

Anton Kern Gallery

David Byrd

For Immediate Release

February 7 – March 9, 2019

Opening reception: Thursday, February 7 from 6–8pm

Anton Kern Gallery is pleased to announce our first exhibition with New York painter David Byrd, and our representation of the David Byrd Estate. We will introduce Byrd's work with a selection of portraits, landscapes, and genre paintings ranging from 1952 - 2009.

Byrd's style bears influence from different art historical periods: from European Post-Impressionism (ie: Seurat), to Modernism (ie: Balthus and his brother Pierre Klossowski), and Cubism (ie: his teacher Amédée Ozenfant), to American Realism (ie: George Tooker and Ben Shahn), and Regionalism (ie: Andrew Wyeth). Byrd injects realistic portrayal with fantasy, creating an unsettling psychology to the otherwise tranquil compositions. His paintings have a distinct quality of light, and a harmonious palette of muted greens, yellows, greys, and browns, applied with thinned oil paint using a dry brush technique. His prodigious output demonstrates his understanding of human emotion, his isolation, and a lifetime spent carefully looking.



David Byrd, *The Cave*, 1973, oil on canvas, 14 x 18 inches.

David Byrd was born in Springfield, Illinois in 1926, and lived and worked in various parts of New York for the majority of his life. At age 17 he joined the Merchant Marines, and was later drafted into the US Army during World War II. He used the GI Bill to enroll at the Ozenfant School of Fine Arts in New York City, where he studied for two years under the French painter Amédée Ozenfant.

Throughout the 1950s, Byrd worked a series of odd jobs-- including janitor, delivery man, movie house usher -- anything that would cover his bills while also (and more importantly) allowing him time to paint. From 1958 - 1988 he worked as an orderly in the psychiatric ward at the VA Hospital in Montrose, New York. His daily experiences during this time inspired his most defining body of work.

Byrd was a keen observer of his surroundings. He painted the people and situations he encountered, past and present, from memory. Byrd also painted scenes from his daily commute-- including mountains, bridges, houses, gas stations, and shopping centers. In 1988 David retired, bought land in the Catskills and spent the next several years building a home-cum-studio/gallery for himself, where he focused full-time on painting until his death in 2013.

David Byrd's work was not publicly exhibited until he was offered a solo show at Greg Kucera Gallery in Seattle, only a few months before his death at the age of 87. Since then, and through the establishment of the David Byrd Estate, his work has continued to be exhibited posthumously.

His first solo exhibition in New York City will open at White Columns in January 2019 and run concurrently with his show at Anton Kern Gallery through March 9, 2019. Special thanks to Jody Isaacson and Jessica Farrell from the David Byrd Estate for making this exhibition possible.

Previously his work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Fleisher Ollman, Philadelphia, PA (2018); and Greg Kucera Gallery, Seattle (2013, 2017). Notable group shows include *Byrd Hammond Klossowski Olowaska* at Balice Hertling, Paris (2018 - 2019), *OUTSIDE-as in: out-of-doors, as in: not belonging to*, curated by Matthew Higgs at Karma, Amagansett, NY (2016), and *The Patients and the Doctors: David Byrd and Peter Gallo* at Zieher Smith Horton, New York (2015).

Gallery Hours

Tuesday through Saturday
10am – 6pm

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