

DAVID KORTY

1 June-3 July 2004
private view, 1 June, 6-8pm

In his paintings of the urban landscape David Korty initially focused on his native Los Angeles. His predilection in painting his home town was for soft colours and a heightened sensual atmosphere. Marrying this palette to delicate brushstrokes, the scenes acquire an ethereal quality, as Korty explores the impact of light on the city's streets, parks and buildings. There is a sense of experimentation, a search for how best to convey the peculiarities of the atmosphere, both in terms of ambience, but more specifically in the climatic sense. This quest, together with the aesthetic, recalls the innovations of the Impressionists, with their forays into pointillism and whole series dedicated to exploring the impact of different light conditions on the same scene. Korty's landscapes also share the Impressionists' positive, celebratory approach towards the metropolitan environment, as the industrial age dawned bringing with it a new prosperity and a nascent leisure culture.

In his recent landscapes Korty has begun to consider other cities, including Venice and London. He has become emboldened too in his choice of colour, as he paints with brighter and stronger tones. This, coupled with a freer application of paint, adds warmth and a renewed vigour to the fundamental optimism of these paintings. Figures remain, by and large absent, but where they can be seen, scale dictates that they are anonymous miniatures, dwarfed into insignificance by the majesty of their surroundings. In a monochrome painting, where we peer through trees at rain-drenched, grey streets, where cars file by, nose to tail, there is nonetheless a sense of the dynamism of the city, once celebrated by the Futurists, along with the energy of urban life. An energy that reaches the viewers as they are urged into activity; for while the paintings are easy on the eye, devoid of any jarring elements, the eye needs to work, to pick out the figurative from the decorative and steadily absorb the atmosphere of the city.

David Korty lives and works in Los Angeles. He showed at HQ as part of a gallery swap with China Art Objects, Los Angeles and then had a solo show here in 2002. His work has been included in group and solo shows in Europe and the U.S.