



The Katonah Museum of Art presents the
second installment of its Hudson River Trilogy:

Ellen Kozak

in the Project Gallery
July 12 – October 4, 2009

Katonah, NY – The Hudson River Trilogy, a KMA exhibition series celebrating the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson’s historic exploration of the river that bears his name, continues on July 12 with **Ellen Kozak** as its second featured artist. The three solo exhibitions during the year showcase contemporary artwork inspired by the Hudson River’s beauty, ecology and rich maritime history. Kozak’s work debuts concurrently with the exhibition *Dress Codes: Clothing as a Metaphor*, on view through October 4. The Katonah Museum of Art is located at 134 Jay Street in Katonah. 914-232-9555. For more information and programming please see www.katonahmuseum.org.

An artist with incredible focus and perseverance, Kozak has returned every summer to paint along the banks of the Hudson for the past 18 years, combining a tradition of *plein air* study with studio work, much like her 19th-century predecessors of the Hudson River School. Outside she records the visual “facts” of her subject—color, light, reflection, current, mist, and fog. While some paintings are completed on site, many are finished months or even a year later in her SoHo studio, thereby incorporating the elements of memory and time into the composition. Kozak is first and foremost a colorist, eliciting distinct moods in her paintings--the viewer can palpably sense whether a painting depicts an overcast morning or a bright summer day.

Kozak's strength lies in her ability to translate direct observation of natural phenomena into lyrical paintings. Her paintings straddle the line between representation and abstraction. Without the reference of horizon lines, viewers are immersed in molten scenes of saturated hues and subtle movement. And yet her paintings are jewel-like, small and nearly square. Unlike traditional landscape, which tends toward horizontal orientations and vast vistas, Kozak's format lends itself to intimate, abstract readings. While ostensibly her paintings depict the Hudson River, they are, in fact, explorations in phenomenology.

Notations on a River, a compilation of digital stills taken of the Hudson over the past two years, is Kozak's first video work in 24 years. One image slowly dissolves into another in a hypnotic, rhythmic progression. Similar to her paintings, the images are close up views of the water's surface; they are abstract and fluid and project a sense of topography, almost like aerial photographs. In two sequences, the early morning light transforms the water's surface into a textured blanket of gray tonalities, while a third segment is as aquamarine as the Caribbean Sea.

Ellen Kozak is a professor of color and design at Pratt Institute. The final artist featured in the Hudson River Trilogy is Alison Moritsugu, whose exhibition will be on view from October 18 through January 24, 2010.

Image Credit

Ellen Kozak
Route, 2007
Oil on panel, 17 x 20 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Ellen Kozak
Vessel, 2008-09
Oil on panel, 17 x 20 inches
Courtesy of the artist

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