

KEES ALDERLIESTEN



Front Cover: **Seascape, Light and Clouds** 90 × 120 cm

All works Oil on Panel

KEES ALDERLIESTEN

Solo Exhibition

February 2015

CATTO GALLERY

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Any contemporary Dutch painter would be forgiven for feeling the weight of 500 years of painting tradition. You'd think he or she might avoid the still lifes, seascapes and fleshy nudes that define Flemish mastery. Well, not Kees Alderliesten. Instead, he takes his knife and brush and paints his way directly towards it.

Kees is proud to represent a contemporary echo of Northern renaissance giants such as Rembrandt and Jan van Goyen. To do their example justice, he obsesses over technique and composition. Kees paints for between 10 and 15 hours a day, and when he's not painting he's generally thinking about his work. He's immensely serious about it all. He says: "As an artist I paint for eternity, using the most durable materials and techniques. I'm seeking to continue the Dutch painting tradition."

This diligence has made him one of his country's most celebrated artists. And in this new show for the Catto, his fifth, Kees displays the full repertoire. The majority of the work comprises supremely delicate still lifes, exemplified by the achingly lovely *Pink Orchid* and *Venice Glass with Silk*. Each of these reflects the taste and judgement of someone who knows exactly where he's come from, and exactly what he's doing.

And there's the same sureness of touch in *Seascape, Light and Clouds*. Again, Kees reveals he's happy to accept the legacy of history here. In the 16th century, Dutch artists were among the first to depart from classical and religious themes in order to paint the sea. It wasn't exactly accident. This period marked the birth of sea-faring and the rise of The Netherlands as a maritime nation. Painters like Hendrick Vroom set the template for this kind of work; Kees continues it.

And in this new show, he even takes on another Dutch tradition: the nude. This is something we haven't seen from Kees in a long time and it's remarkable. *Reclining Nude*, for example, is such a vivid piece. Visceral as a Rubens, it reflects in its subject matter and execution just how confident Kees is right now. But don't think this confidence came easily. Kees confesses he finds life painting difficult and has worked for three years to reach this standard again.

Fans of Kees' work will be captivated by the collection, though the artist will have mixed feelings should they wish to buy one. For Kees, each work is like a child and he hates to see them go. He says: "I'm just not too comfortable about selling my work. In fact, it breaks my heart."

Kees' words reflect the immense care he takes over each of his works. Interestingly, though, the new works also showcase a looser approach in the form of 'alla prima' - painting with a single layer of paint. It's understandable that an artist so immersed in technique might wish to return to the 'single take'. Perhaps it's like the musician rejecting the overdubs and orchestras, and returning to the liberating simplicity of a song and a guitar.

Here's how Kees explains it: "The beauty of a rough sketch is what captivates me. Rough paintings can be a motivation for a more elaborate work, or they can be left as is. There's something special about the directness of it."

Kees Alderliesten may be one of the senior figures in contemporary Dutch painting, but he's still experimenting still striving for new forms of expression. And it's what makes him an artist who is not just inspired by 500 years of tradition, but genuinely part of it.



PINK ORCHID
80 X 85 cm



THUNDER CLOUD
21 X 40 cm



BLACK AND WHITE GRAPHIC
90 X 120 cm



NUDE GREEN
24 X 24 cm



RECLINING NUDE
22 X 35 cm

VENICE GLASS WITH SILK
120 X 100 cm





IN THE EVENING, LILAC SEA
40 X 66 cm



SYRIAN MEDIEVAL AND MODERN GLASS
80 X 85 cm



THE TWO OAKS
24 X 24 cm



POPPIES
95 X 82 cm



MORNING SUN
12 X 12 cm



HAZY MORNING, LILAC
92 X 120 cm



SEE THE SEA WAVE
60 X 80 cm



EMERALD
60 X 80 cm



BLOSSOM TREES
40 X 65 cm



BLOSSOM BLUE SKY
40 X 65 cm



BIESBOSCH HOLLAND
24 X 24 cm



CALM SEA
60 X 80 cm



POLDER LANDSCAPE, HOLLAND
92 X 120 cm



SUMMER EVENING
40 X 65 cm



RED MORNING
40 X 70 cm



MUSSELS WITH FEATHER
60 X 80 cm



STILL LIFE WITH TWO EGGS
80 X 85 cm



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Opening times: 10am - 6pm Mon - Sat • 12.30pm - 6pm Sunday • and by appointment

EXHIBITION DATES: 12th February - 3rd March

