

press release:  
**vivienne koorland**  
condensation  
S is for Say it  
**12 march -**  
**23 april 2011**

private view  
10 march  
6.30 - 8.30pm

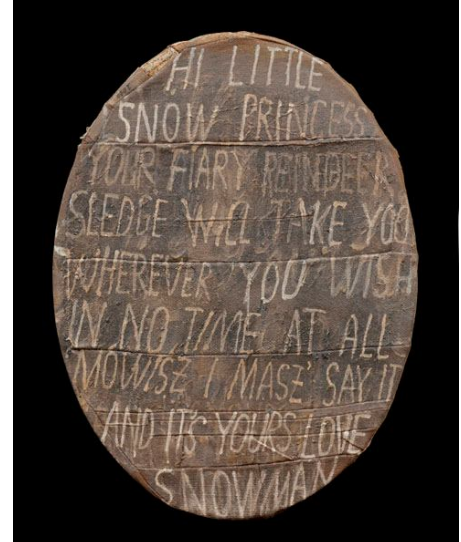
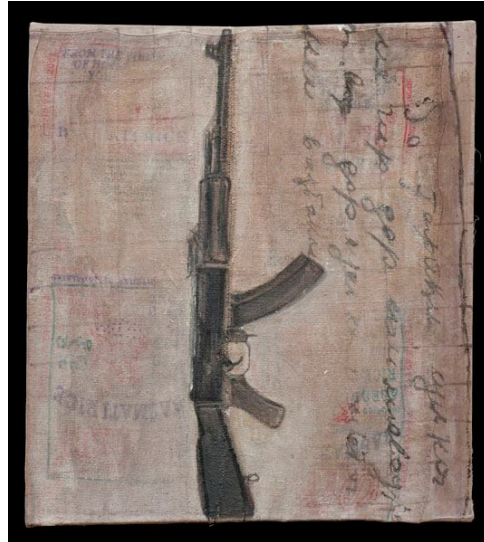


east central gallery is proud to present *condensation: S is for Say It*, an exhibition by the new york-based south african painter vivienne koorland. this exhibition is the artist's first one-person show at the gallery, and will comprise a large number of works, most of them painted over the last eighteen months.

the show marks a significant departure for the artist, not least in a change of scale. known for works of large dimensions, koorland has taken on a challenge of working on smaller scale surfaces. still using her signature hand-hewn heavily-stitched burlap and linen for the oil paintings, and her worked bookboards for the drawings, she has dived deep into her rich and multi-layered vocabulary in order to create a complex, intimate language of iconic words and images, providing viewers with an index through association for the individual logic and constancy of her work.

throughout her practice, koorland has projected her own history onto subject matter concerned with greater political themes, such as war, racial displacement and cultural destruction. but often text used in the body of her work is intimate, touching less exposed places, but even then, not directly so. in *Condensation*, the artist has walked the long way and created what is by far her most private show.

in creating a structure for this project, koorland chose the unadorned vehicle alphabet. in linking certain words and letters together, her choice is sometimes direct, while at other times it is by way of association.



the artist has commented on this process: *"i set myself the simple task of painting an alphabet. an a-z. as is usual for me, there were many compelling and personal reasons that were resonant here. my attachment in general to alphabets of all kinds, conceptually and visually, as well as being irresistibly drawn to the potentialities of the extreme visceral and abstract qualities that alphabets generate and encompass and finally, its inseparability from language in all senses of the term, made painting an alphabet natural for me. this simple container as a working idea also promised me a sequential method and meaning, a kind of tidier systematising order and homogenising form in my otherwise relatively chaotic and untidy working practice.*

*in spite of this and almost immediately as work commenced, possibilities with different letters became mind-blowingly overwhelming and paintings became unmoored, behaving like kites in the wind. i felt myself constantly reining them in.*" (vk)

one of koorland's main occupation is repetition, working the same image or idea over and over again, in a meditative manner: *"this modest project where i also struggled to downsize the paintings, did however allow me the comfort and consolation of repetition, referencing precedents, interiorly and in the world at large".* (vk)

the title of the show borrows the freudian term condensation, which can be defined as *"...the dream's tendency to combine several themes into one dream symbol. in this way the symbol can stand for several different considerations..."*

vivienne koorland has said: *"the freudian dream term condensation for my alphabet feels exactly right: in my inventory of symbols and icons of longing the images i represent in pictures and words stand for many thoughts, feelings, longings and ideas."*

vivienne koorland was born in cape town, south africa in 1957. she is a graduate of the university of cape town, the institut der künste in berlin, the école nationale supérieure paris, and columbia university, new york.

koorland has had solo exhibitions in museums and public galleries including the williams college museum of art, williamstown, usa; the irma stern museum, cape town, sa; the gallery of the college of staten island, usa; and the freud museum, london.

her work is in public collections including the south african national gallery, cape town; the jewish museum, new york; the mint museum of art, charlotte, north carolina; the president's library of the university of cape town; the harvard business school, cambridge, usa; the boston museum of fine art, usa; and anglo american london, uk.

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