



Taming Tigers in London

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by Pat Rogers

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Lions and tigers and bears....No, wait. There are only tigers and Kevin Berlin has them under control. Using his penchant for dramatic flair, Berlin demonstrated his taming skills at the opening of "Tiger Training for Beginners" at UNIT24 Gallery in London, England on May 17, 2012.

A Closing Party for the solo exhibition is being held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The show continues through June 14, 2012. "Tiger Training For Beginners" features around 100 new paintings by Berlin. The works are mix of nudes and scenes inspired by the times he spent learning how to train tigers and lions with Ukrainian National Circus.

Berlin met up with the big cat trainers while shadowing ballet dancers with the Ukraine National Opera in Russia for a new series of works. After being invited to study lion and tiger trainers (and learn a few things), Berlin leapt at the chance.

Two years ago, a series of paintings based on his time in Russia was presented at RVS Fine Art in Southampton, NY. Berlin opened his solo show with a compelling art performance demonstrating his new-found knowledge of how to sooth the savage cats. The exhibition, "Kiev Days / Kiev Nights" revealed dancers, trainers and sophisticates in oil paintings.

The London show represents a new body of work, said Berlin. The paintings begin with his experiences of tiger taming with the Ukrainian National Circus but also leap into imaginative narratives. What if tigers were part of contemporary life? If so, wouldn't they enjoy cocktail parties too?

In true dramatic form, Berlin launched his solo show in London with a live art performance.



"Tiger Training For Beginners" Live performance by Kevin Berlin, 2012.
Photography by Katarzyna Zill.

"Tiger Training for Beginners" is Berlin's first major show in London. Berlin has exhibited in Kiev, Russia; Shanghai, China; and in the United States (New York, Miami, FL; Chicago, IL and other

locations), according to an exhibition release.

Painting tigers is Berlin's way of encouraging awareness of the declining population of the big cats, he said. "This exhibition may be the last time you ever see a tiger, if we don't take action," said Berlin.

Berlin's work is collected by Kim Basinger, Luciano Pavarotti, David Letterman, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Quincy Jones, Buzz Aldrin, Henry Buhl and others.

This summer, Berlin returns to the Hamptons. However, his annual July 4th weekend exhibition and art performance opening at RVS Fine Art in Southampton, NY won't be occurring. The gallery recently closed its doors after decades of selling art on tony Jobs Lane.

Instead, Berlin will have a "major display" at Art Hamptons, said Berlin. He's exhibiting with Kasia Kay Art Projects Gallery. They also organized the London show at UNIT24.

Berlin lives and works in Florence, Italy and Southampton, NY.

BASIC FACTS: "Tiger Training for Beginners" is on view through June 14, 2012 at UNIT24 in London, England. www.unit24.info

Kevin Berlin: www.kevinberlin.com

Kasia Kay Art Projects Gallery: www.kasiakaygallery.com

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