

Fergus McCaffrey, New York

**Kathleen Jacobs: *DREMS*
March 1 – April 14, 2018**

Opening Reception: March 8th, 6:00-8:00PM

Fergus McCaffrey is pleased to present the gallery's first solo exhibition of new work by Kathleen Jacobs at its Chelsea location from March 1 to April 14, 2018. *Kathleen Jacobs: DREMS* will present 12 of Jacobs's expansive canvases, which evoke meditative land- and seascapes.



While living in China in the 1980s, Jacobs studied under traditional painters and calligraphers, spending years exploring modes of mark-making and hand-written lettering. Essentially, Jacobs learned the process of stone-rubbing, in which a calligraphic text is formed from the palimpsestic marks rubbed from a stone's surface. When Jacobs began painting outdoors—first in the forests of Colorado, and later in the woods of Massachusetts—she decided to use tree bark as the surface on which to begin her lines and marks. Working with raw linen or canvas, Jacobs wraps and re-wraps the material on multiple tree trunks, subjecting the pieces to various gessesos

and rubs, and leaves them to absorb the influences of weather patterns and the evolution of the trees themselves. The artist leaves these paintings outdoors for as long as two years to weather and mature, creating a unique surface. In the final phase, she moves the aged paintings back into her Great Barrington studio, painting and reworking the marks begun by her and taken up by her environment. The resulting paintings are complexly textured and abstract.

In the lineage of John Cage and the artists of *Dansaekhwa* (Korean monochrome painting), Jacobs's practice is defined by the interplay of intention and chance, guided by the artist's heightened attention to natural forces. Jacobs's collaborations with the forces of nature ultimately evince her own deliberate choices: the artist carefully selects sections of tree bark to rub, and intimately understands the specific results of leaving a painting to age for varying amounts of time. The resulting paintings are complex and subtle fields of texture and color resulting from a series of deliberate, measured marks. In this way, the artist partially allows her paintings to form themselves, calling to

mind the Tao Te Ching's injunction to "act with no action, use the technique of no technique." Jacobs's paintings perform a poetics of chance and choice; their final forms, however, are densely layered abstract compositions firmly grounded in the tradition of painting. In this way, Jacobs's canvases show the complex interplay of environmental topographies in much the same way that Julie Mehretu's and Ingrid Calame's paintings explore the traces of urban networks.

The exhibition's title, *DREMS*, is a five-letter designation—called a "waypoint"—that approximates the aeronautical location of Fergus McCaffrey's New York gallery. Jacobs, a skilled pilot, explores the skies near her home using such five-letter codes to navigate. She uses these waypoints as titles, at once unintelligible, poetic, and materially specific, to designate in her paintings the places in the sky that seem intangible to the human eye. Although such five-letter designations for latitude and longitude, chosen by air traffic control, do not have traditional semiotic meaning, they serve both memory and communication—much like Jacob's canvases, which are hieroglyphs of presence.



About the Artist

Kathleen Jacobs was born in 1958 in Aspen, Colorado. Over a three-decade career, Jacobs has synthesized several disciplines learned while working in Italy and China. She studied for six years in Milan while working at Unimark International. After her time there, she immigrated to China, where she studied calligraphy and painting with renowned artist and poet Huang Yong Yu. Her paintings and sculpture have been exhibited widely across the United States and internationally.

About the Gallery

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role in promoting the work of postwar Japanese artists such as Sadamasa Motonaga, Natsuyuki Nakanishi, Kazuo Shiraga, and Jiro Takamatsu. The gallery also exhibits the work of emerging and seminal Western artists such as Marcia Hafif, Birgit Jürgenssen, Richard Nonas, Sigmar Polke, and Carol Rama.

In keeping with the gallery's commitment to Japanese art and culture, we are pleased to announce that Fergus McCaffrey will open its Tokyo outpost in March 2018 with an exhibition of paintings by Robert Ryman.

For press inquiries, please contact:

Tel: +1 212 988 2200

Email: press@fergusmccaffrey.com

Images:

1. Kathleen Jacobs, *WIDLO*, 2017. Oil on linen, 72 x 76 inches (182.9 x 193 cm).
2. Kathleen Jacobs, *DNERO*, 2017. Oil on linen, 72 x 76 inches (182.9 x 193 cm).