

AT MAF

ILDIKO KOVACS

What have you been working on lately?
What can we expect from your latest work?
 I have been painting with rollers for the last 18 months. My recent paintings are much more raw and immediate.

How do you feel your working process has evolved or changed in the three decades you've been exhibiting?
 In the three decades of my work there has been three distinct shifts.

In my earlier work I applied paint in an expressionistic manner, the work was very busy and energetic. My concern was purely the energy of paint. There was a youthful exploration into the unknown and then as I matured as a painter I started to question more what I was trying to say. So I started to paint out everything I was doing. The work became the reworking. I was questioning the void, that there was something in nothing. Arriving at a point where I could start again.

This was around 1990, by then my palette had become so minimal that the layered washes had become the painting. In many ways this stage was a transition into finding some clarity. I started to work with form, putting down shapes haphazardly [and] these shapes morphed over a period of time into the line. Once the line revealed itself I refined it, like sculpting in space. Arabesque rhythmic forms that had the illusion of being three-dimensional.

The latest shift in my work came about when I felt I was becoming too familiar with the process. When you get to know something so well you become too self-conscious, it loses its honesty. This led me to using rollers. The roller creates its own unique marks. It allowed me

to see my work with a new freshness. The line continues to happen. The line is a metaphor for me, my nature.

Ultimately the process of painting for me is an intuitive one. It seems to me that these shifts coincide with transitions in my life.

What does a normal day in the studio involve? What turns it into a good day?

I procrastinate. I clean my rollers, pick up boxes of paint and turps soaked tissues. I spend ages looking at what I did the day before. I make coffee, come back, look again. Psych myself up, either to rework what I have done before or start a new painting. A good day is when everything is synchronised. The work paints itself.

You've said in the past that you try to reject whatever is familiar to your eye when you're working on a painting. This must involve taking a lot of risks. Are you a risk-taker outside the studio too?

Risk-taking is a fundamental aspect of painting. I think my nature is a bit reactionary. I tend to jump first then worry about swimming. I have never been frightened of living my life.

And finally is there anything you've liked at the galleries recently?

I was in Alice Springs recently. I was at an opening of an exhibition of work from the APY and NPY lands. It was a beautiful show.

Jane O'Sullivan

New work by Ildiko Kovacs will be exhibited at Melbourne Art Fair from 4 to 8 August 2010 by both Hugo Michell Gallery, stand 45, and Martin Browne Fine Art, stand 3.

Ildiko Kovacs, *up*, 2010. Oil on plywood, 144 x 133cm. COURTESY: THE ARTIST, HUGO MICHELL GALLERY, ADELAIDE; AND MARTIN BROWNE FINE ART, SYDNEY

