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ART & SOUL: Paper Dreams

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By Allison Hersh

German artist Andreas Kocks has a passion for paper. To create his elaborate installations and richly-textured mixed media work, he paints, cuts, bends, layers and manipulates heavy watercolor paper, exploring its plasticity as well as its sculptural potential.

“Everybody is familiar with paper, one way or another, uses it probably on a daily basis for all kind of reasons,” Kocks said. “It is simply universal and, despite the fact that it is produced under enormous industrial, heavy-duty circumstances, the final product carries such a warm and maybe even human energy.”

Kocks’s latest experiments with paper take center stage at the Savannah College of Art and Design’s Pei Ling Chan Gallery in Savannah. “Andreas Kocks: Momentary Suspension,” a solo exhibition on display through April 29, liberates paper from its traditional two-dimensional boundaries, imbuing it with more architectural properties.

The heart and soul of this exhibit is “Paperwork #1029G (Scattered),” a massive site-specific installation that wraps around the south wall of the gallery, spilling over onto adjacent surfaces as if its energy simply cannot be contained or

Winston Wächter Fine Art, Inc.

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restrained. Defined by overlapping explosive shapes that threaten to ripple right off the wall, Kocks's installation has been meticulously crafted from cut-out waves of watercolor paper adorned with graphite and pewter pigment.



In this edgy three-dimensional installation, paper has been released from the frame and from its geometric plane. As a result, it fulfills a more dynamic, sculptural destiny, with its creative juxtaposition of intricate patterns and violent shapes. Kocks captures the liquid effect of splashing paint, infusing the gallery with a gleeful sense of kinetic energy.

"This whole body of work started with drawings," Kocks said. "Sketches, studies and technical drawings were made with pencil on white paper."

The artist is clearly fascinated with motion, space and form, drawing the eye to his strategic manipulations in a large-scale installation as well as in more intimate compositions. In a series of framed items from his "Paperwork" series, Kocks overlays textured grey-on-grey designs, creating ridged patterns that combine to create a staggered, topographic effect.

"From a formal point of view, the line is probably the most important element in my work," he said. "But at the same time, there are a lot of painterly gestures and sculptural decisions involved, with all the layering and spatial issues."

Unlike his early work, which incorporated steel, bronze and wood sculpture, Kocks's latest compositions reveal his fascination with the formal properties of drawing and painting on paper. Whether he depicts ribbons of color swirling across the surface in thick grey and blue swaths or creates abstracted shapes that drip, like decomposing continents, down the surface of the paper, he freezes moments in time with remarkable elegance.

“My work is conducive to the experience of space,” he explained. “Turn it into an event, activate it. Who expects paper to have such a physical presence?”



IF YOU GO

What: “Andreas Kocks: Momentary Suspension”

Where: Pei Ling Chan Gallery, 322 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

When: Through April 29

Gallery hours: 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Mon.–Fri.

For more information: 912-525-4743 or www.scadexhibitions.com

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Oberhausen, Germany, artist Andreas Kocks earned a prestigious Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2006. He has degrees in Architecture, Education and Sculpture from various universities in Germany and has been featured in *Art in America*. An accomplished mixed media artist, Kocks has exhibited his work throughout Europe and the United States. He currently divides his time between New York City and Munich.