifowoshe, "Whatever You Think I Am, I'm Not – Out of Easy Reach Review", *Sixty Inches from Center*, December 29

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- A. Lambert, "On The Road Series Stuns at Jenkins Johnson Gallery", *Antemag*, December 4
- F. Fernandez, "A tale of two artists: the works of Caroline Kent and Lela Pierce '08", *The Mac Weekly*, October
- N. Watson, "Gateways to the where: Investigating new territories in the work of Caroline Kent", *Beyond The Kàrmàn Line Exhibition Essay*, September 8
- A. Eler, "Painting Show at St. Kate's explores the boundary between Earth and outer space", *StarTribune*, September 6
- S. Rodney, "An Exhibition that Frustrates our Grasp of Abstraction", *Hyperallergic*, August 2
- A. Flynn-Taylor, "Review: Out of Easy Reach", *Sixty Inches from Center*, May 31
- P. Jameson, "Black and Brown and Seen All Over: Out of Easy Reach Expands the Limits of Abstraction", *New City Art*, May 15
- M. Lopez, "Caroline Kent", *Out of Easy Reach, Exhibition Catalogue Essay*, March 15
- A. Smith, "Un-naming the gaps", *Disappearance of the Word, Appearance of the World Exhibition Essay*, January 15
- 2017 M. Morris, "It will be more like scratching than writing", *Exhibition Essay*, May 5
- C. Schmid, "Essay: Is Minneapolis America's Next Powder Keg for Art?", *Vice*, January 24
- 2016 C. Olson, "Into The Heart of Darkness", *Mn Artists*, July 21
- C. Schmidt, "Close Encounters With the Dark", *Independent Artist Publication*, March 5
- 2015 M. Morris, "Review: Imaginary Landscapes/Mana Contemporary", *New City Art*, April 20
- 2014 Y. Umolu, "States of Exception", *Saint Wilma and the Fourth Dimension Exhibition Essay*, February 1
- 2013 S. Reagan, "Caroline Kent explores transcendence, tesseracts", *Citypages*, January 31