

James  
rosen

The Artist  
and the Capable Observer

A survey of artist James Rosen's 60-year career, including his homages to some of the great works of Western art.

September 26 – December 12, 2010

Free public opening reception on Sunday, September 26, 2010, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

“Veiled paintings” evoke air of mystery and quietude

Over his six-decade career, American artist James Rosen has produced a body of visually arresting paintings, watercolors, and drawings, that gently invite viewers to stay a while. Rosen seeks “capable observers” who bring to bear their own intellect and imagination in order to observe poetic images that are conducive to quiet contemplation. The late art historian Madlyn Millner Kahr wrote, “While others tangle themselves in excess, Rosen starts with the question: What is truly essential here? He demonstrates that the function of art is to coordinate the visual imagination, the sensitive eye, the intellect, and the network of subliminal associations that not the painter alone, but the observer as well, brings to the work.”

The Museum of Contemporary Religious Art (MOCRA) is fortunate to have over 100 Rosen works either in its collection or on long-term loan. His work has been included in many of MOCRA's group exhibitions over the years and never fails to draw appreciative comments from visitors. Drawing primarily on these works, *The Artist and the Capable Observer* presents work from the 1950s to the present, offering viewers the opportunity to observe Rosen's visual journey through paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints. The exhibition culminates with a series of oil and wax/oil emulsion paintings that are homages to the religious art of the European past. Rosen is especially drawn to some of the great European religious masterworks by artists such as Duccio and Grunewald. Painted with up to 60 thin layers—“veils”—of oil paint and wax, these works possess a sense of mystery as they slowly disclose themselves to the patient and attentive observer. As Kahr stated: “Jim Rosen understands that when we open our eyes on the visible world . . . what we see is light. And this is what he paints.”



Above: *Sta. Cecilia*, 1986. Oil and wax/oil emulsion on canvas. Below, left: *Untitled*, 1959. Oil and charcoal on paper.

About the Artist



James Rosen has had a distinguished career as an artist and lecturer. Educated at Cooper Union, Wayne State University, and Cranbrook Academy of Art, he has taught at the University of Hawaii, the University of California–Berkeley, Augusta College, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He has exhibited widely and his works are in collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MoMA, the Whitney Museum, and the Ashmolean Museum. Influenced by artist Mark Rothko and art historian Meyer Schapiro, Rosen's work demonstrates his keen understanding of art history, mastery of form, and ability to imbue canvases with mystery. He notes, “My paintings are about time. They have up to sixty veils of wax/oil and they have taken me sometimes a year to finish. They require time of the viewer as well . . . Only by spending time with the work, looking at it in subdued lighting, does one experience the work beginning to reveal itself to the viewer.” He is represented by Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, and the Leyton Gallery of Fine Art, St. John's, Newfoundland.

Museum of Contemporary Religious Art (MOCRA) • Saint Louis University

Located at 3700 West Pine Blvd (a pedestrian mall) on the campus of Saint Louis University. Museum hours are Tuesday – Sunday, 11 A.M. – 4 P.M.

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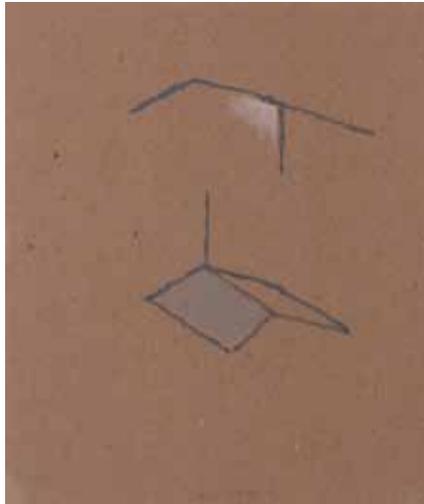
*This exhibition is made possible through the generous support of the Regional Arts Commission.*



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Sample Images



First row: *Untitled*, 1984. Ink on paper. • *Frances*, 1959. Charcoal on paper.

Second row: *Certosa, 6th State*, 1986. Serigraph. • *Trepassey: Triangles & Parallelograms*, 2000. Watercolor and gouache on cardboard.  
Study for *Madonna*, 1983–84. Oil on paper.

Third row: *Homage to the Pietà d'Avignon*, 1989–91. Oil and wax/oil emulsion on canvas. • *The American Family*, 1963. Oil and charcoal on paper.