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Buoyancy #14, 2022, oil on canvas 40x64 inches

PETER WAYNE LEWIS

The Buoyancy Paintings
January 19 – March 4, 2023

Skoto Gallery is pleased to present *The Buoyancy Paintings*, an exhibition of recent paintings by Jamaican born artist Peter Wayne Lewis. This will be his third solo exhibition at the gallery. The artist will be at the reception on Thursday, January 19th, 6-8pm.

Peter Wayne Lewis's Buoyancy paintings combine complex compositional organization with spatial dynamics that break away from flatness with a strong conviction in the spiritual energy of color to create pictures that continue to refine and re-define the language of abstraction. A prolific artist, with a long-standing attempt to synthesize his search for creative excellence with a versatile, aesthetically potent ways of knowing and affecting the world around him, his work evinces exuberant energy and vitality that burst with color, texture and form tightly interwoven into the canvas. He draws on a highly developed experimental approach to making art and an awareness of a vast array of both formal and inherited traditions; and employs a rich vocabulary of signs and symbols that speak boldly and clearly to a universal audience.

The Buoyancy Paintings were directly inspired by the artist's recent voyage across the Atlantic Ocean from Florida, USA to Venice, Italy over a period of 27 days in 2022, that offered time for deep reflection. It was very difficult for him to not be aware of the horrific and traumatic experience for the millions of Africans who endured the Middle Passage period. The Middle Passage supplied the New World with its major workforce and brought enormous profits to international slave traders. At the same time, it exacted a terrible price in physical and emotional anguish on the part of uprooted Africans; it was distinguished by the callousness to human suffering it developed among traders – *And in the words of the artist...* "This experience transformed my sensibilities and humanness. The Buoyancy paintings, as all of my work, deal with stasis; trying to find some sort of balance and grounding. Being an immigrant from Kingston, Jamaica and migrating to the USA in 1962, forever changed me

and my sense of place and meaning. Balancing through the physics of being buoyant on a vessel across an aqueous body, as well as moving through the cosmos in this world never escapes me.”

He draws on memory and history to create work that celebrates an openness that is at once visceral and spiritual. Peter Wayne Lewis has always worked in series. The Buoyancy Paintings build on earlier series that include “Strings”, “Bending Time” and “Buddha Plays Monk.” As in each of these series, his art lies not so much on the finesse of the individual mark, but in the orchestration of the interplay of intention and accident, curiosity and discovery; as well as an ability to reduce forms and ideas to their essence that are inherent qualities that help convey the true harmonies of his artistic vision. His work seeks to expand the boundaries between the pictorial arts and consciousness.

Peter Wayne Lewis was born in Kingston, Jamaica and moved to the United States in 1962 where his parents made their home in Sacramento, California. He received his MA in painting in 1979 from San Jose State University of California and became a U.S. citizen in 1983. After 25 years teaching there, he is Professor Emeritus of Painting at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston, MA and a former Chairman of Fine Art 2D. He has exhibited extensively in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, the US, and Asia. A selection of recent past solo survey exhibitions of his works include the “Beijing Booster Paintings” at The Delaware Contemporary, Wilmington, DE in 2019/20, “The Booster Paintings” at the Museum of Contemporary Art - MOCA – North Miami, FL in 2015 and “Boosters” at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art – UCCA, Beijing, China in 2016. Upcoming exhibitions include the PAN AFRICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM in Accra, Ghana and the SCULLY TOMASKO FOUNDATION in New York City in 2024.

He is in numerous public and private collections at home and abroad. He currently resides in South Orange, NJ and Beijing, China.