

GARY KOMARIN

Born in New York City, the son of a Czech architect and Viennese writer, Gary Komarin is a risk taker in contemporary painterly abstraction.

Komarin's stalwart images have an epic quality that grip the viewer with the idea that he or she is looking at a contemporary description of something timeless. For painter Gary Komarin, abstraction has never been a formal dead end. Rather, it has allowed him to challenge the limitations of the style -to make painting 'include more' precisely because a recognizable image excludes too much. Komarin has been called a "painter's painter". His status in this regard is based on the authenticity of his work, its deep connection to the tradition of Modern painting as well as its sustained individuality as an utterly personal voice.

Like many of the best artists of his generation he is indebted to the New York School, especially his mentor Philip Guston with whom he studied at Boston University where he was awarded a Graduate Teaching Fellowship. Komarin has been particularly successful at filtering these influences through his own potent iconography.

Guston's influence is evident in Komarin's merrgence of drawing and painting often breaking the picture plane of his rich and elegantly composed color fields with an assortment of private iconic cake and vessel-like objects. Preferring non-art industrial canvas tarps and drop cloths, Komarin eschews traditional painting media and materials. He builds layered surfaces with latex house paint in a thinned out sluce mixed with spackle and water. The house paint offers hybrid colors that seem slightly 'off' and the spackle creates a beautiful matte surface. Using color energetically, the quick drying materials allow him to paint with a sense of urgency, which mirrors the tension created by conflicting renderings of the spontaneous and the deliberate, the conscious and the unconscious or the strange and familiar. The resultant image is one that appears familiar but resists recognition.

Komarin has exhibited extensively throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. In 1996, Komarin's work was included in a pivotal exhibition at 41 Greene Street in New York City, along with work by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Philip Guston and Bill Traylor. In 2008, he had a solo museum exhibition at the Musee Kiyoharu Shirakaba in Japan. The exhibition and catalog, *Moon Flows Like a Willow*, was orchestrated by the Yoshii Foundation in Tokyo with galleries in New York, Tokyo and Paris. Komarin has had four solo shows at Galerie Proarta in Zurich and is preparing for his next exhibition at Proarta with works by Jean Arp and Francis Bacon. Komarin is also preparing for shows in London, Korea and Dubai following his successful catalogue show in Dublin with works by Robert Motherwell and Larry Poons and a museum showing in Spain just north of Madrid at the Museo Patio Herriano in the Spring of 2014.

Gary Komarin has been honored with the Joan Mitchell Prize in Painting, the New York Foundation for the Arts Grant in Painting, the Edward Albee Foundation Fellowship in Painting, the Elizabeth Foundation, New York Prize in Painting and the Benjamin Altman Prize from the National Academy of Design Museum, New York.

Articles and reviews of Komarin's work have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Art in America* and *Arts Magazine* among others. His work may be found in many noted museum, corporate and public collections including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Denver Art Museum, the Museum South Texas, Corpus Christi; the Montclair Art Museum; the Newark Museum; the Zimmerli Museum, the Yoshii Foundation, Tokyo; the Arkansas Museum of Contemporary Art; the Musee Mougins in the South of France; the Microsoft Corporation; Blount International, Atlanta; the United Bank of Houston; AT&T and American Airlines.

Komarin lives and works in a house and studio in the wooded hills of Roxbury, Connecticut.

"From these seemingly unlovely methods Komarin gets paintings that vibrate with historical memory, echoing such things as Matisse's driest most empty pictures. Robert Motherwell's spare abstractions of the 1970's, or the early New Mexico and Berkeley paintings of Richard Diebenkorn." – Kenneth Baker, *San Francisco Chronicle*