

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

KEN TISA
PAINTINGS, CERAMICS
ORGANIZED BY MATTHEW RONAY
MARCH 29 – MAY 3, 2013

Ken Tisa's first solo exhibition at the gallery, organized by Matthew Ronay, is comprised of 30 ceramic works and a new, 4-panel painting. This exhibition marks Tisa's first solo show since 1999, and it will be the first time his ceramics are shown in the United States.

Tisa's works span many different media including beaded panels, carpets, ceramics, and painting. Despite its many forms, Tisa's work is essentially figurative narrative painting tinged with the spirit of the cartoons of his childhood mixed with a musical sense of wave-like patterns. His content deals in codes of self-discovery accessed through trance states akin to Active Imagination; his interests' range from *Sheena Queen of the Jungle* to Hopi hair whorls, all the while touching on the earnestness of folk art and the skill found within Minoan frescos. Many works present the body in its entirety while others separate it into basic elements like veins and arteries. This 'inner figurativism' echoes throughout in sinewy labyrinthian patterns that are as much corporeal as they are cosmic overtures.

The ceramics in the exhibition, presented on one large plinth representative of Tisa's obsessive interest in collections, are the result of a unique relationship between Tisa and ceramist Vincent Buffile. While living in Aix-en-Provence from 1999-2007, Tisa and Buffile used Tisa's sketches as the inspiration for dozens of vessels. Tisa easily translated his mix of narrative and pattern to the forms, and the vascular patterns he learned from painting on the ceramics became the basis for the new series of paintings on panels.

Born in 1945, Ken Tisa studied painting at Pratt University and then went on to study with Robert Ferris Thompson at Yale, receiving an MFA in 1970. While at Yale, Tisa discovered Haitian beaded flags and gave up painting to begin working in large-scale beaded wall hangings. In the early 1970's, Tisa traveled to San Francisco to experience psychedelic gay culture. He then returned to New York and was included in the 1975 Whitney Biennial. While back in New York City, he made solo exhibitions of his beaded works and realized several experimental projects including dance collaborations and projects with writers Kenward Elmslie and Max Blagg. His project with Blagg, *Hotel Furbank Archive* was shown at MoMA PS1 in 1980. Throughout the early 80's Tisa traveled to Haiti and the Dominican Republic where he collaborated with a local Gaga group creating ritualistic objects, this experience sparked his return to painting. In the mid 1980's, Tisa had several solo shows in New York where his fusion of beaded, painted and sculpted works were exhibited. Tisa withdrew somewhat from exhibiting in the late 80's to mid 90's during the AIDS epidemic, and focused on teaching. Affected by loss, Tisa began his *One-a-Day* paintings and started his collaboration with Tibetan carpet weavers. From 1999-2007, Tisa lived in France and worked with the master ceramist Vincent Buffile.

Ken Tisa (US, b. 1945 in Philadelphia, PA) received his BFA from Pratt Institute and his MFA from Yale School of Art and Architecture. He currently lives and works in New York, NY, and is a professor in the painting department at Maryland Institute College of Art. Tisa has held numerous solo exhibitions at venues including: Centre d'Art et de Culture, Aix-en-Provence, FR; Stellweg-Seguy Gallery, New York, NY; Alexander Wood Gallery, New York, NY; and Fischbach Gallery, New York, NY. Over the past four decades his work has also been included in exhibitions at a variety of institutions such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; The Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, OK; MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY; Artists Space, New York, NY; and Art in General, New York, NY.

Matthew Ronay is an artist who lives in Brooklyn. He has had recent solo shows at the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, Louisville, KY; La Conservera Center For Contemporary Art Ceuti, Spain; Lüttgenmeijer Berlin; and Andrea Rosen New York, NY. He will be included in the upcoming Biennial de Lyon.

Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday, from 11 until 6 PM. For further information and images please email info@katewerblegallery.com.