



Leo's work spans styles and centuries with ease, fusing the best of each into a singular art which could only be his.

Adrian Sumner
Arts Development Officer
Chester City Council

Kundas works equally well in all of his media; he is outstanding as a painter, print-maker, and draftsman. The composition, color, and brushwork of his paintings have enormous intensity and poetry.....

Louise Thompson
New York

When one thinks of traditional printmaking instantly images of Dürer and Rembrandt come to mind. Leo Kundas draws from this tradition in a way that is uniquely his own. He breathes life into the monuments of Central Park.

Phil Sanders
Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop
New York

The drawings, etchings and paintings of Leo Kundas are meditations on the nature of time. Intensely personal, rooted in youthful life experiences in the Soviet heartland...

Noah Simmons
New York

In his etchings and charcoal drawings Kundas gives us brilliantly executed discourse between animated vibrating lines of a living being and perfectly formal lines of an architectural element. There is a vibrant dialogue of bursting energy and dry restraint which is sustained by his dynamic feel for composition and line.

Valentina Belyeva
Russian Museum
St. Peterburg

contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Painting	7
3. Venetian Lagoon	8
4. Visiting Rembrandt	20
5. Torso series	28
3. Drawing	41
4. Etching	53
6. Central Park series	64
7. Mural, Barnes & Noble store	75
& Artist statement	79



Introduction

*"History, you arise in me
Like a never-felled forest of infinite trees"
-Pasternak, History*

The drawings, etchings and paintings of Leo Kudas are meditations on the nature of time. Intensely personal, rooted in youthful life experiences in the Soviet heartland or in ones from his maturity in the West, his work is also the expression of an ancient cultural perspective that views history as essentially cyclical, not precisely as a single triumphal march towards progress. According to this perspective, human aspirations and the search for beauty or power shape our civilizations, but the latter are in turn eroded and transformed beyond recognition by the passage of time. Pasternak conveys this idea in *Dr Zhivago*. The hero, mourning the loss of love in the midst of revolution and civil war, likens the course of history to the natural cycles of a forest:

The forest does not change its place; we cannot lie in wait for it and catch it in the act of change. Whenever we look at it, it seems to be motionless. And such also is the immobility to our eyes of the eternally growing, ceaselessly changing history, the life of society moving invisibly in its incessant transformations.

The passage from Pasternak evokes another central theme in Leo Kudas' work: the relationship between artifice and nature. In his Central Park Series of etchings, Kudas suggests that we erect monuments to anchor our fleeting civilizations, in a sometimes noble, at other times foolish attempt to stem the ebb and flow of time. But the immobility and permanence of an obelisk or skyscraper are mere optical illusions. Like trees in a forest, human artifacts are inevitably subject to corruption, transformation, destruction, but also transfiguration.

The subtle joy that pervades Kudas' work is in turn connected to his faith in the inevitability of eternal rebirth. Thus his still-lives and nudes are more than emblems of transience, or *Vanitas*: for they hold the seeds of future life. Proud towers shall crumble; human monuments and projects will tatter, sensuous nudes wilt with age; but from their ashes will reemerge, phoenix-like, things rich and strange. Historians describe that story; poets sing of it; and an artist such as Leo Kudas draws, etches and paints it.



painting

Kudas' paintings are a kind of visual magic land; they draw the viewer in with light and color and leave him with a profound sense of significance and feeling. The compositions are engrossing; one's eye roams, excited and contented. The color is rich and pleasing, often seemingly subdued but glinting with light or suffused with a glowing emanation from within. His masterful brushstroke is perhaps the source of the controlled but vibrant energy in the works. Together, the elements of each piece produce a powerful sensuous energy and sense of comprehension and depth of meaning.



venetian lagoon series

More than elsewhere in his work, Kudas unleashes in his painted landscapes the fury of the cosmos. His choice of small canvases for his landscapes is deliberate: the chromatic Sturm und Drang is all the more effectively conveyed. Significantly, humanity is only faintly suggested, if at all. The focus is here is on the transformative power of nature, of cataclysm, rather than on human achievement. In keeping with a sensibility always attentive to the cyclical nature of time, Kudas hints in places to a return to calm after the tempest. *Landscape with a Blue Lake* includes in its left-hand corner the sliver of what looks like a crater lake. Note the accent of almost pure blue, the mirror-like suggestion of placid water, in singular contrast with the drama above.



Cp 144

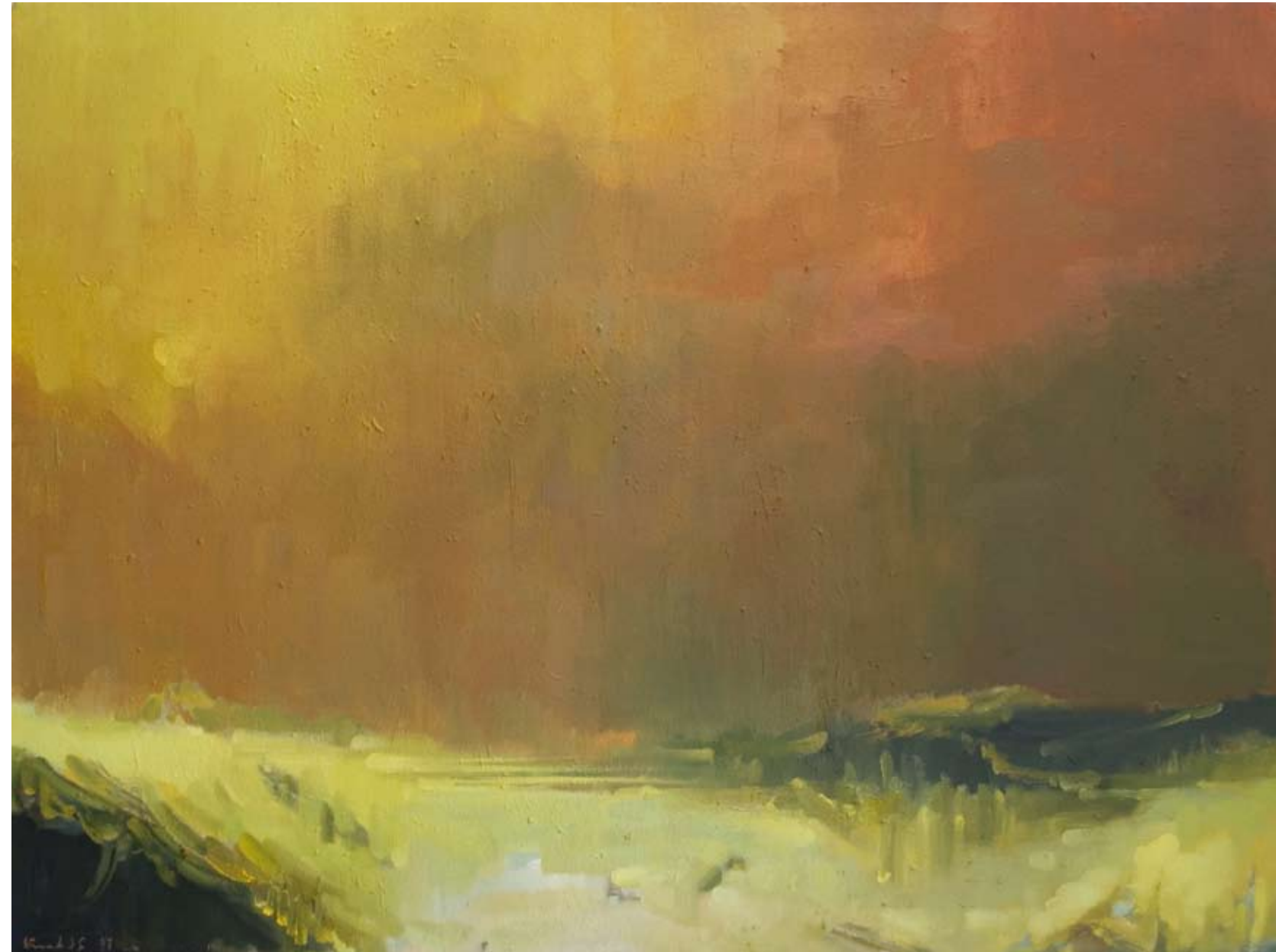
Landscape with a Tree #2, 2003-2009
From series *Venetian Lagoon*
Oil on canvas
40 x 48 in. (101.5 x 122 cm.)



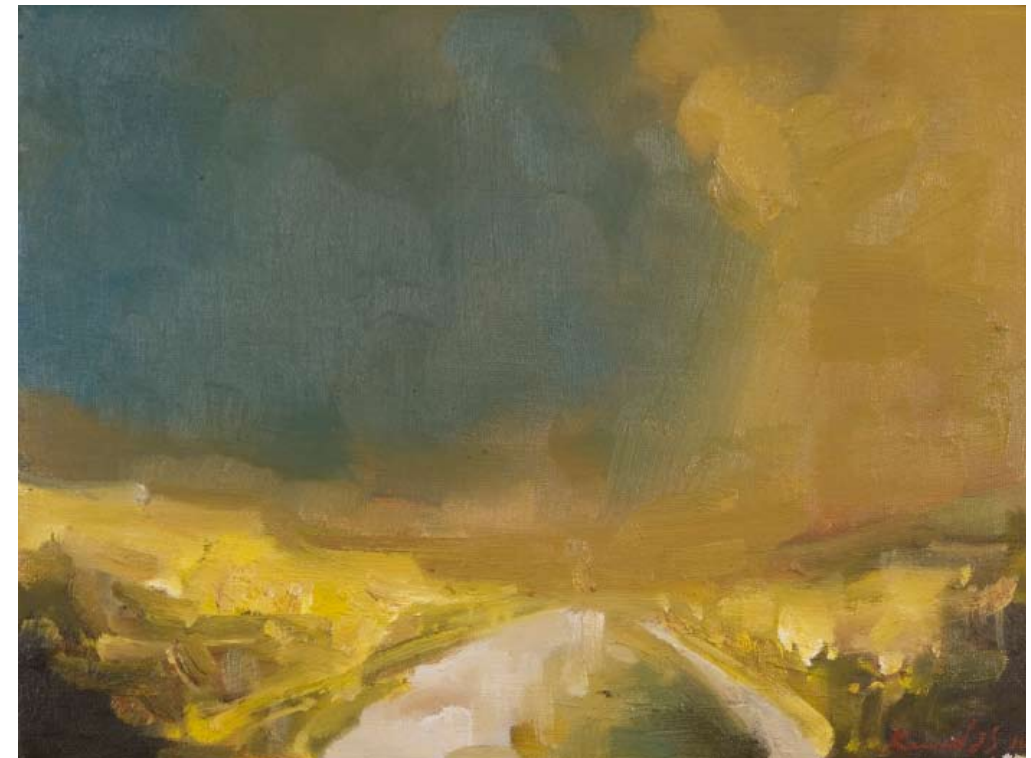
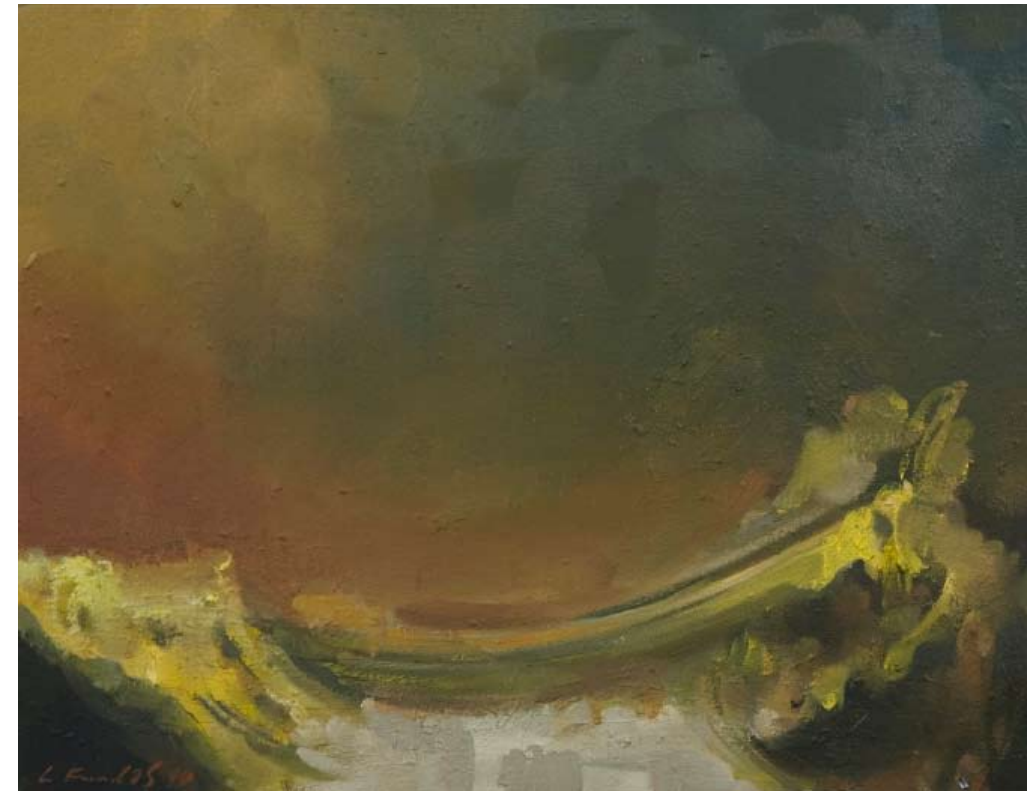
Cp 193
Landscape #12, 2010
From series *Venetian Lagoon*
Oil on canvas
15 x 15 in. (38 x 38 cm.)



Cp 194
Landscape #13, 2010
From series *Venetian Lagoon*
Oil on canvas
15 x 15 in. (38 x 38 cm.)



Cp 153
Landscape #19, The Golden, 1997-2008
From series *Venetian Lagoon*
Oil on canvas
36 x 48 in. (91.5 x 122 cm.)



Cp 162
Landscape with a Golden Sky, 2009
 From series *Venetian Lagoon*
 Oil on canvas
 30 x 40 in. (76 x 102 cm.)

Cp 031
The Golden Dome, 2007-2009
 From series *Venetian Lagoon*
 Oil on canvas
 20 x 24 in. (51 x 61 cm.)

Cp 053
Landscape with a Golden Cloud, 2007
 From series *Venetian Lagoon*
 Oil on canvas
 14 x 18 in. (36 x 46 cm.)

Cp 197
Landscape #03, 2009
 From series *Venetian Lagoon*
 Oil on canvas
 11 x 14 in. (28 x 36 cm.)



Cp 006
The Yellow Sky, 2003-2009
From series *Lowland*
Oil on canvas
24 x 36 in. (61 x 91 cm.)



Cp 045
The Blue Sky, 2003-2009
From series *Venetian Lagoon*
Oil on canvas
24 x 36 in. (61 x 91 cm.)



Cp 195
Brooklyn Bridge #01, 2009
From series *Bridge*
Oil on canvas
16 x 20 in. (41 x 51 cm.)



Cp 196
Brooklyn Bridge #02, 2009
From series *Bridge*
Oil on canvas
20 x 24 in. (51 x 61 cm.)



Cp 107
Infanta #2, 2007-2009
Oil on canvas
40 x 48 in. (101.5 x 122 cm.)

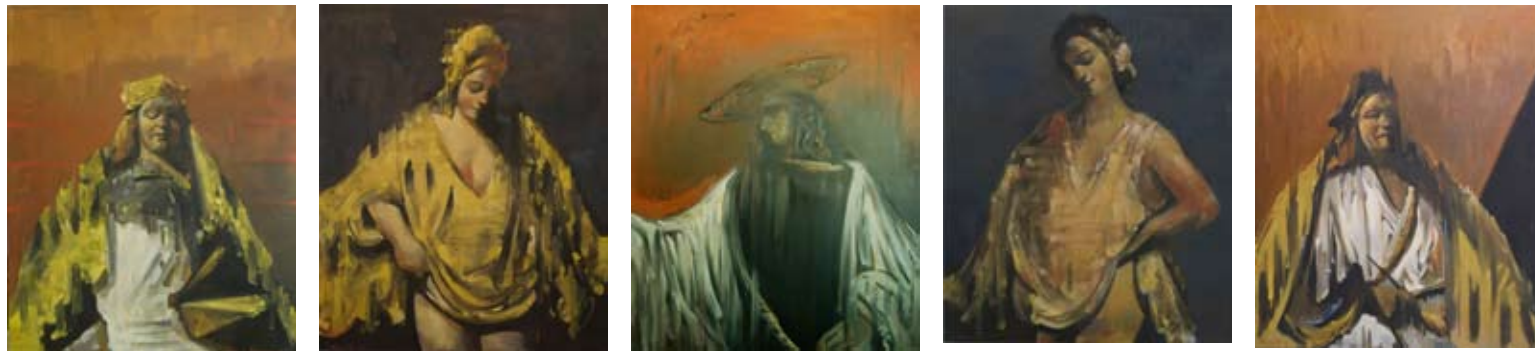


Cp 122
White Angel #7
From series *Central Park*
Oil on canvas
40 x 48 in. (101.5 x 122 cm.)



Cp 198
Three Horses, 2011
From series *Central Park*
Oil on canvas
46 x 38 in. (101.5 x 122 cm.)

Cp 199
Lew the Pilot, 2011
Oil on canvas
46 x 38 in. (101.5 x 122 cm.)



visiting rembrandt

A set of paintings, the Rembrandt Portraits, illustrate another dimension of Kudas work. The personages appear to have been stirred from a long slumber. There is an almost unnerving quality to these portraits, to the manner in which 17th c. figures emerge from the past and from the chthonic depths of the canvas. One peers sharply into us, creating a degree of discomfort (*Portrait #3*, 2005-2009). Another subtly confers serenity and interior peace (*Portrait #6, on Red Background*, 2005-07). In both cases the viewer is captivated, drawn into a dialogue that bridges centuries and compresses time, as if through a spell.

Cp 095

Portrait #6, on Red Background 2005-2008

From series *Visiting Rembrandt*

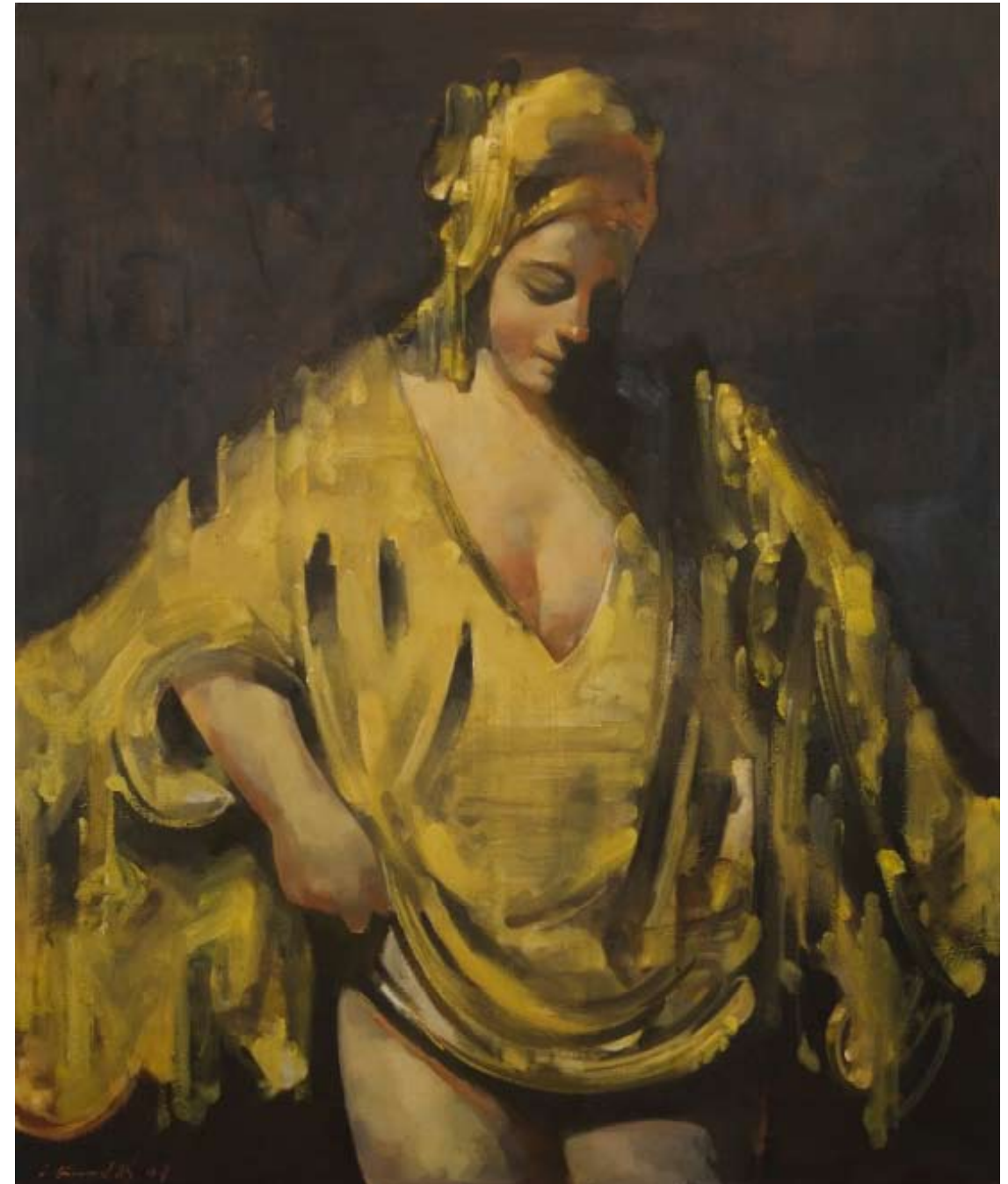
Oil on canvas

48 x 40 in. (122 x 101.5 cm.)

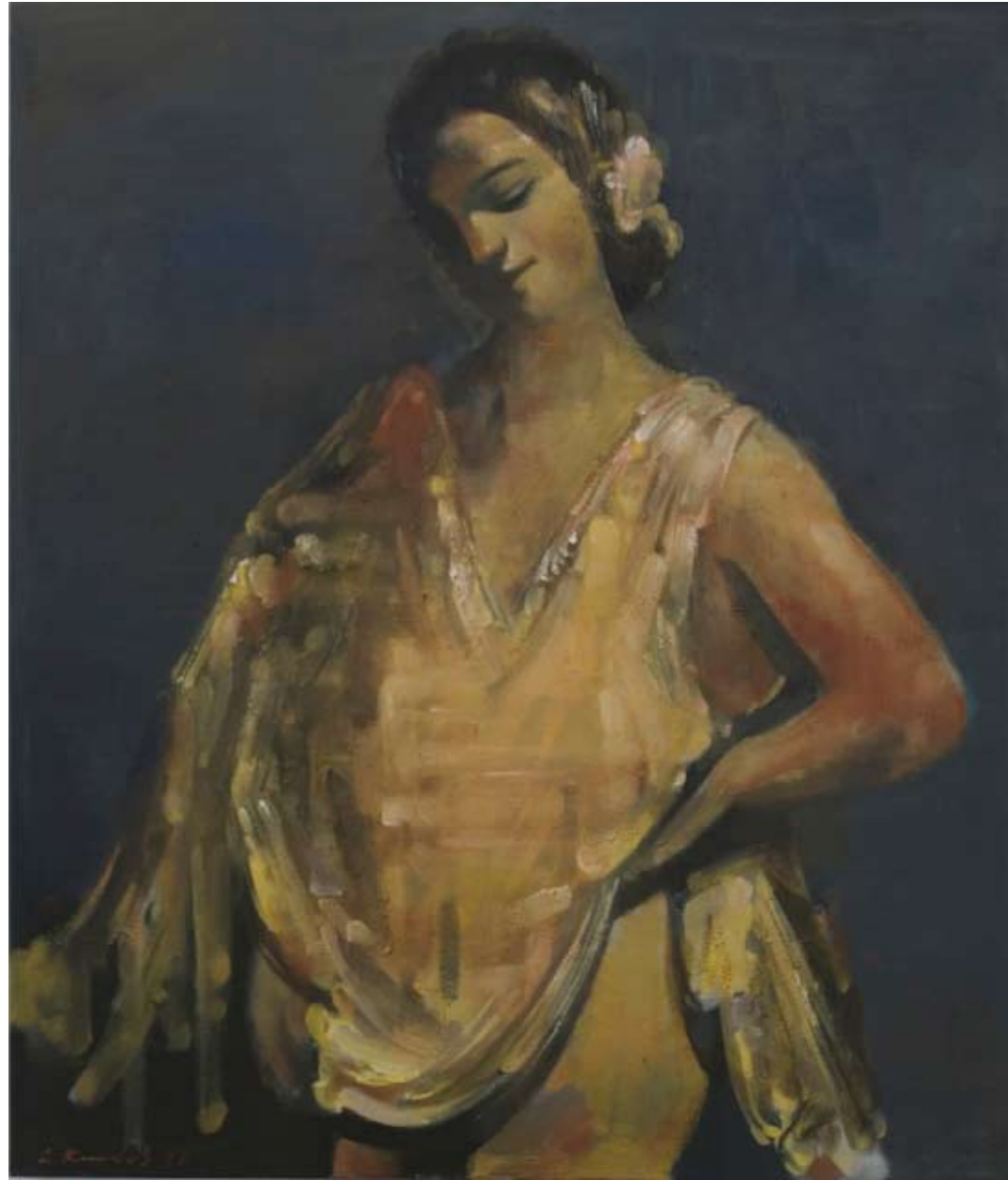




Cp 037
Portrait #7, 2005-2007
From series *Visiting Rembrandt*
Oil on canvas
28 x 22 in. (71 x 56 cm.)



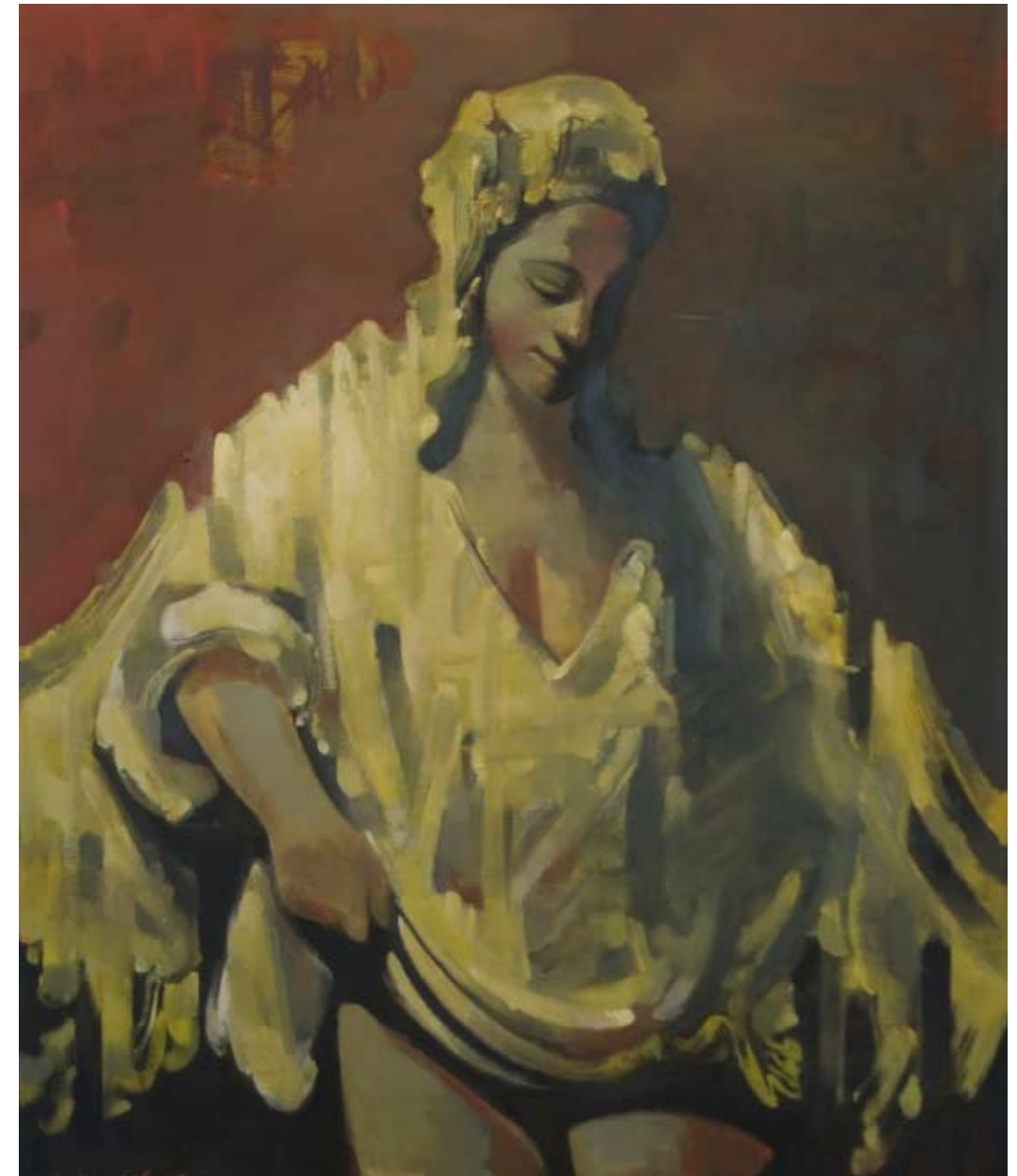
Cp 102
Hendrickje, Bathing #3, 2009
From series *Visiting Rembrandt*
Oil on canvas
48 x 40 in. (122 x 101.5 cm.)



Cp 202
Hendrickje, Bathing #7, 2011
From series *Visiting Rembrandt*
Oil on canvas
48 x 40 in. (122 x 101.5 cm.)

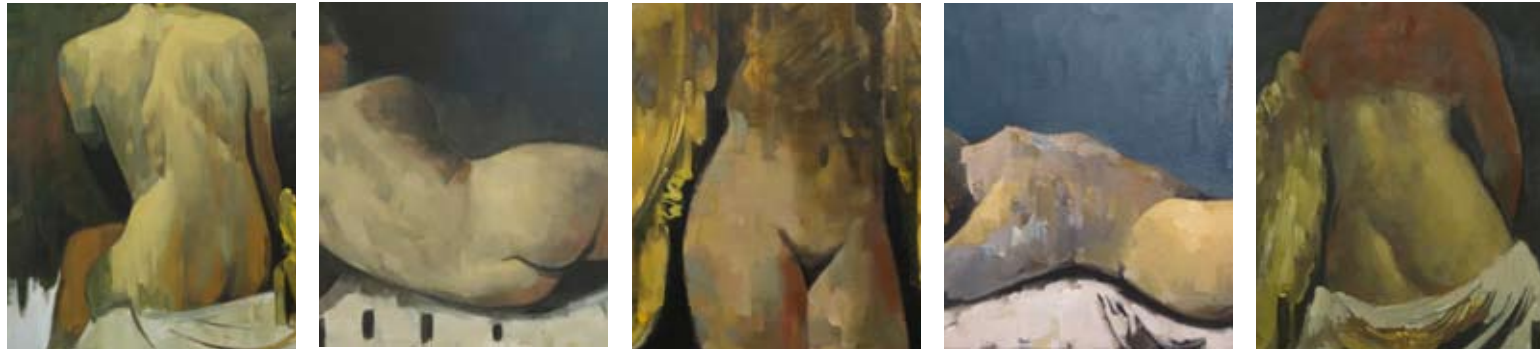


Cp 112
Portrait #3, 2005-2009
From series *Visiting Rembrandt*
Oil on canvas
48 x 40 in. (122 x 101.5 cm.)



Cp 061
Portrait #4, 2005-2007
From series *Visiting Rembrandt*
Oil on canvas
48 x 40 in. (122 x 101.5 cm.)

Cp 119
Hendrickje, Bathing #4, 2009
From series *Visiting Rembrandt*
Oil on canvas
48 x 40 in. (122 x 101.5 cm.)



torso series

Kundas' torsos plumb the depths of life and death, love and loss. There is a delicate yet frank eroticism here, a sweetness in the sleep of the belles, and the drama of a fallen and very erotic angel. The light of flesh and love and the black darkness of repose and absence struggle within these powerful paintings. The language is the terse modernism of sinewy nudes cast in Seicento penumbra. Voluptuous planes of light strike a curved expanse of flesh, undulating or in tender repose, yet the skin is often tinted a sickly grey. Darkness consumes one side of her into invisibility, while another side glows. The play of drapery allows a game of dark and light to flicker across this living form. In the Fallen Angels, a headless angel, now bound with that drapery, lies still, glowing but surely doomed. Her wing appears to hover bright gold in a sky dripping and washing with oranges and reds. We are seduced by the living and equally seduced by the surrounding dark ether.

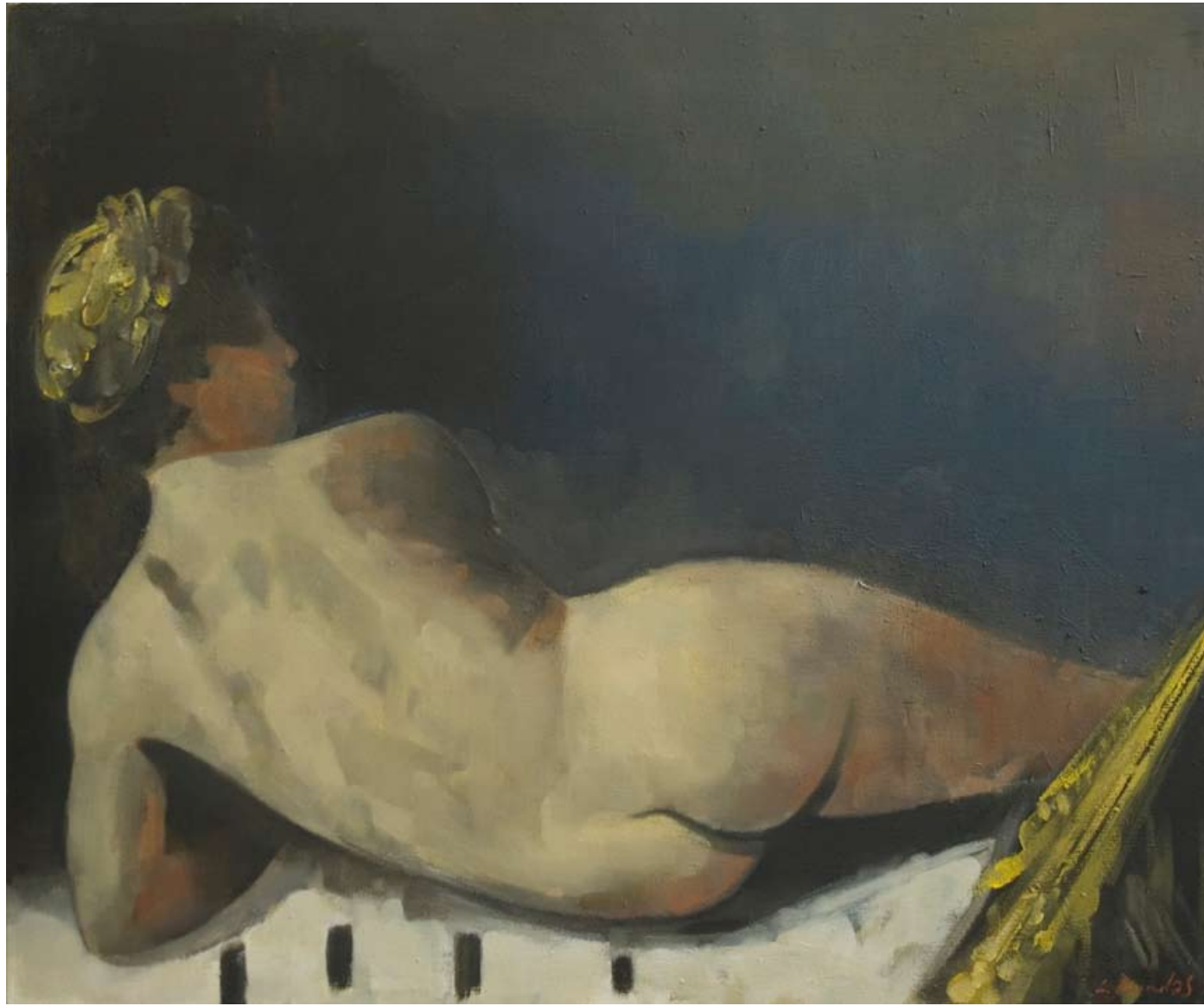
Cp 145

Torso on Dark Background, 2007-2009

From series *Torso*

Oil on canvas

48 x 40 in. (122 x 101.5 cm.)



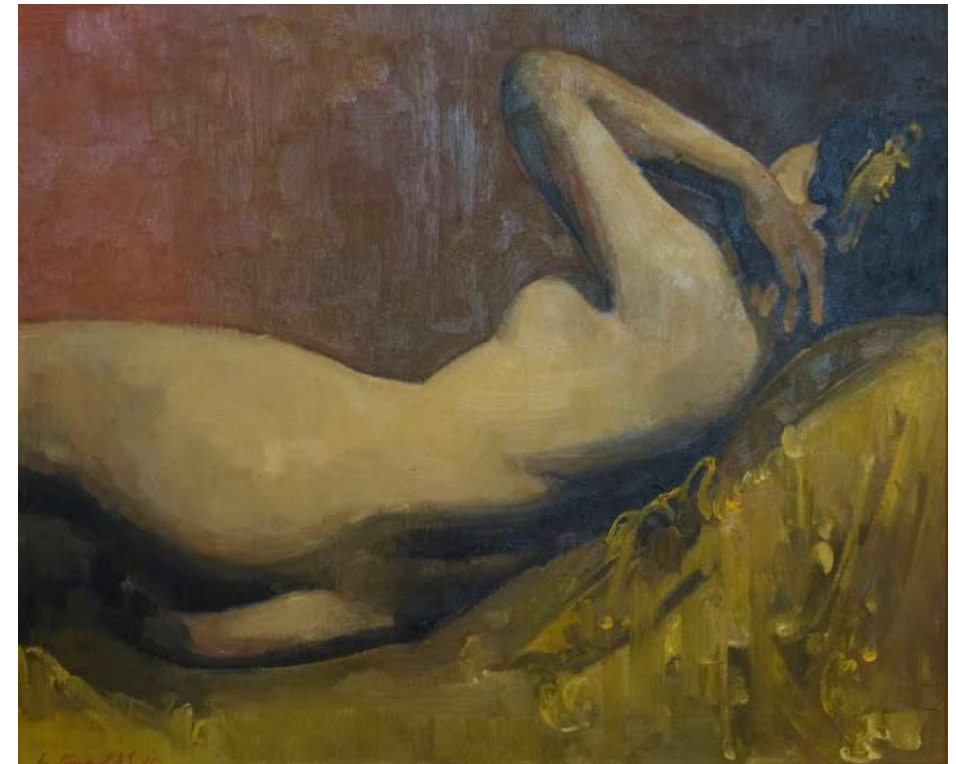
Cp 074
Lying #8, 1995
From series *Torso*
Oil on canvas
40 x 48 in. (101.5 x 122 cm.)



Cp 156
Torso #12, 2009
From series *Torso*
Oil on canvas
24 x 20 in. (61 x 51 cm.)



Cp 158
Bathing, Torso #9, 2009
From series *Torso*
Oil on canvas
48 x 40 in. (112 x 102 cm.)



Cp 015
Torso #3, Tinatchka, 2003-2006
From series *Torso*
Oil on canvas
19 x 23 in. (51 x 61 cm.)



Cp 014
Torso #4, Tinatchka, 2003-2006
From series *Torso*
Oil on canvas
20 x 24 in. (51 x 61 cm.)



Cp 132
Torso #4, 1999
From series *Torso*
Oil on canvas
14 x 11 in. (112 x 102 cm.)



Cp 157
Torso, #10, 2009
From series *Torso*
Oil on canvas
48 x 40 in. (112 x 102 cm.)



Cp 121
David, The Man, 2010
Oil on canvas
40 x 28 in. (102 x 71 cm.)



Cp 033
Venus #2, 2011
From series *Torso*
Oil on canvas
40 x 48 in. (101.5 x 122 cm.)



Cp 121
The White Horse #5, 2011
From series *Central Park*
Oil on canvas
40 x 48 in. (101.5 x 122 cm.)



Cp 060
The White Horse #3, 1999
From series *Central Park*
Oil on canvas
40 x 48 in. (101.5 x 122 cm.)



Cp 093
The White Horse #4, 2009
From series *Central Park*
Oil on canvas
20 x 24 in. (51 x 61 cm.)



Cp 201
The White Horse #5, 2011
From series *Central Park*
Oil on canvas
40 x 48 in. (101.5 x 122 cm.)



drawing

In his drawings, Kundas focuses on human passion and animal energy. Rearing horses and sensuous nudes proclaim the glory of bodily beauty. Elsewhere, architecture is rendered with precision, and its solidity and permanence more readily conveyed than is the case in his etchings, or most definitely in his paintings. The medium and support lend themselves to the emphasis on quivering flesh, or the virility of architecture. But Kundas' focus is equally connected to his celebration of youth and life, even as he notes elsewhere their ephemeral qualities in the context of infinite time. Two charcoal landscapes point to dual sources of inspiration in 17th c. art. *The White Vase* 2003-07 is distinctly Italianate in feeling, evoking the ink drawings of Claude Lorraine and his lifetime exploration of Rome and its environs. *Landscape with Big Sky* 2003-07 on the other hand is a masterly study of light effects and stormy weather in the Dutch manner. Both landscapes are testimonials of Leo Kundas' study of the Old Masters, but also his capacity to bring to life contemporary landscapes through the prism of ancient techniques.



central park series

Kundas' Central Park drawings series appear at first glance familiar, yet a closer look reveals them to be utterly original. The familiarity is due to his choice of well-known New York landmarks. The novelty resides in both technique and in his particular interpretation of these New World landscapes. Technically, Kundas draws upon the aesthetic of 17th c. Dutch masters, and more specifically Rembrandt's graphic oeuvre.

Cd 003

The Cleopatra Needle, 2003-2007

From the series *Central Park*

Charcoal Drawing on Mylar

12 x 18 in. (30.5 x 45.7 cm.)



Cd 011
White Angel #3, 2003-2007
From the series *Central Park*
Charcoal Drawing on Mylar
12 x 18 in. (30.5 x 45.7 cm.)



Cd 002
White Horse, 2003-2006
From the series *Central Park*
Charcoal Drawing on Mylar
12 x 18 in. (30.5 x 45.7 cm.)



Cd 035
Three Horses, 2003-2007
From the series *Central Park*
Charcoal Drawing on Mylar
12 x 18 in. (30.5 x 45.7 cm.)



Cd 001
The Little Fountain, 2003
From the series *Central Park*
Charcoal Drawing on Mylar
12 x 18 in. (30.5 x 45.7 cm.)



Cd 010
White Horse by the Bridge, 2004-2005
From the series *Central Park*
Charcoal Drawing on Mylar
12 x 18 in. (30.5 x 45.7 cm.)



Cd 029
Anna, 2004-2007
From the series *Venice's Journey*
Charcoal Drawing, on Mylar
12 x 18 in. (30.5 x 45.7 cm.)



Cd 006
White Horse #3, 2003-2005
From the series *Central Park*
Charcoal Drawing on Mylar
12 x 18 in. (30.5 x 45.7 cm.)



Cd 051

Torso #7, 2009

From the series *Torso*

Charcoal Drawing on Mylar
24 x 18 in. (61 x 45.7 cm.)

Cd 050

Head 13, Milla, 2009

From the series *Head*

Charcoal drawing on Mylar
12 x 18 in. (30.5 x 45.7 cm.)



Ce 008

Bach, 1981-1995

Etching, soft ground

On grey Rives BFK, signed in pencil

One of 17 artist's proofs

State 4, 13.5 x 9.8 in. (34.5 x 25.0 cm.)

etching

Kudas' Central Park etchings series appear at first glance familiar, yet a closer look reveals them to be utterly original. The familiarity is due to his choice of well-known New York landmarks. The novelty resides in both technique and in his particular interpretation of these New World landscapes. Technically, Kudas draws upon the aesthetic of 17th c. Dutch masters, and more specifically Rembrandt's graphic oeuvre. In part, his Central Park views owe their preternatural quality to the sense of timelessness thus conferred. But that is not all: you might notice that Cleopatra's Needle does not command the landscape; rather the obelisk appears almost fragile, lost in the cosmic sweep of clouds and terrain. In another etching, the Dakota building barely emerges above mounds of primordial vegetation. Horses arch their manes, signaling pride and power in defiance of the vastness of the universe. Another etching depicts a White Angel stretching her hand with a protective tenderness over a succession of arches, which conjure in the mind's eye the time-worn ones of ancient imperial aqueducts cutting across the Roman Campagna. Might the Angel with the secret smile be Clio, the muse of history, and the gesture an indulgent, compassionate one?



Ce 001
The Luka, 1981-1992
 Etching, soft ground
 On grey Rives BFK, signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 3.5 x 4.37 in. (8.7 x 11.1 cm.)



Ce 042
Duet, 1981-1992
 Etching, soft ground
 On grey Rives BFK, signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 3.5 x 4.37 in. (8.7 x 11.1 cm.)



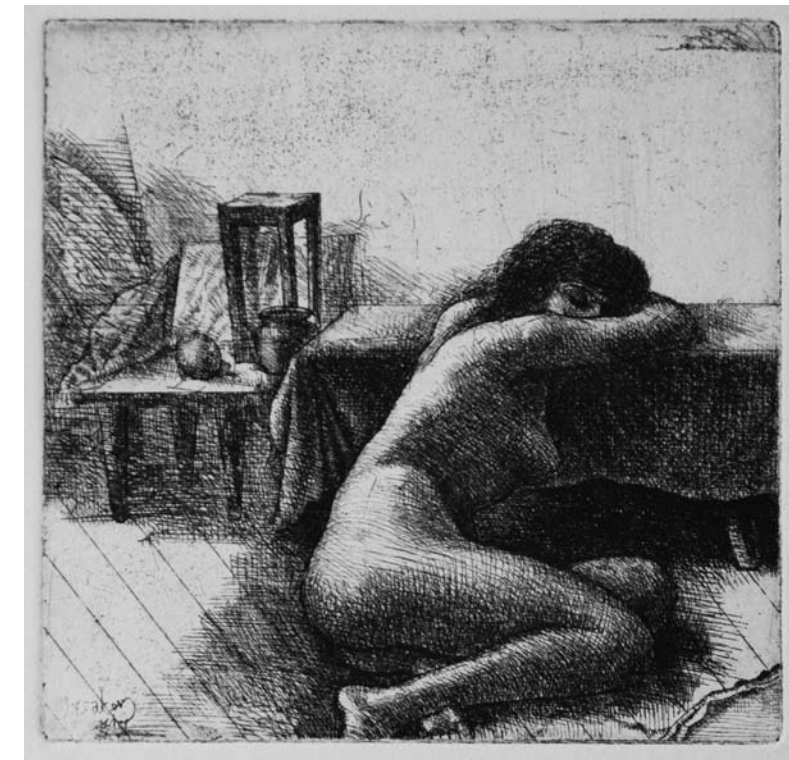
Ce 009
Poplar Trees, 1981
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 7.1 x 6.89 in. (17.9 x 17.6 cm.)



Ce 029
Big Tree, 1981
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 7.1 x 6.89 in. (17.9 x 17.6 cm.)



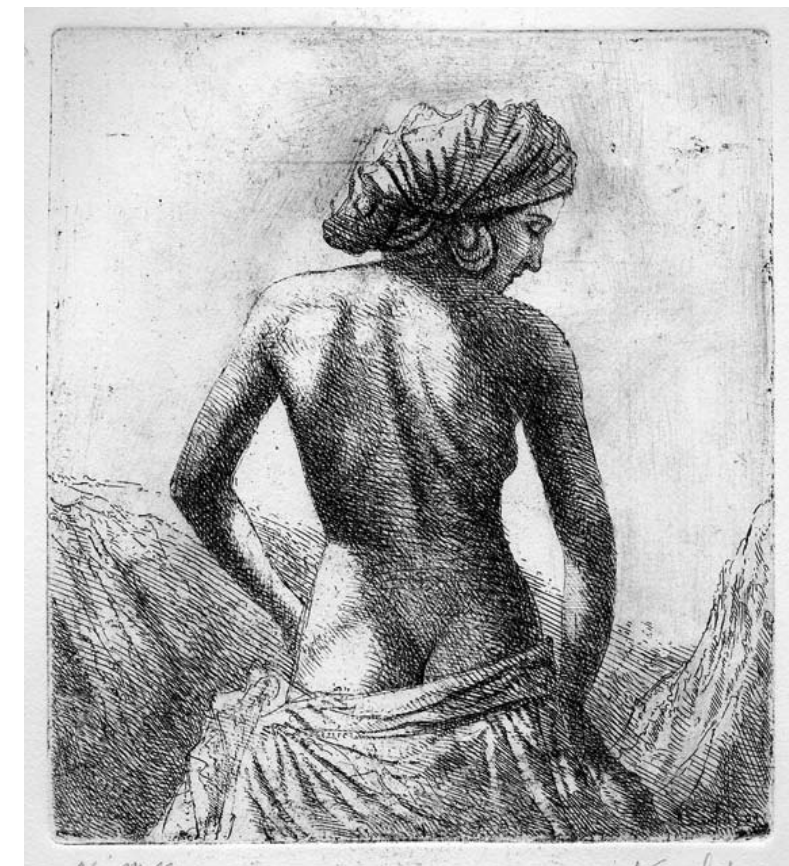
Ce 002
The History of One House, 1980
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 4.6 x 10.2 in. (11.8 x 26.1 cm.)



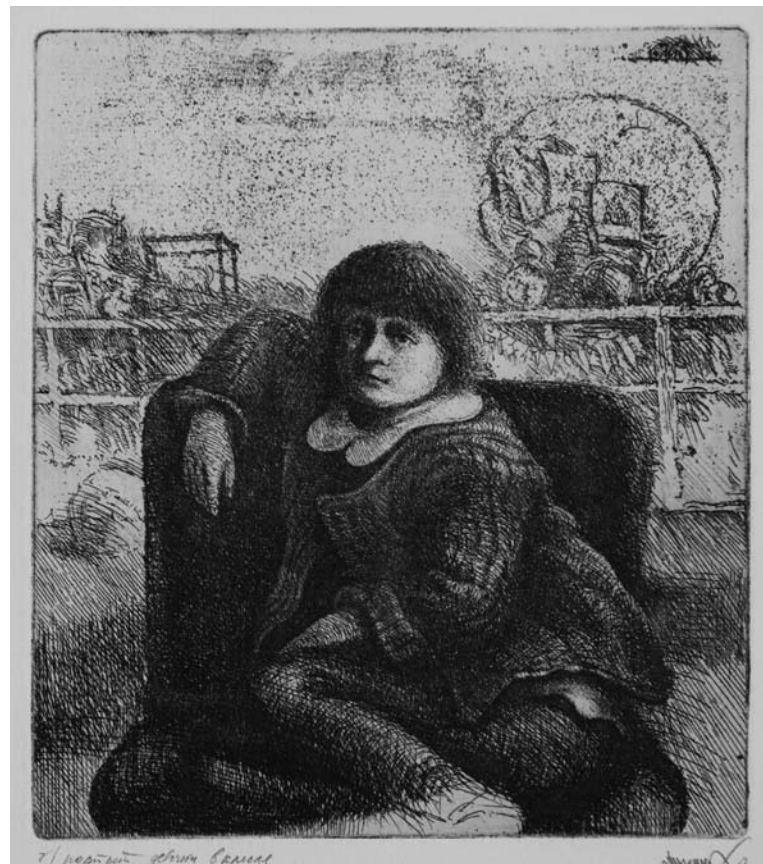
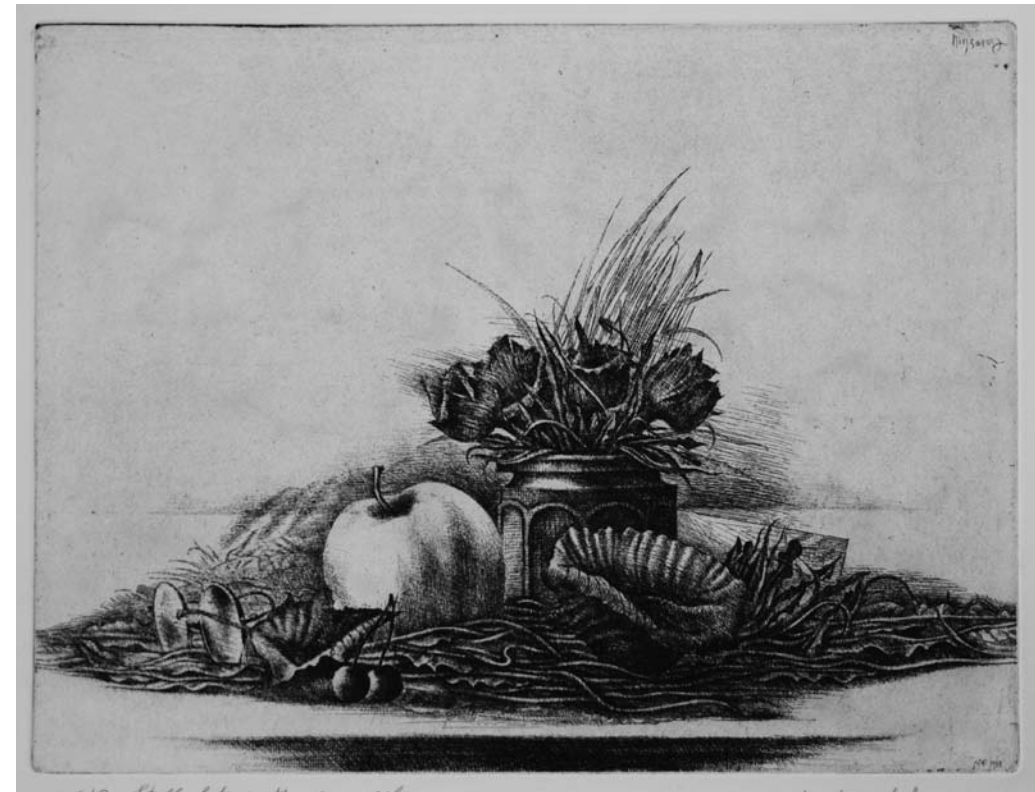
Ce 034
Nude, 1980-2004
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 6.15 x 6.3 in. (15.7 x 16.1 cm.)



Ce 004
Still Life with a Rose, 1980
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 4.6 x 10.2 in. (11.8 x 26.1 cm.)



Ce 060
Nude #2, Milla, 2008-2011
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 6.15 x 6.3 in. (15.7 x 16.1 cm.)



Ce 031
Mother, 1980
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 6.25 x 6.25 in. (16 x 16 cm.)

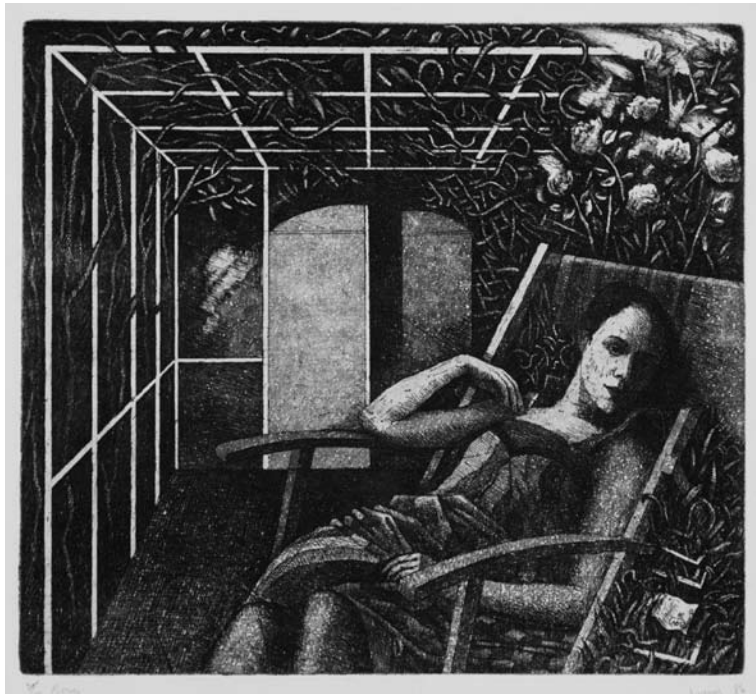
Ce 006
The Little Girl, Alexandra, 1980
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 6.25 x 6.25 in. (16 x 16 cm.)

Ce 017
Still life with Apple, 1980-2007
 From the Series *Autumn*
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 9.75 x 12.6 in. (24.8 x 32.1 cm.)

Ce 020
Still life with Vase, 1980-2007
 From the Series *Autumn*
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 9.75 x 12.6 in. (24.8 x 32.1 cm.)

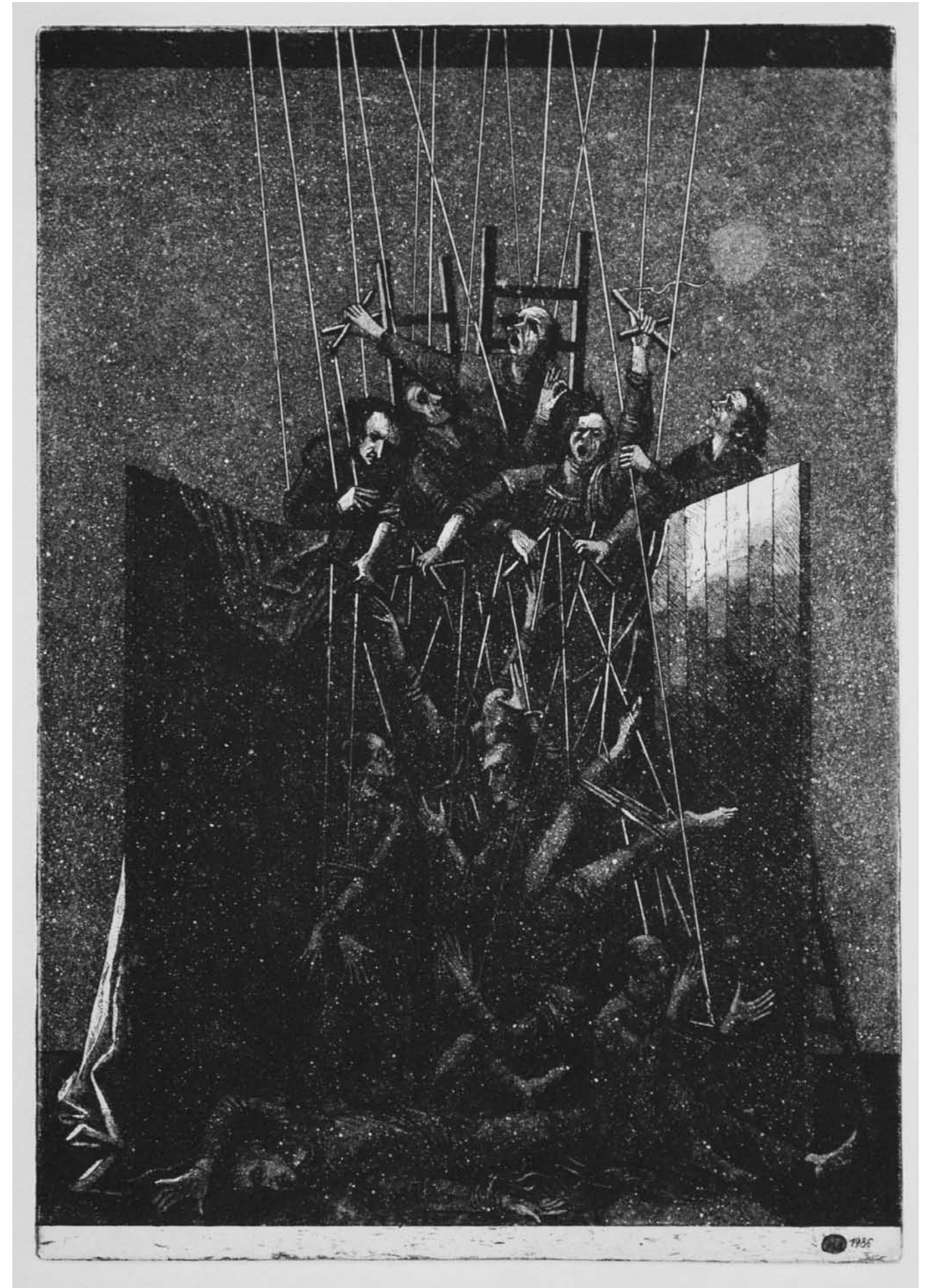


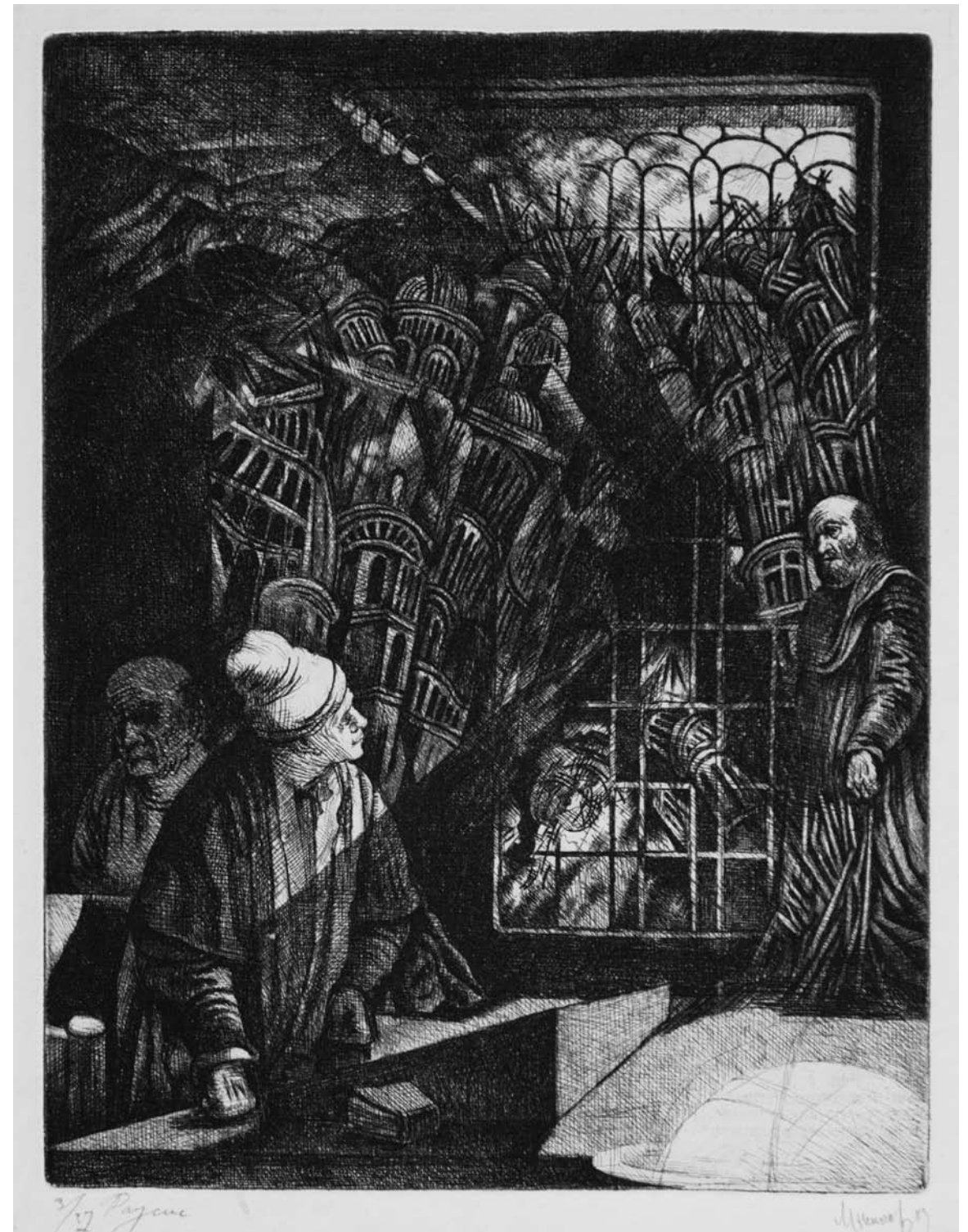
Ce 044
Anna, 1985-1999
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 13 artist's proofs
 State 3, 6 x 8.1 in. (60 x 80 cm.)



Ce 039
The Girl in the Garden, Anna, 1984
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 13 artist's proofs
 State 3, 6 x 8.1 in. (60 x 80 cm.)

Ce 012
Puppets, 1981
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 13 artist's proofs
 State 3, 6 x 8.1 in. (60 x 80 cm.)



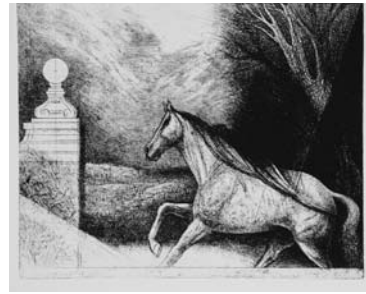


Ce 058

The Arch of Triumph I, 1985
Etching, on grey Rives BFK
Signed in pencil
One of 13 artist's proofs
State 3, 19.75 x 13 in. (50 x 33 cm.)

Ce 011

Faust, 1985
Etching, on grey Rives BFK
Signed in pencil
One of 13 artist's proofs
State 3, 19.75 x 13 in. (50 x 33 cm.)



central park series

In Kundas' Central Park etchings series, landscapes appear both familiar yet utterly original. The familiarity is due to his choice of well-known New World landmarks. What is novel is the Old World gaze that rests upon them. Cleopatra's Needle does not command the landscape; rather it appears almost fragile, lost in the cosmic sweep of clouds and terrain. The Dakota barely emerges above mounds of primordial vegetation. Another etching depicts a White Angel stretching her hand benevolently over proud arches; the latter conjure in the mind's eye the time-worn ones of imperial aqueducts that yet meander across the Roman Campagna. Is the Angel with the secret smile Clio, the muse of history?

Ce 026

White Angel, 2005-2007

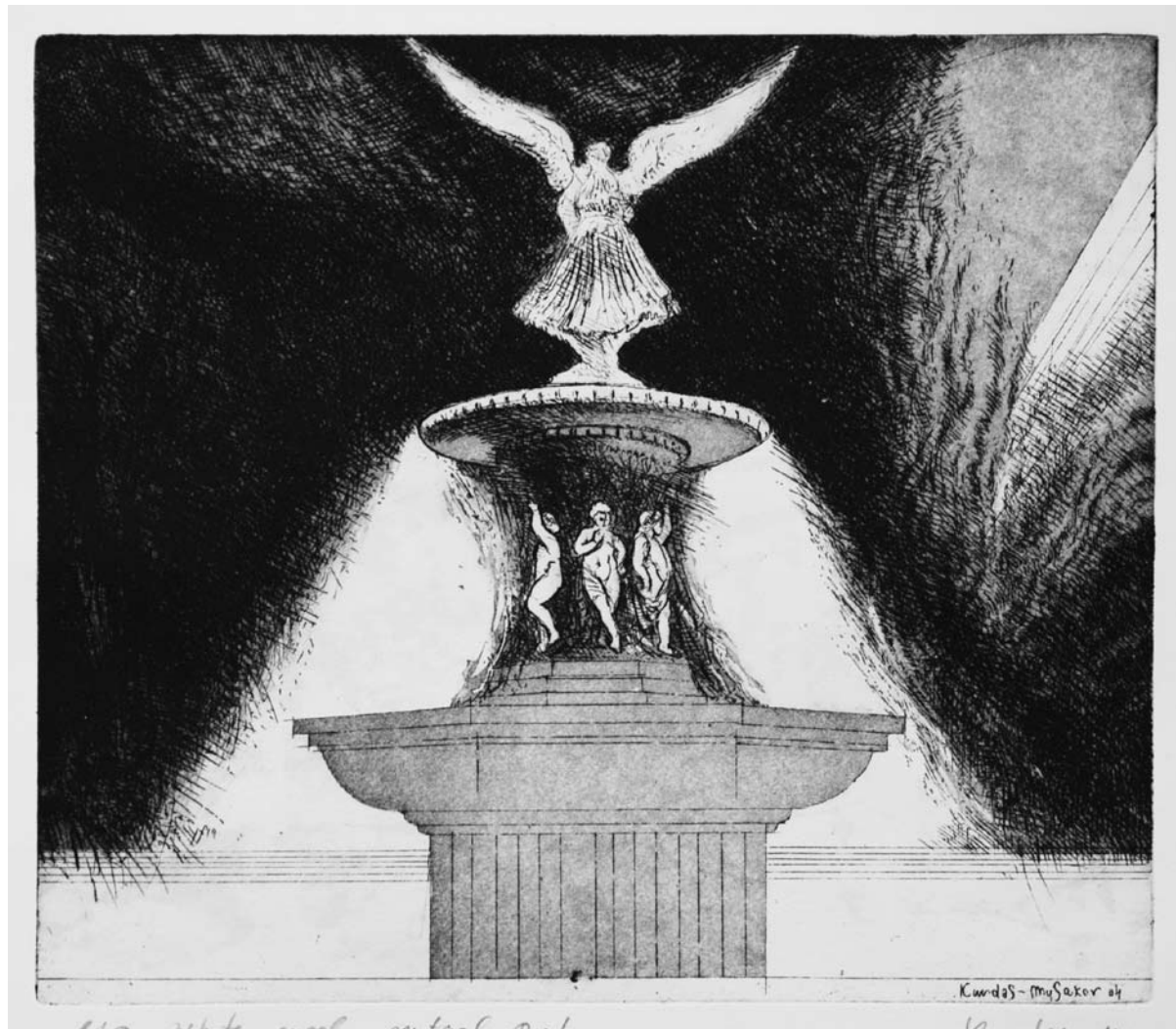
From the series *Central Park*

Etching, on grey Rives BFK

Signed in pencil

One of 17 artist's proofs

State 3, 7.9 x 9.75 in. (20.1 x 24.9 cm.)



Ce 025

White Angel on a Dark Background, 2004-2007

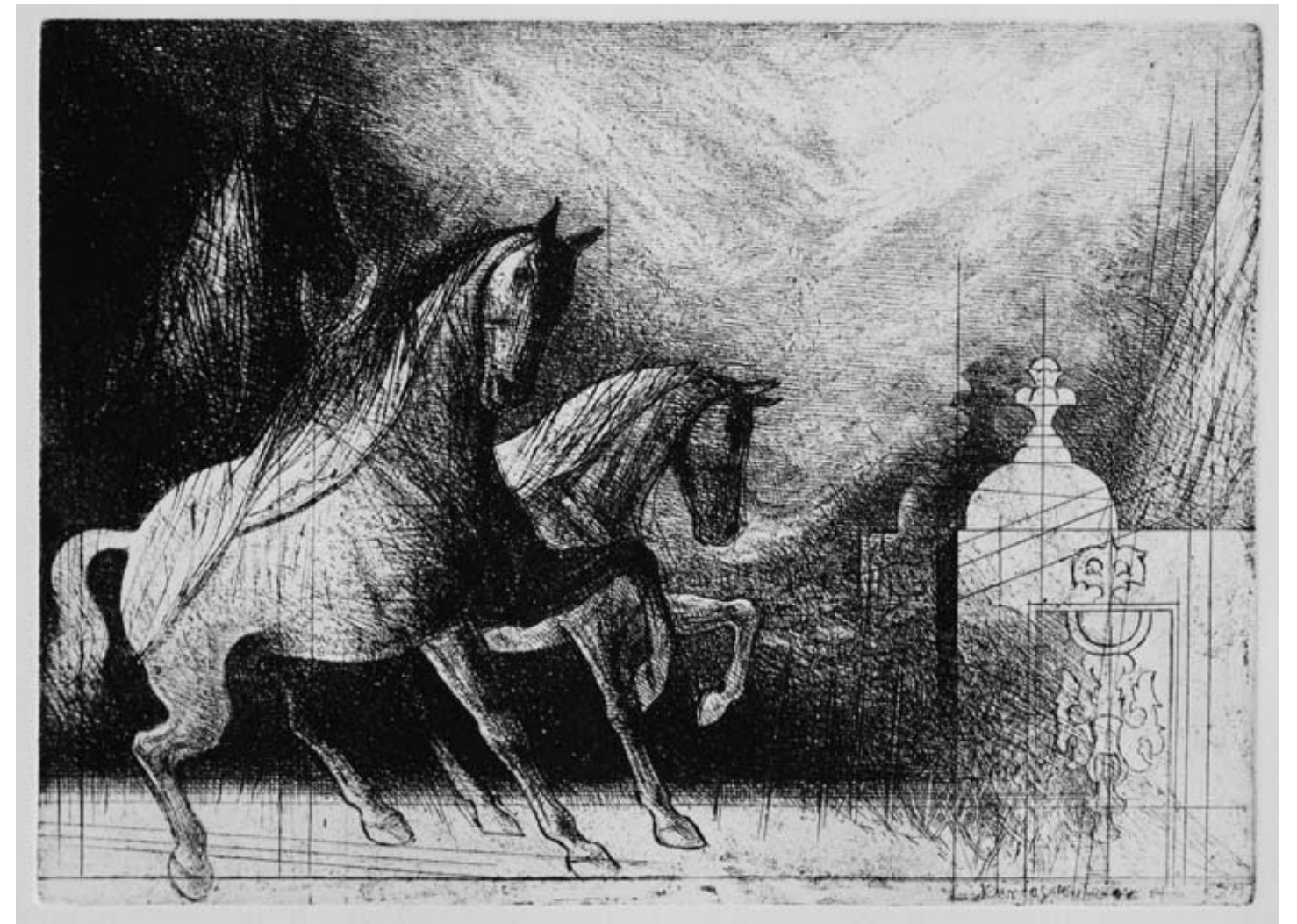
From the series *Central Park*

Etching, on grey Rives BFK

Signed in pencil

One of 17 artist's proofs

State 3, 8.25 x 9.8 in. (21.1 x 25 cm.)



Ce 027

The White Horse, 2005-2007

From the series *Central Park*

Etching, on grey Rives BFK

Signed in pencil

One of 17 artist's proofs

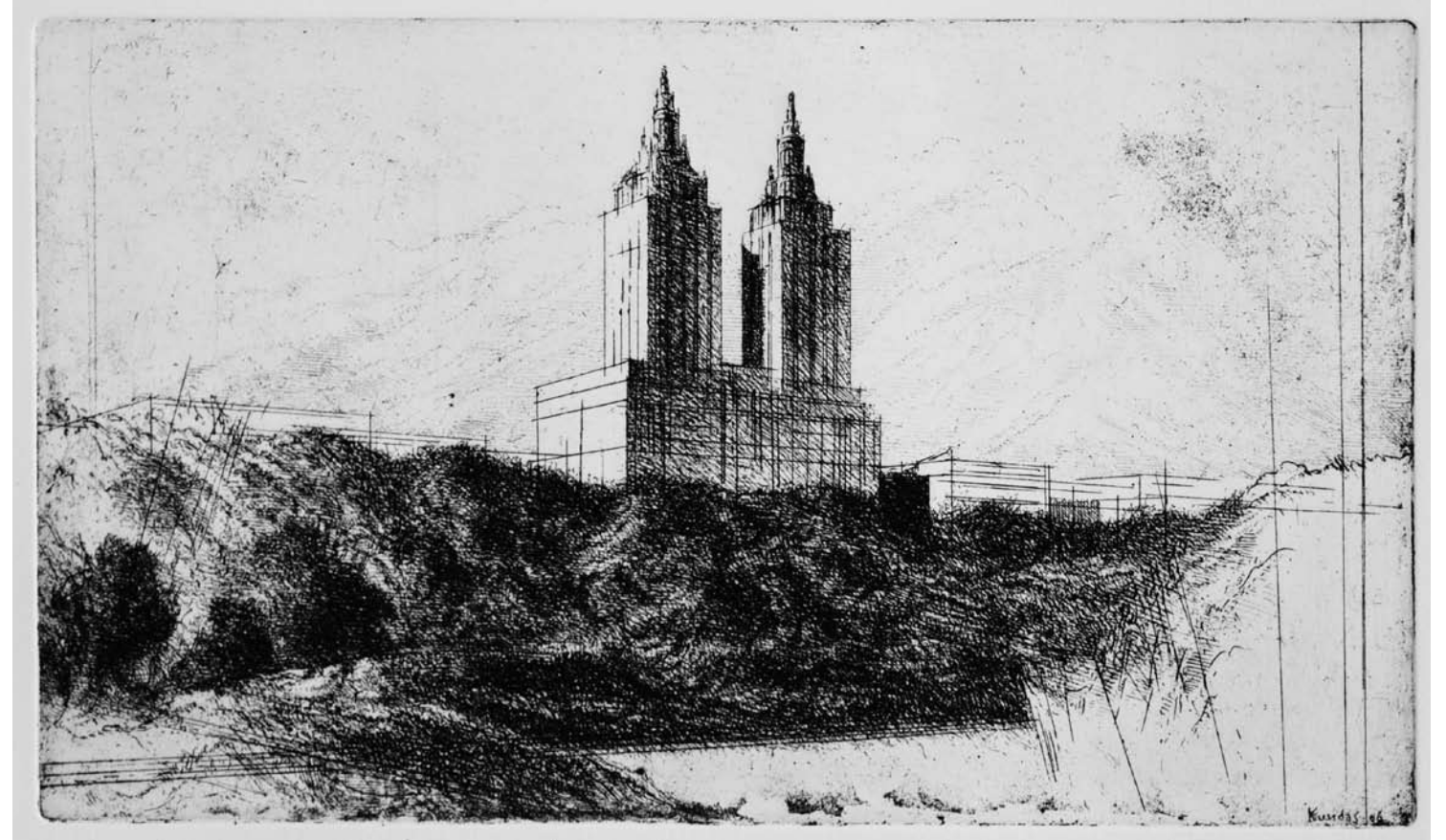
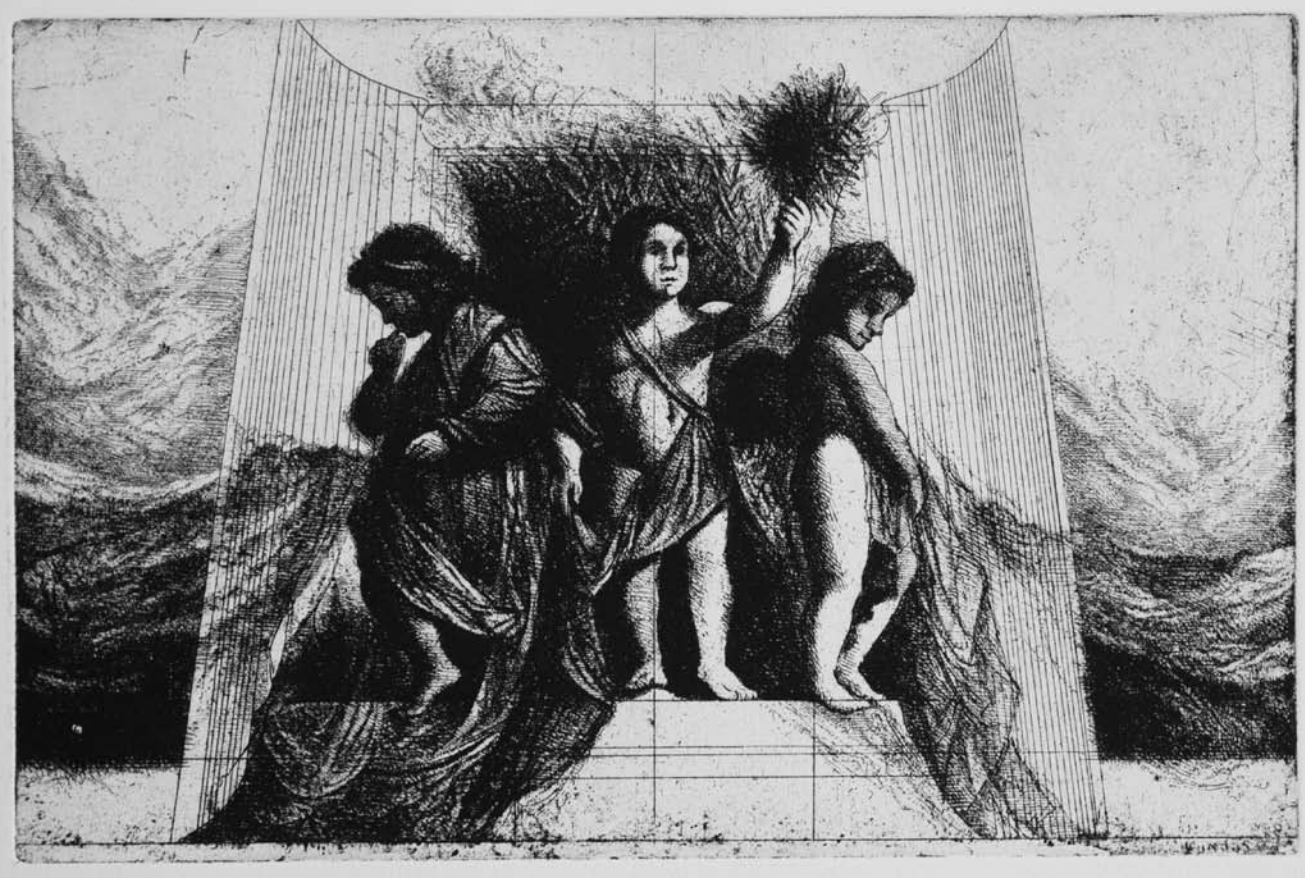
State 3, 8.77 x 12.25 in. (22.4 x 31 cm.)



Ce 035
The White Bridge, 2005-2007
From the series *Central Park*
Etching, on grey Rives BFK
Signed in pencil
One of 17 artist's proofs
State 3, 7.72 x 7 in. (20.5 x 17.8 cm.)

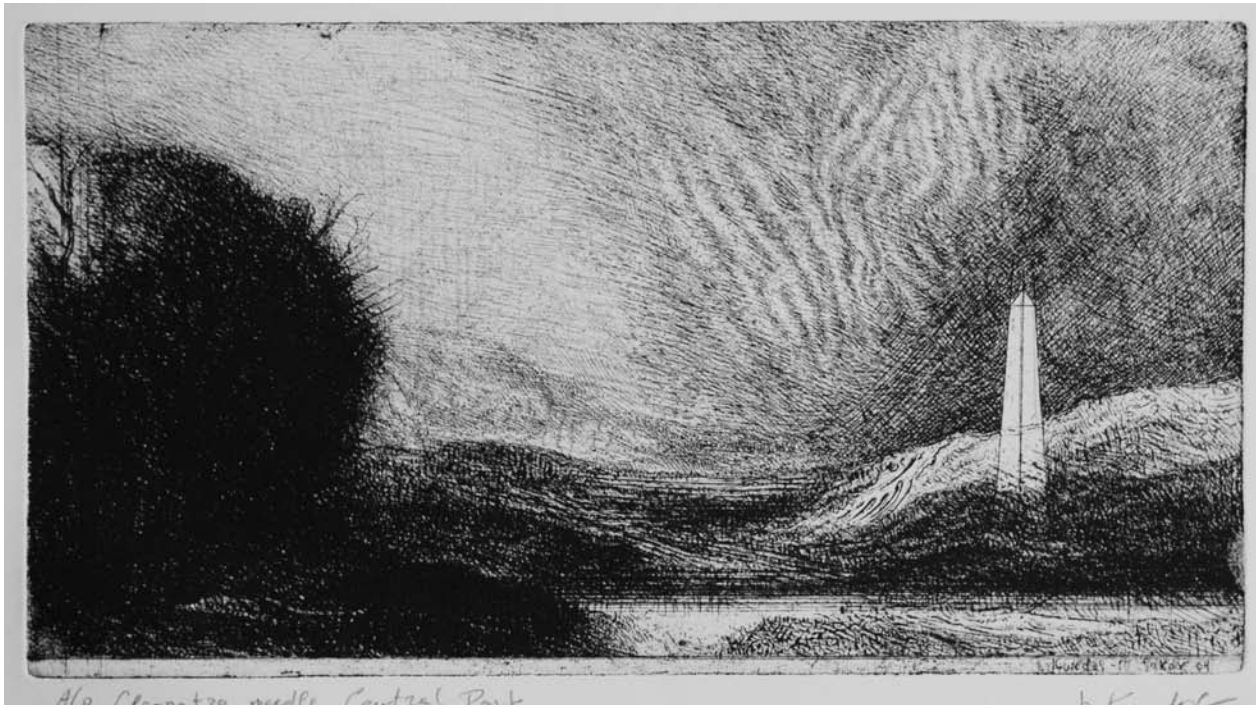


Ce 036
Dakota, 2005-2007
From the series *Central Park*
Etching, on grey Rives BFK
Signed in pencil
One of 17 artist's proofs
State 3, 7.8 x 7.8 in. (19.9 x 19.9 cm.)

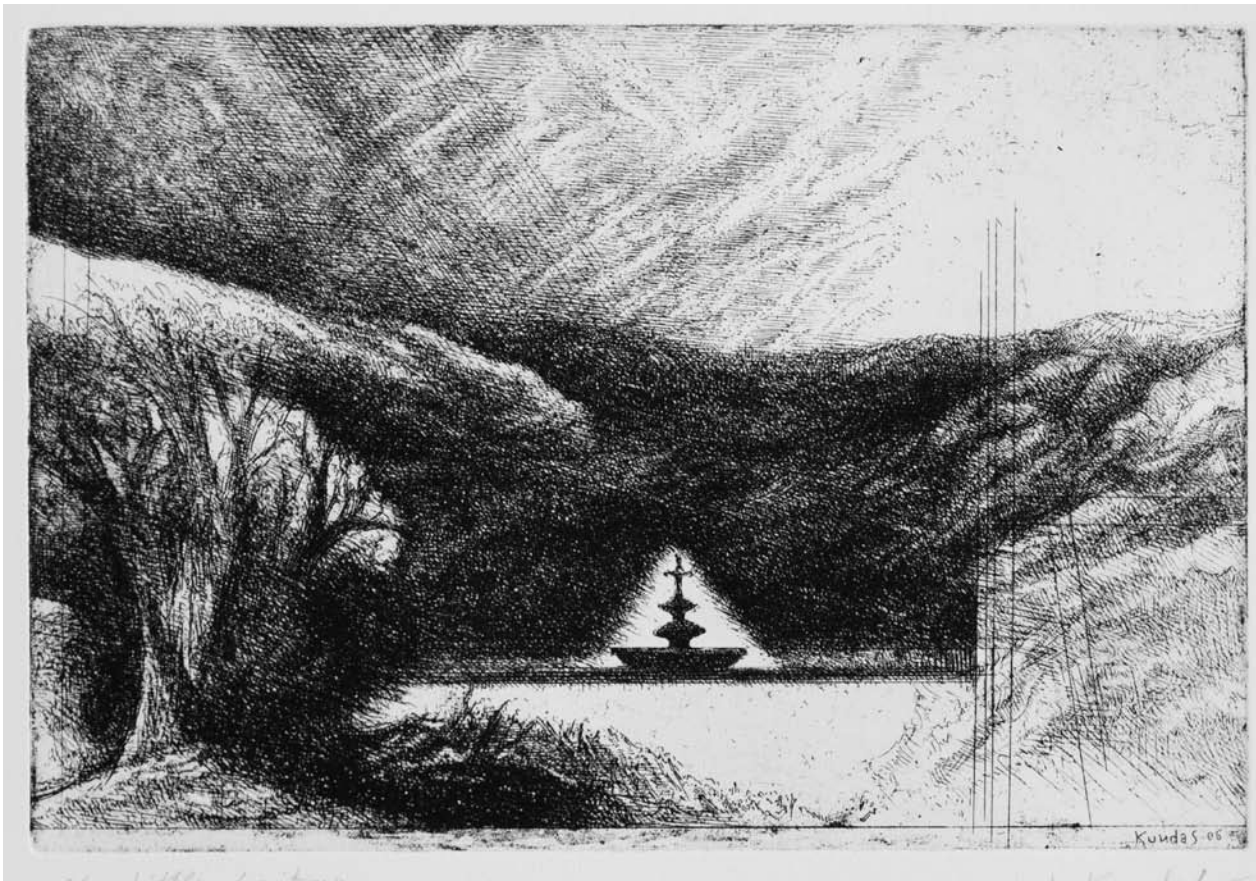


Ce 054
The Little Cupids, 2005-2009
From the series *Central Park*
Etching, on grey Rives BFK
Signed in pencil
One of 17 artist's proofs
State 3, 7.75 x 12 in. (60 x 80 cm.)

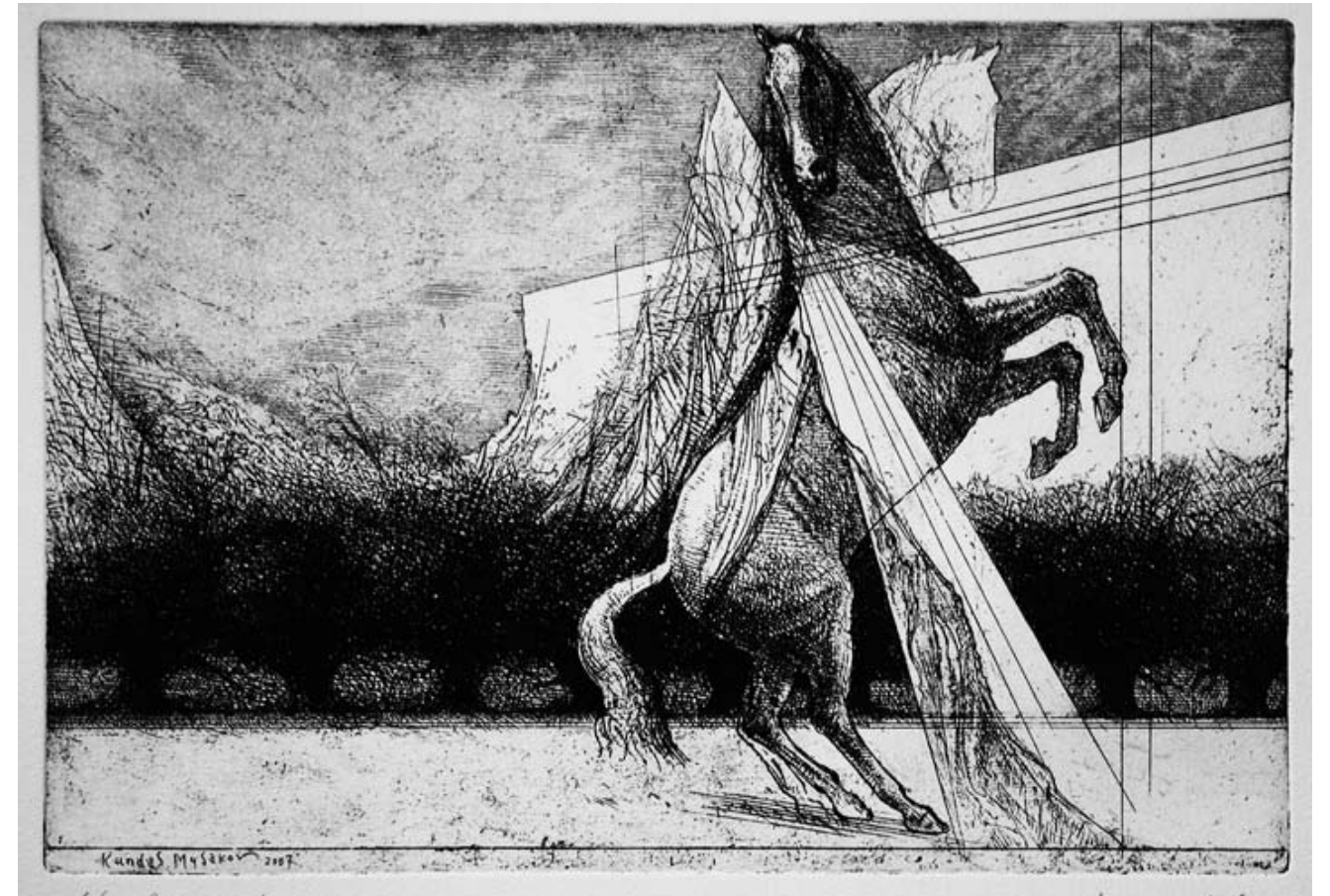
Ce 053
San Remo, 2005-2007
From the series *Central Park*
Etching, on grey Rives BFK
Signed in pencil
One of 17 artist's proofs
State 3, 6.87 x 11.78 in. (17.4 x 30 cm.)



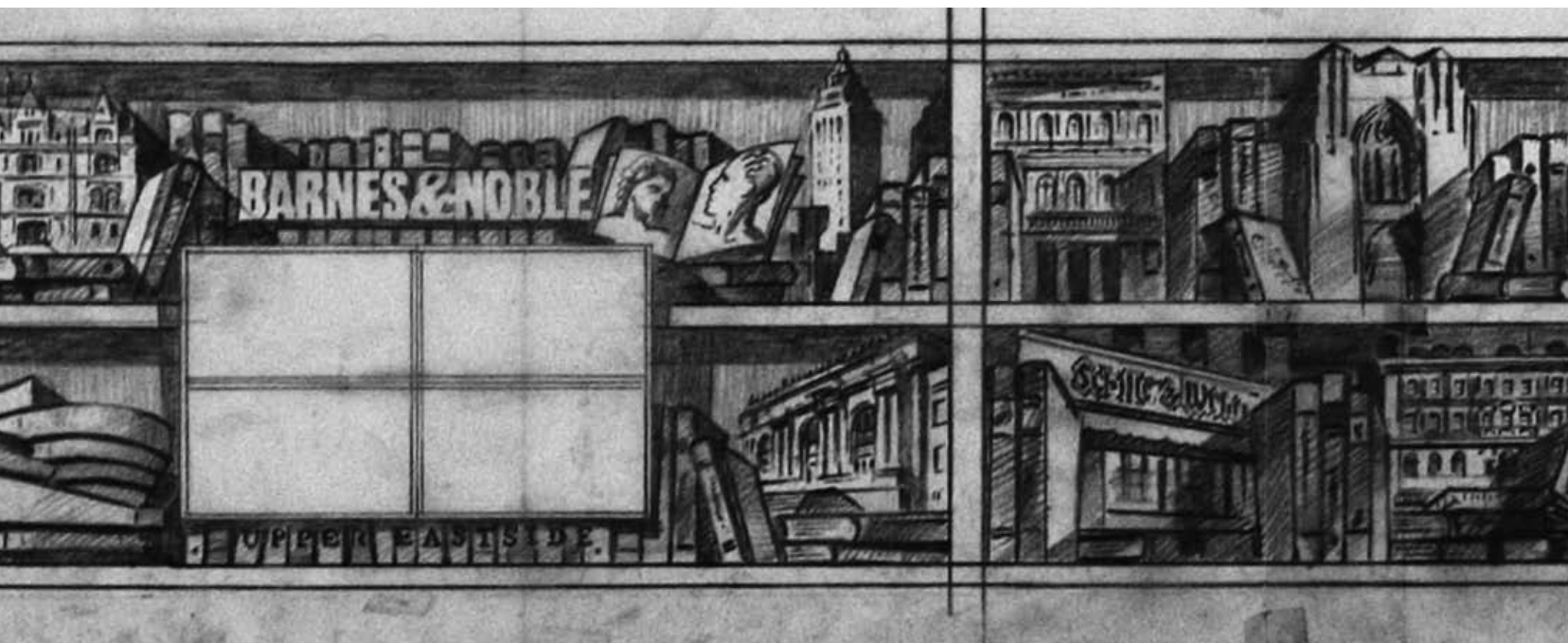
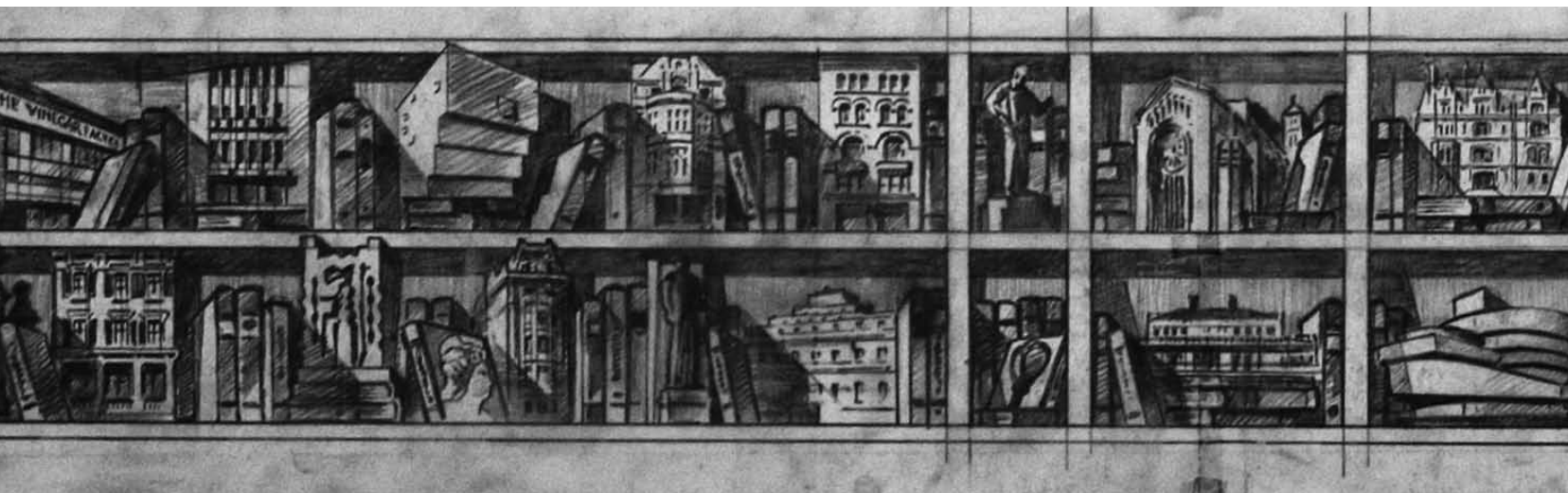
Ce 022
The Cleopatra Needle, 2005-2007
 From the series *Central Park*
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 6.75 x 12.3 in. (17.1 x 31.3 cm.)



Ce 052
The Little Fountain, 2005-2009
 From the series *Central Park*
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 8.25 x 9.75 in. (21 x 25 cm.)



Ce 037
Cherry Trees, 2005-2009
 From the series *Central Park*
 Etching, on grey Rives BFK
 Signed in pencil
 One of 17 artist's proofs
 State 3, 8.25 x 9.75 in. (21 x 25 cm.)



Architectural Treasures of the Upper EastSide
Barnes & Noble Mural, 1000 sq. feet 2009
Manhattan, New York
Oil on canvas



Cp 194
Tote Bags for Barnes & Noble Stores
 New York 2009
 Woodcut



Cp 199
Nostalgic Vintage,
 Digital Collage,
 New York 2009





artist's statement

One of my earliest and dearest childhood memories is olfactory, that of the wonderfully pleasant, lingering scent of turpentine. Both my parents were artists. Self-taught and modest about their talents, they painted to earn a meager living in a post-World War II Russia. Their art, in retrospect naïve and sentimental (a typical specimen might depict a couple in love, surrounded by white swans, under the azure skies), seemed to me most beautiful at the time, set off as it was by the surrounding bleakness and decimation visited upon the victorious but ravaged country.

Growing up, I was surrounded by rusty tins of paint, soaking brushes, stretchers that my father so handily put together, rolled-up canvases and other tools of the trade. The very sight, the touch, the smell of them excited my imagination. From my early childhood I remember my father sharpening pencils for me. Those were the best pencils I have ever had. Probably those were also my first lessons in art.

Did all these early experiences influence my much later urge to become an artist myself? The honest answer is, I don't know. But the smell of turpentine still lingers...

A true interest in painting did not come until the age of fifteen. Before that, and for a couple years after, I studied the art of a circus performer and even performed briefly with a traveling troupe as acrobat and juggler. I also walked the tightrope. The feeling I now get from a few hours of productive work sometimes reminds me of the exhilaration I felt in my teenage years, when, a balance pole in my hands, I edged my way forward in half-darkness, high above the upturned heads of the hushed crowd of spectators down below. That prior occupation of mine etched in my consciousness the love and appreciation of the form and the movement, of animals and humans alike.

Much has been written about the creative process in art, yet for all that, it remains, and as far as I am concerned will forever remain, a mystery, a magical mystery. Imagination is king. A ray of light enters; it refracts through the mesh of your dream-like memories and sensory experiences; then, before you know it, your brush begins stroking the canvas; and objects, colors, textures and moods start materializing effortlessly, as if unconnected to your will.

Mysteriously? Effortlessly? Sure. But, shall we say, with a little help from years of training, of honing your skills with practice – of sharpening your pencils, as it were.

Leonardo's thoughts on light and shadow, and their role in the art of painting, are very close to my heart. However, rather than a technical dictum, I prefer to regard them as a poetic statement on the nature of painting, where colors are born through the interplay of light and shadow.

Just as it is conceived by the artist's imagination, often sparked by an impulse from nature, so should a painting serve as a stimulus for the viewer's imagination. For only in this final stage does the work of art complete the full circle of the creative process, of which the viewer is as much a participant as the artist himself. In that, painting is much like poetry, and it is precisely the poetic quality of the visual image that, in my view, elevates it from a mere depiction of reality to true art, never static, always evocative, mysterious and somewhat elusive.

I often repaint my work. It is hard to let go of the brush. I suppose it is a symptom of that striving for perfect, complete beauty, which motivates so many of us. You know you will never arrive there, but you want so much to come close. That is why it is often difficult to determine precisely that point in time when the work has to stop. Sometimes, when I am getting too engulfed in the process, I recall to memory the character from E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Mademoiselle de Scuderi*, a Parisian master jeweler who, entrusted with precious stones from his customers, kept making and remaking them into ever more beautiful settings, unable to part with his creations (or was it the process itself?) and finally met a gruesome and infamous end through that obsession of his. Well, that helps to stop.

Special Thanks!

*Anatoly Belilovsky
Nellie Gencheva Gipson
Anna Moshkova
Tamara Mysakova
Sasha Mysakova
Milla Lozanova
Noah Simmons
Adrian Sumner
Irene Thorp
Louise Thompson*

and

all my friends who have supported and inspired me
through the years

*Grosvenor Museum
Kolodzei Art Foundation
Helen Keeler Burke Charitable Foundation
Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop
Topin & Associates*

Text by
Boris Kogan
Noah Simmons
Louise Thompson
Editor Allan Hoving
Design by Annaleo Studio

Number:

Edition: 500

Leo Kundas

© All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be
reproduced, stored in retrieval system
or transmitted, in any form or any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording
or otherwise, without the prior
permission of Leo Kundas
www.kundas.com

NEW YORK
2011

