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Dorothea Tanning

INSOMNIAS 1955-1965



Kent Gallery is pleased to present *Dorothea Tanning: Insomnias 1955-1965*, an exhibition of selected paintings from a pivotal period in the work of an artist who is now in her ninety-fifth year. This is the first Tanning exhibition since *Birthday and Beyond*, the retrospective that the Philadelphia Museum of Art mounted in 2000 to mark their acquisition of Tanning's celebrated 1942 self-portrait, *Birthday*. In the 1940s, when she was one of the painters in Julien Levy's stable, Tanning painted within the idiom of surrealist representation. By the mid-50s, her work had radically changed. As Tanning explains, "Around 1955 my canvases literally splintered . . . I broke the mirror, you might say." The *Insomnias* — the group takes its name from a painting of the same title that Tanning made in 1957 — are forays into the realm of conjured energies. They represent a forceful shift at a particular, postwar moment that continues to reverberate today. In his essay in the book accompanying the exhibition, Charles Stuckey describes these "seemingly multidimensional mindspaces" as "among the most ambitious and sophisticated paintings to address the dilemmas of imagination and culture in a new atomic, space-race age."

The exhibition is accompanied by a monograph on the paintings, with essays by Charles Stuckey and Richard Howard.

Charles Stuckey and Richard Howard. *Dorothea Tanning: Insomnias 1954-1965*. New York: Kent Gallery, 2005. 80 pages, 14 color plates. ISBN: 1-878607-95-2. \$14.95

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