

ARTS, PEOPLE



Local Painter Explores the Art of Memory in Exhibitions Around the Twin Cities

by Catherine Guden | Oct 2019



Photos: Rachel Nadeau

Plymouth artist Keren Kroul showcases her artistry through watercolors and cut paper in her latest exhibition.

Artist Keren Kroul had a vibrant and diverse childhood spent living in cities around the world. Years later, her art is inspired by memories and natural motifs. Her watercolor and cut-paper pieces are filled with bright splashes of color and patterns mirroring neurological pathways in the brain and other organic shapes.

Born in Haifa, Israel, Kroul spent her adolescence in Mexico City and San José, Costa Rica. With an Argentinean father and an Israeli mother, Kroul grew up experiencing diverse cultures and people.

Kroul moved to the United States to study art at Brandeis University. During that time, she spent two months in a visual arts residency at the Chautauqua School of Art in upstate New York. As she fell deeper in love with visual arts, she realized she could no longer even consider any other life path—she had found her calling.

“This incredibly intense and rewarding experience taught me what it means to be an artist, and I have been hooked ever since,” says Kroul. After deciding on art as a career, Kroul made a bold move and went to New York City with friends. There she attended Parsons School of Design and earned her Master of Fine Arts degree.

“I was an artist and wanted to be in the center of things,” says Kroul.

Kroul's work has an ethereal, delicate look, but its larger-than-life size quickly captures attention. She uses watercolor on paper to create paintings that sometimes measure up to 8 by 12 feet. She also makes suspended cut-paper installations.

"I enjoy the play between the fragility of the watercolor, the delicate nature of the paper, and the large, sometimes monumental size of the finished pieces," says Kroul.

Kroul draws her inspiration from natural processes like crystallization—a theme through many of her designs. Kroul is also intrigued by the way memories impact a person's life and how they change perspective on past events.

"I think about the layering of memories, the way they are revealed and concealed, coming into the present and receding into the past. The repetition and layering of my imagery parallels this idea. The rhythmic formations featured in my work reference the neurological structures that retrieve and capture memories in the brain," says Kroul.



Her latest collection of ongoing work began in 2017 and is titled *Topographies of Loss and Longing*. Kroul says, “Inspired by my memories of my grandmother’s stories as a Holocaust survivor and refugee, this work examines the weight of absence, the fragility of memory, and the continuing bond that shapes identity through loss and longing.”

The art in the collection is a blend of cool-toned shades such as blue, gray and black with pops of mustard yellow. The repeating motif of what appear to be ropes intertwine around the rest of the shapes and colors. Her watercolor paintings, combined with the hanging cut-paper installations, create a complex and thought-provoking collection. Titles like “Embedded Time” and “Shroud” invite the viewer to ponder the deeper meanings of the images. “Shroud” is an entirely white hanging cut-paper piece that appears like a curtain, but upon closer inspection, has thinly cut designs that let some light through. Another hanging piece made of cut and painted paper is titled “Unfolding Memory” and combines the more vibrant colors seen in “Embedded Time” with the lightness of “Shroud.” It runs from ceiling to floor and rolls across the ground unfolding like a scroll. The shapes and patterns seem to resemble thoughts flowing over and over across the paper.



Kroul does most of her painting in her studio. Many of her new ideas build on previous art she has created, using similar materials, patterns or color schemes. Like many artists, Kroul often struggles with finding the time to completely immerse herself in her work because it requires such concentration and focus.

As to Kroul's process, she says, "I make an effort to be disciplined and have a consistent studio practice. I embrace failure, accidents and mistakes and use them to think about solutions to the visual problems that I have set up."

Since 2011, Kroul has been bringing her love and knowledge of the visual arts to others. She has worked across the Twin Cities teaching painting, drawing and design at Augsburg University, Hennepin Technical College, the Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth and the Minnetonka Center for the Arts.





After 25 years, Kroul still creates her own art, finds time to teach and raises a family. Kroul moved to Plymouth, Minnesota 14 years ago and has been enjoying the neighborhood that provides her family access to great schools as well as many ways to

connect with nature, such as going to parks and hiking and biking on the numerous trails in the area.

Kroul also exhibits her work throughout the Twin Cities as well as greater Minnesota. Each exhibit is free and open to the public. She has an October show at Bemidji State University, followed by The Phipps Center for the Arts in December, North Hennepin Community College in January 2020 and a spring show at the Hopkins Center for the Arts in May. Each exhibit will be showcasing the work of *Topographies of Loss and Longing*.

“My favorite part about being an artist is that I get to bring forth all parts of myself—intellectual, emotional, visual—and take on a journey in which I don’t know the way or the destination. I figure out things as I go along,” says Kroul.



Upcoming Exhibits:



Talley Gallery



Bemidji State University

October 1-29



Gallery One

The Phipps Center for the Arts, Hudson, WI

December 6, 2019-January 12

Joseph Gazzuolo Gallery

North Hennepin Community College, Brooklyn Park

January 20-February 20

Redeppening Gallery

Hopkins Center for the Arts

May 14-June 20

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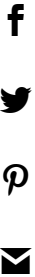


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