

David Lloyd

MONAS HIEROGLYPHICA

Gallery KM is very pleased to present *Monas Hieroglyphica*, the gallery's first solo show of work by Los Angeles-based artist David Lloyd. The exhibition features several large and medium-scale mixed-media paintings on canvas and wood, in a series that fuses together abstract imagery, words, representational figures and animals, illustrated scientific principals, surfing symbols and dimensional collage. The exhibition runs from October 22nd to December 4, with a reception for the artist held on Saturday, October 22, from 5 – 8pm, and an artist talk held on Thursday, December 1st at 7:30pm.

Lloyd describes his current work as exploring the sublime and the ridiculous in equal parts, a combination of “serious mysticism and f-d up pseudo-science”. The series is influenced by what he sees as the intersection between the materialist/biological determinist point of view and the religious/spiritual point of view, and the way in which those two competing yet interrelated perspectives manifest across our personal and collective narratives.

The title of the show is taken from the book “*Monas Hieroglyphica*” (*Hieroglyphic Nomad*), published in 1564 by John Dee, who was among other things the court astrologer for Elizabeth the 1st of England, and who used the original publication to expound upon the significance of a symbol he had invented called *Monas Hieroglyphica*—one he perceived as a convincing tool for teaching his theory of the unity of the cosmos. This 16th century situation, in which a powerful empire is guided by an occult attempt to represent the universe as whole, is not without resonance in our contemporary political landscape, and evokes the confluence of contradiction and absurdity at play in Lloyd's current work.

Formally, Lloyd's paintings operate in their own intersection between abstraction and representation, with a fluid integration of formal abstract language topped by imagistic referent points that provide a kind of inverted narrative map for the viewer. The pieces incorporate a barrage of materials, ranging from collage, fiberglass and resin, monoprint, paint of a variety of kinds, xerox transfer, water based medium, spar varnish, dirt, and used synthetic boat sails, and they present us with a visual density that matches the intensity of physical material used in their creation. Some of the paintings break with the classic rectangular presentation; one of the pieces is formed on nine-sided wood, while another offers an asymmetrical combination of curves and angles that is subtly reminiscent of a shark tail—and many of them feature a nearly sculptural application of materials. In the imagery, we see a fish hook wind around a perfectly formed spider made from clear plastic jewels and then morph into they small face of a woman, a shark with three bearded male heads, a whale with his own talking bubble, and the word GOD caught somewhere between the scrawl of fringe astrophysical theories and a hanging man wearing a speedo.

Most of the paintings include a repeated use of symbols—Lloyd’s personal symbols often relate to the Los Angeles surf culture of which he has been a part for years, and they are mixed with a variety of images and forms culled from esoteric or simply unusual historical sources. The overarching effect is both visceral and dialogic. Known in the art community primarily for his sophisticated, intelligent, and near-humorous abstractions, and in the surf community for his emblematic representations of the California surf experience and culture, Lloyd has here combined the two identities to create pieces that are atmospherically affective while commenting on the overabundance of competing didactic languages in our current social and political landscape.

David Lloyd graduated with a BFA from CalArts in 1985. He has had solo shows at Margo Leavin Gallery, William Turner Gallery and Chac Mool Gallery in Los Angeles, at Gallery Paule Anglim in San Francisco, and at the Surf Gallery and Peter Blake Gallery in Laguna Beach. Group shows have included the Orange County Museum of Art, Metro Pictures, and Milk Gallery in New York. His work has been written about in Artweek, The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Artscene and Artspace, and many others. He has taught at Art Center in Pasadena and The Brentwood Art Center, and he is included in the collections of the Orange County Museum of Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.