



**RON
KINGSWOOD**
ARRANGEMENTS

LewAllenGalleries



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OCTOBER 27 – DECEMBER 9, 2023

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Cover: *A Purposeful Walk* (detail), n.d., oil on canvas, 46" x 58"

RON KINGSWOOD ARRANGEMENTS

A painting can be like a haiku, reflecting a simple truth, or posing a question with no answer, like a koan. High above a mesa, presumably somewhere in the American Southwest, a small flock of birds fly above a single cloud. But there is no mesa. None that you can see that is.

High Above the Mesa, created by Ron Kingswood in 2014, depicts the circling birds, cloud, and sky, but no terrain, mesa or otherwise. So, if he titled it *High Above the Sea*, there would be no reason to assume it wasn't. Kingswood situates you in a region — a place — then, through the sheer massive scale of the artwork, puts you over that place.

High Above the Mesa is 98-by-84 inches. You are up there with the birds. Does it matter what's below when you can fly anywhere?

There's always something outside the picture frame of any painting. Literally, everything else that is not that painting is outside of it. Figuratively its setting, or even its mood, expands to encompass anyone standing before it. Such paintings reach out to the world beyond the canvas and pulls the world into it. For instance, the brook, which enters Kingswood's painting, *Stream in Winter*, from the center top and exits at center bottom, flows to and from somewhere. But, because of its size (72-by-64 inches) you are not just there, admiring the peaceful ducks who waddle in the snow-banked rivulet. You have one foot planted on the left bank and one on the right. The stream passes beneath you.

Surrounding this scene of quietude is a blanket of snow. Like the simplicity of 16th-century Japanese painter Hasegawa Tōhaku's work, Kingswood's paintings emanate tranquility. In *Stream in Winter* there is a hush so as not to disturb the silence of the snow with anything more than the sound of trickling water.

"What fascinates me is that whole minimalism, which is like the minimalism of [Piet] Mondrian," Kingswood says of traditional Japanese nature painting. "There's almost a disarrangement that I was familiar with growing up. But it's not a direct influence so much as it's just the way I love to look at nature, which is to put it in some architectural arrangement — not in some classical sense — in the way of Mondrian."

Kingswood embraced the idea of the minimal composition that now characterizes many of his works after undergoing a profound period of self-reflection. He yearned for a deeper, more meditative response to nature than that which had characterized his engagement with it during the first two decades of his career. Feeling true meaning for him as a nature or wildlife painter had to exist in finding the ethereal within the essence of the natural world rather than in the literal forms he had worked with only in the past. Kingswood "rummaged for the spiritual" in his work.

He entered upon an epiphanal artistic journey that continues even now in search of an intangible potency that lay in experiencing nature and wildlife rather than merely observing them. It has opened avenues of expression from what Kingswood calls "the indefinite realm, the unfamiliar one" and through "being willing to leave behind everything for the prospect of nothing." In this regard, one is reminded of the analogy Ernest Hemmingway made in his "Theory of Omission" about

writing: "The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water."

To commend this Zen-like aspect of his own practice, Kingswood quotes the late Museum of Modern Art curator, Kirk Varnedoe, who wrote, "The less there is to look at, the more important it is that we look at it closely and carefully." Not all of Kingswood's works are minimal. Some involve complex elements but even those are distinguished for redefining traditional wildlife painting and present unconventional spatial and color relationships that he intuits from his experience at the intersection of landscape, habitat, and wildlife.

Kingswood, who's in his 60s, was born in St. Thomas, Ontario, in 1959 and remains active in the region, working in Sparta, a community in the township of Central Elgin. His scenes of the terrain that surrounds him and its wildlife, whether fox, deer, owl, heron, or crow, evoke the sense of liberation from appointments and the demands of time and deadlines that a short experience in that world can bring. The birds flying free, or just being in the moment, is almost a source of envy for us humans. And so, a melancholy also pervades Kingswood's work, a yearning to be a part of the flock, or spend one's days seeking out, with the keenest of eyes, the things that burrow into the grass and snow, that glide beneath the surface of a shallow stream, like the birds and the fox do.

But on a Kingswood scale, you can approximate that very feeling.

In 2015, Kingswood finished a body of work for his London gallery, Jonathan Cooper, a small British gallery, which necessitated a move to smaller paintings. "I think the largest piece was 4-by-4 feet," he says. "But I like scale. Maybe it goes back to the Abstract Expressionists, when I used to wander the museums and looked at those monster canvases and dream a way of incorporating nature."

Kingswood works large enough to drown out the surroundings, enveloping himself in a composition as he works. When painting, whatever scene he's creating fills his peripheral vision. He is there fully with it.

After completing the smaller work for Jonathan Cooper, he set about painting *The Narrows*. As an abstract composition, *The Narrows* is a series of horizontal bands rendered in painterly, gestural brushstrokes. It is the minimalistic type of stroke, which, in insolation, exists as a mere mark, signifying nothing. When combined with other, feathery strokes, like the feathers of the ducks depicted in this same painting, we understand right away that this is snow, trampled lightly under the feet of many ducks. Their formation by a stream is linear, though slightly skewed and mimics the horizontal bands of snow and icy stream.

"I want to challenge myself," he says about painting large canvases. "I want to elevate it into something that excites me. *The Narrows* has some interesting things on. That flock of ducks I've seen so often. I spent a couple of months on that piece."

Kingswood's paintings capture a sense of wabi-sabi, the Japanese concept of imperfect perfection, although, as he says, the influence is not direct. But in each of his "arrangements," which combine an abstract working of planes and color fields with representational imagery, one isn't grounded by a center. The elements of the overall



High Above the Mesa, 2014, oil on canvas, 98" x 84"

subject, such as cloud, bird, and sky or duck, stream, and snow-bank are in asymmetry with one another. It's an imbalance that creates balance in the sense that it expresses a certain freedom from conformity. It is why we leave the busy world behind and seek experience in nature. Nature is a place where there are no rules save those that drive the animal instinct.

Kingswood used to work *en plein air*, but he found the studio experience to be more profound in terms of his creative process. "I soon realized that the confines of the studio for me were much richer for conceiving art than painting outside and having the subject in front of me. I think one has to be really careful doing that to make sure you're not just copying something. I felt like I was just copying

something. I have more freedom being locked up in my studio and dreaming away."

But, on a walk in between bouts of painting, he receives much from the world outside. A murder of crows or those ducks on the river-bank, some wading in a stream, are a common sight in the Northern climes in which he lives. He does paint what he sees, but fractured, in a sense, then recombined like an a-tonal musical composition designed to take you to a place beyond itself even as you remain in the place where you started.

Like a haiku turned into a painting. Just like a haiku. Or a koan.

— Michael Abatemarco



Ushering in the Evening
2021, oil on canvas, 50" x 57¾"



Duck Hunting
2023, oil on canvas, 72" x 54"



Nightfall
n.d., oil on canvas, 52" x 52"



Stream in Winter
2015, oil on canvas, 72" x 64"



Refuge
2021, oil on canvas, 35 1/4" x 52 5/8"



Adoration
2017, oil on canvas, 48" x 44"



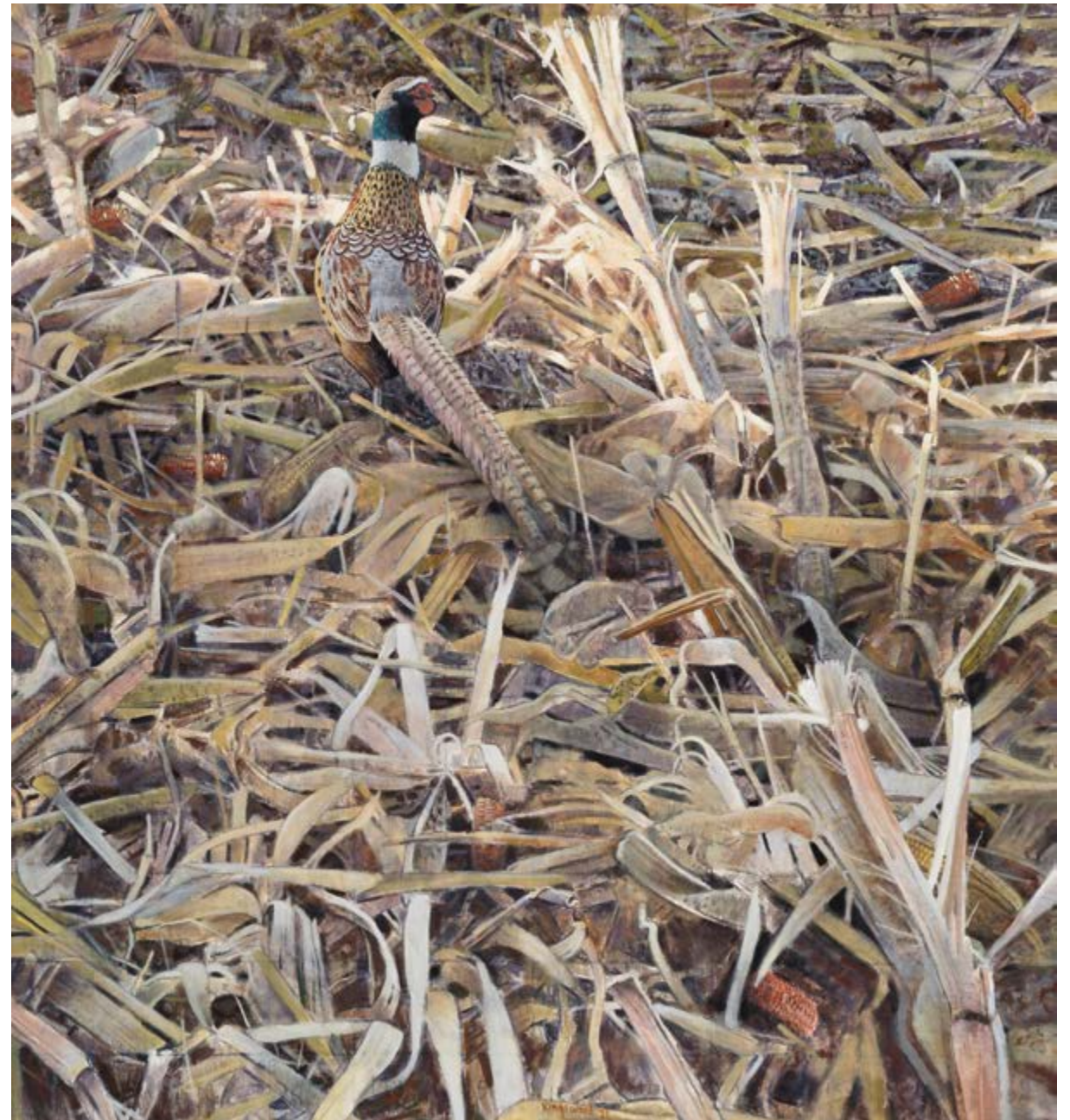
Summoning the Twelve
2022, oil on canvas, 60" x 120"



The Promenade
2023, oil on canvas, 36" x 44"



With Time to Spare
2023, oil on canvas, 42 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 60"



A Morning Walk
2021, oil on canvas, 51 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 47 $\frac{5}{8}$ "



The Narrows
2015, oil on canvas, 84" x 100"



Tranquility
2023, oil on canvas, 41½" x 29½"

EDUCATION

1978-80 H.B. Beal (2 year Art Program), London, Ontario, Canada

1980 University of Western Ontario, Bird Ecology and Ornithology, London, Ontario, Canada

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023 *Arrangements*, LewAllen Galleries, Santa Fe, NM

2020 Excavo London, Ontario, Canada

2018 Jonathan Cooper, London, UK

2016 Jonathan Cooper, London, UK

2014 Jonathan Cooper, London, UK

2012 Odon Wagner Contemporary, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

2010 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

2006 Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, NM

2005 Lyndsay McCandless Contemporary, Jackson Hole, WY

2002 Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, NM

2001 Marin-Harris Gallery, Jackson Hole, WY

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2020 *Masterworks*, Jonathan Cooper, London, UK

The Open Art Fair, London, UK

Wildlife Discovery, Trailside Galleries, Jackson Hole, WY

2019 25th Anniversary Exhibition, Simpson Gallagher Gallery, Cody, WY

2018 *Jonathan Cooper: 30 Years*, Jonathan Cooper, London, UK

Birds of a Feather, Trailside Galleries, Scottsdale, AZ

2017 Simpson Gallagher Gallery, WY

Wildlife Discovered, Trailside Galleries, Scottsdale, AZ

2014-18 Masterpiece London, London, UK

Bada Antiques & Fine Art Fair, London, UK

2015-17 Palm Beach Jewellery, Art & Antique Show, FL

2015 *Contemporary Naturalism*, Gerald Peters Gallery, NM

2014 Simpson Gallagher Gallery – *20th Anniversary*, Cody, WY

2013 Jonathan Cooper, London, UK

2012 *Bealart100*, St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, Ontario, Canada

Particles + Waves, 12 Contemporary Artists, ILIAD Contemporary, NY

Beautiful Calamity, Hollis Heichemer, Ron Kingswood, Ellen Wagener, J. Cacciola Gallery, NY

2009 *Drawing/Not Drawing*, J. Cacciola Gallery, NY

Jonathan Cooper, London, UK

2008 *20th Anniversary Exhibition*, Jonathan Cooper, London, UK

Lyndsay McCandless Contemporary, Jackson Hole, WY

The Bank Job, London, Ontario, Canada

2008 Sandra Ainsley Gallery, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

2007 Loveland Museum, Loveland, CO

Lyndsay McCandless Contemporary, Jackson Hole, WY

2006 Jonathan Cooper, London, UK

Foothills Art Centre, Golden, CO

Gallery 1261, Denver, CO

2005 Scott White Contemporary Art, Telluride, CO

Vanderleelie Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

2004 *Off the Path*, Jackson Street Gallery, Jackson Hole, WY

2003 Canada House Gallery, Banff, Alberta, Canada

2002 *Spring Exhibit*, Douglas Udell Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta & Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

1999 *Crossing Paths*, Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, NM

1998 *American Miniatures*, Settler's West Gallery, Tucson, AZ

Spanierman Gallery, NY

MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

2019-22 Prix de West, National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, OK

2018-22 *Buffalo Bill Art Exhibition* Cody, WY

2015-22 *Western Visions*, National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson Hole, WY

2021-22 *Birds in Art*, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI

2020 *Western Visions*, National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson, WY

2019 London Museum, London, Ontario, Canada

2017 *Birds in Art*, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI

2014-15 *Environmental Impact Exhibition* (Touring) organized by David Wagner: Canton Museum of Art, OH; The R.W. Norton Art Gallery, Shreveport, LA; Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, MI; Roger Tory Peterson Institute, Jamestown, NY; Erie Art Museum, Erie, PA; Peninsula Fine Arts Center, Newport News, VA; Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet, SC; The Art Museum, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, Potsdam, NY

2005 *Wildlife Art of the New Century II*, National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson Hole, WY

2000-04 *Western Visions Miniature Show*, National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson Hole, WY

2000-01 *Birds in Art*, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI

2000 *The Single Tree*, Museum London, London, Ontario, Canada

1998-01 *Wilderness Reunion*, Algonquin Museum, Ontario, Canada

1998 *80 Years of Experiment 1912-1992*, Beal Art Museum, London, Ontario, Canada

1996 *Wildlife, the Artist's View*, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI

1995-96 *Birds in Art*, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI

1992-93 *Southwestern Art Exhibit*, Museum London, London, Ontario, Canada

PRIVATE & PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Ella Sharp Museum of Art, Jackson, MI

Foothills Art Center, Golden, CO

Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI

London Museum, London, Ontario, Canada

The Museum of Newfoundland & Labrador, St. John, Newfoundland

National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson Hole, WY

St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

The Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Charlottesville, VA

Whitney Western Art Museum, Cody, WY

Art Gallery of Northumberland, Coburg, Ontario, Canada

Morgan Stanley, Tokyo, Japan

Weston Foundation, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Bird Studies Canada, Port Rowan, Ontario, Canada



With a successful career spanning more than forty years, Ron Kingswood is renowned for his distinctive paintings of animals in their natural habitats. With his gestural brushstrokes and a lifelong study of the outdoors, Kingswood's work exists at the exciting intersection of naturalism, impressionism, and abstract expressionism. Offering a refreshing and iconoclastic approach to wildlife art, Kingswood stuns with his unexpected compositions and mastery of color. Using oil paint on canvas, he shapes a tangible sense of place — from bare minimalist snowscapes to dense woodland scenes. Each quiet moment allows the viewer an extraordinarily intimate glimpse into the unfettered and noble lives of the animal kingdom, inviting meditation about the preciousness of nature.

In his lushly layered ecosystems, Kingswood's equal emphasis on flora and fauna can be interpreted as a subtle act of environmentalism — urging humanity to actively consider, cherish, and conserve our planet's declining biodiversity. Kingswood's paintings can also be seen as an act of preservation — creating an indelible record of present-day species and landscapes for future generations to experience and enjoy. In both Kingswood's canvases and in real life, the beauty of nature is fleeting.

Born in St. Thomas, Ontario, in 1959, Ron Kingswood is internationally recognized for his achievements as a painter. Kingswood studied at H.B. Beal in London, Ontario, and received a degree in Bird Ecology and Ornithology at The University of Western Ontario. In 2022, he was awarded the Pittman Wildlife Award at the Prix de West International Art Exhibition at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, OK. His paintings have been exhibited internationally at both private and public galleries and museums and is included in numerous public collections.

\$15US

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Above: *Wheat Field*, n.d., oil on canvas, 50" x 48"