

Ross + Kramer is pleased to announce Anne Wehrley Björk's solo debut with the gallery in our East Hampton location.

This exhibition, entitled *Uncommon Light*, features a new series of acrylic paintings Björk made during this turbulent year, when the need for bright and uplifting art has felt especially urgent. This body of work relates to two special places in her life, Chaco Canyon, in Northwest New Mexico, near where she grew up and Collioure, France, where she felt an immediate connection as an artist.

Chaco Canyon is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the ancestral home of the prehistoric Anasazi Indians. It is one of only 130 international sites designated as a "Dark Sky Park", where the night sky is devoid of any light pollution. For the last fifty years Björk has painted lyrically abstract compositions that explore the contours of the Chaco Canyon. The pathways, sandstone walls, and the petroglyphs of the Anasazi ruins there etched in her mind.

After completing her undergraduate studies in 1971, the artist traveled to study at the Alliance Française in Paris, France before returning in the early 1980s to complete her MFA at the University of New Mexico. The experience of living in France proved transformative for Björk and continues to be a source of inspiration. The rare lavender hued light in the Mediterranean port of Collioure, France informs Björk's palette of late. The intense colors of the sea-side village have attracted many painters throughout history, from late 19th century Fauvists to Henri Matisse, and has consistently drawn Björk back.

In her paintings, the light of Collioure contrasts with the terrain in New Mexico in a peculiar and satisfying way, departing from any existing elements of natural scenery while remaining overwhelmingly familiar to Björk. Unlike previous bodies of work that featured sparse applications of paint, these canvases are lush celebrations of color and light. Despite an affinity towards abstraction, in Björk's own words, "There is a subtle narrative that takes place to be discerned by the viewer. Boulders appear poised to fall while a demi-lune floats in others. The light of turbulent skies adds dynamism in some of the paintings, while an Impressionist use of juxtaposed warm and cool colors create a softness in others, and *crepuscule* [dusk], overtakes the forms in others."

The arc of Björk's career resembles that of many female painters of her generation--despite beginning her career in the 1970s, her work is finally gaining broader recognition now, later in her career. During her graduate studies at the University of New Mexico, she trained with Agnes Martin, Joan Brown, Susan Rothenberg, and Deborah Butterfield, fellow women artists similarly drawn to the atmospheric quality specific to New Mexico, who encouraged her practice. Her commitment to the subject of Chaco Canyon has been consistent throughout, a constant in a career underpinned by a thorough investigation of light, color, and form.

Now living and working between Lexington, KY and Charleston, SC, Björk (b. 1948) has shown across the country regularly for the last forty years, but most notably at Mary Bell Gallery (group exhibitions regularly throughout 1991-2005, Chicago, IL), at the Lexington Art League (2009, Lexington, KY), with Philip Dusenbury at Carol Saunders Gallery (2011, Columbia, SC), and solo exhibitions at B.Deemer Gallery (2015, 2017, Louisville, KY). Her work is in the public collection of the Fine Arts Museum at the University of New Mexico, as well as the Corporate Collection at Sears Tower in Chicago, IL.

Uncommon Light runs from December 18, 2020- February 14, 2021 in Ross + Kramer, 66 Newtown Lane, East Hampton. The gallery is open Thursday - Sunday, 11 - 6pm. For more information or press requests, please contact Emma Fernberger, emma@rkgallery.com or +1 (917) 675 7293.