

J. CACCIOLA GALLERY

NEW YORK DUBLIN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alex Kanevsky

Beautiful and Profound Paintings

May 1 – June 14, 2014

Opening Reception:

Thursday, May 1, 2014, 6 p.m - 8 p.m.



Alex Kanevsky, *Breathing Room*, 2014, oil, 66 x 66 in.

April 1, 2014, New York, NY -- J. Cacciola Gallery proudly presents Alex Kanevsky's eighth solo exhibition, *Beautiful and Profound Paintings*, featuring approximately 18 works in oil, ranging in size from 18 x 18 inches to 66 x 66 inches. This exhibition showcases paintings and an accompanying mindset that is breaking new ground for both the artist and the gallery. Says director John Cacciola, "It is an honor to be associated with Alex Kanevsky. We look forward to each of his exhibitions, as he continues to develop as an artist and surprise us. When I visited his studio and saw the beginnings of the triptych for this show [J.W.I., J.F.H., J.W.I. 2] I knew this would be a very special exhibition and eagerly anticipated the new direction this body of work would take."

Beautiful and profound -- two of the most debated and often misunderstood adjectives in the canon of art -- are never words you trumpet without the work to back it up. For Alex Kanevsky, arguably one of the most accomplished of the contemporary painters who walk the line between traditional and contemporary concepts and aesthetics, it's time to clearly and unapologetically state what he is after. Amid cries from art critics that beauty has no place in the contemporary art world, and the attendant removal of that word from its vernacular and value system, Kanevsky's current exhibition responds by saying, "Beautiful and profound -- these are still important words to me as a 21st-century painter and fundamental to my work."

In Kanevsky's current exhibition, those words take on new meaning. The woman lying contorted and supine in *Breathing Room*, caught in the middle of an explosion of paint, for example, is not a traditionally "beautiful" image. It is an uncomfortable, unconventional, awesome kind of beautiful, one that took much keen observation and imaginative execution on the artist's part. Paintings such as *Dark Pond*, *Cold River*, and *Red Room* are equally gritty, edgy, and curious. They are beautiful in an unexpected way, one that challenges but does not threaten. By labeling these paintings "beautiful" Kanevsky is in a way redefining the very connotations of the word that has led the contemporary art world to shun it. Regarding "profound," for Kanevsky that word symbolizes the emotions behind the work of art, the motivation that happens on a deeper level than intellect and that is transmitted and recognized through the visual experience.

"By beautiful and profound I don't mean the opposite of ugly and shallow," the artist explains. "I mean the whole spectrum that lies in between. I'm interested in the visual aspects that trigger human emotional response, as well as the basic human emotions that underlie apparent narratives. Those emotions -- love, hate, fear, hope -- just like beauty, are experienced by all and recognized by all but resist analysis. As a painter, I am interested in things that are experienced visually with clarity and intensity, yet resist cerebral approach."

Some would say that everyone is interested in that which is beautiful and profound to some degree, but that the definition of those concepts changes depending on the individual and collective context. One of the most famous and

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important questions ever raised in the art world was when the post-modernist art critic Arthur Danto, after seeing Andy Warhol's exhibition of Brillo boxes in 1964, asked "What Is Art?" This led to a book and movement wherein Danto ultimately concluded that most of the aesthetic criteria and parameters of beauty were gone, that art is what the art establishment says it is, and that the age of pluralism had come. Clement Greenberg, in the Modernist movement before him, steered clear of the word "beauty" and rather pointed toward "quality" as the defining factor in art, beauty's close but somehow distant relative. Artists such as Duchamp with his infamous urinal installation laughed in the face of beauty, and some of the work seen in the last several years' worth of Whitney Biennales wouldn't be caught dead near it. In his 1993 book *The Invisible Dragon*, art critic David Hickey claimed that attempting to find any universal standard of beauty is futile and that visual qualities are essentially invalid. But there are many contemporary artists who beg to differ, and Kanevsky is one of them. "We have a visual language. Nobody can fully define or learn it, as you might be able to learn Italian for example, but everybody understands it. That we are capable of universally understanding it has to do with the existence of beauty. I find this fascinating and nothing short of miraculous."

For more information, contact J. Cacciola Gallery at (212) 462-4646 or info@jcacciolagallery.com.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Alex Kanevsky was born in Rostov, Russia, in 1963. He attended the Vilnius University, in Lithuania, where he studied mathematics. During that time he also took painting classes at a small evening art school. In 1983 he immigrated to the United States, where he worked as a translator and drew pictures for telephone-book advertisements. Kanevsky later attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), concentrating on painting. The artist currently lives in Philadelphia with his wife Hollis Heichemer and teaches a weekly class at PAFA, spending the majority of this time working in his studio. Kanevsky has shown his work at various galleries, museums, and schools throughout the United States, Canada, Italy, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. For more information, visit <http://www.somepaintings.net>

ABOUT J. CACCIOLA GALLERY

The J. Cacciola Gallery has been a fixture in the New York art world for many years. Established in 1986 in Soho, and relocating to Chelsea in 1998, the J. Cacciola Gallery continues to show many of the most talented artists at work today. Ranging from established and mid-career to emerging artists, J. Cacciola has consistently adhered to the highest standards in art and service to collectors. We continue to seek out exceptional talents and bring their work to a wider public. The gallery offers a full range of consulting services to assist both private and corporate collectors. With more than 25 years experience we are committed to developing quality collections that reflect the unique tastes and requirements of each collector. Through thoughtful planning and collaboration with the client we can assist in creating a collection that heightens the attractiveness and enhances the image of both public and private environments. Collectors' goals, preferences, and budget are always foremost in the planning and execution of our consulting process. We are in association with a variety of artists, gallerists, and private dealers and are able to provide a comprehensive selection of media and genres to meet every client's goals and budget. Our staff can provide delivery and installation of virtually any manner of artwork throughout the United States. For more information, visit <http://jcacciolagallery.com>

PRESS/MEDIA CONTACT: Jenny Montgomery, jenny@jcacciolagallery.com

GALLERY HOURS: Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

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Press release by:

Allison Malafronte
Art Independent
www.artindependentllc.com