

Conrad Jon Godly

TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK

JD MALAT
GALLERY

January - March 2019

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'To see is not to speak, because words could distract your eyes.'
-Kobayashi Hideo, *Bi wo motomeru kokoro*, 1957

*'I returned to my roots as a painter, and I also returned
to my birthplace in the mountains.'*
-Conrad Jon Godly

JD Malat Gallery is pleased to present 'TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK', a solo exhibition by Swiss artist Conrad Jon Godly. Following on from the artist's solo show, 'DARK IS LIGHT', in Kyoto, Japan, 2018, 'TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK' presents an exciting selection of work which addresses the relationship between human nature and the sublime. Godly finds a beauty in the awe and terror of nature, and his works are a reminder of the futility of human existence. 'TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK' embraces the viewer in the dramatic elements of nature making for a captivating yet peaceful display.

Despite Godly's earlier peripatetic career as a photographer in the fashion industry, during which he spent 18 years travelling across the urban centres of Europe, the eighteen works created for this exhibition are not direct studies from nature. In fact, Godly's return to nature, distances himself from the traditional canon of landscape painting, not just through technique, but in rendering a selection of abstracted work which he draws from memory. These are not scenes which one can summon directly from nature, nor are they individual landmarks, but approximations. As such, Godly is able to capture the most dominant and reflective aspects of his surroundings, saying;

I never paint a certain mountain. The mountains surrounding me where I live have a great effect on me but I paint from memory and imagination. Years ago I took photos of mountains, just to study details... and to bring these images into my memory. Today I don't take photos anymore, I have enough images inside of me.



What Godly reveals then, is the essence of one's natural surroundings, his works give reverence to the most vital elements of nature to create an overall feeling of nostalgia. The harsh, unrefined brushstrokes not only create a tension between subject matter and viewer, but the paint seems to drip off the canvas, breaking the barrier between the painting, and viewer. An idea, which undoubtedly reflects the consuming and unrestrained aspects of nature which Godly is attempting to contain. Godly's investigation culminates in a blunt expression of form, presenting a series of heavily impastoed canvases, mixed with faint brush marks. This severity of contrast displays Godly's ability to capture the purity of nature through a harmonious assembly of paint.

Moreover, having spent much of his time in Japan, a place which Godly considers his second home, Godly's work embodies the traditions of Japanese calligraphy, 'shodō', as well as leaning towards Shan shui, a traditional Chinese technique of landscape painting using just ink and brush. As such, professor and art historian Yuji Yamashita refers to Godly's work as 'the birth of Sansui Oil painting.'

In describing his approach to painting, Godly has stated that he 'studies nature very intensively, just to see, to understand nature and its own rules.' In so doing, Godly successfully extracts the spirit of his physical surroundings, and formulates a cohesive narrative between the individual elements of nature.

The nature of theatricality lies at the core of Godly's paintings, and by creating an abstracted version of nature, Godly is able to free himself from the limitations of reality. Such as what he found in photography, perhaps. 'TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK' is a culmination of Godly's fascination with capturing and framing the essence of nature. As Godly states;

It is not so much about the mountains or the sea, it is much more about the essence of something, whatever it is. I am very much interested in the essence of things. When I paint a mountain... I try to convey the essence of a mountain. What is the essence of a mountain, what is light, how does reflection work on snow etc?

Additionally, the clear spontaneity and urgency in Godly's work to evoke the essence of the mountains and surrounding environment is reflected in Godly's approach. Godly suggests, that his 'way of painting is very fast. You can see and feel it when you study my brushstrokes. My brushstrokes are the essence of my way to paint, very physical, very fast,' lending his work to the transient and fleeting elements of one's physical surroundings.

It is clear that Godly is intoxicated by his return to nature, and his work captures the warmth and happiness of an artist engaging with his native surroundings. The pure romantic qualities of nature are able to effectively filter through the canvas. As Philipp Meier's 2013 monograph 'Conrad Jon Godly, works+-', has suggested 'we are reminded of geological processes when viewing such cracked colour material, which forms a distinct topography on the canvas, especially in his large-format works.' An idea which is undoubtedly realised in this exhibition.

'TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK', is an exhibition which embodies this infectious return to nature. If one has never experienced the dramatic tension of the mountains, Godly's work traverses its viewer to the summit of vertiginous proportions, giving his canvases over to the all consuming elements of nature.



"The power that emerges from the textured canvases of Conrad Jon Godly's works is unmissable."

Jean-David Malat





TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #1, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 150 x 130 cm

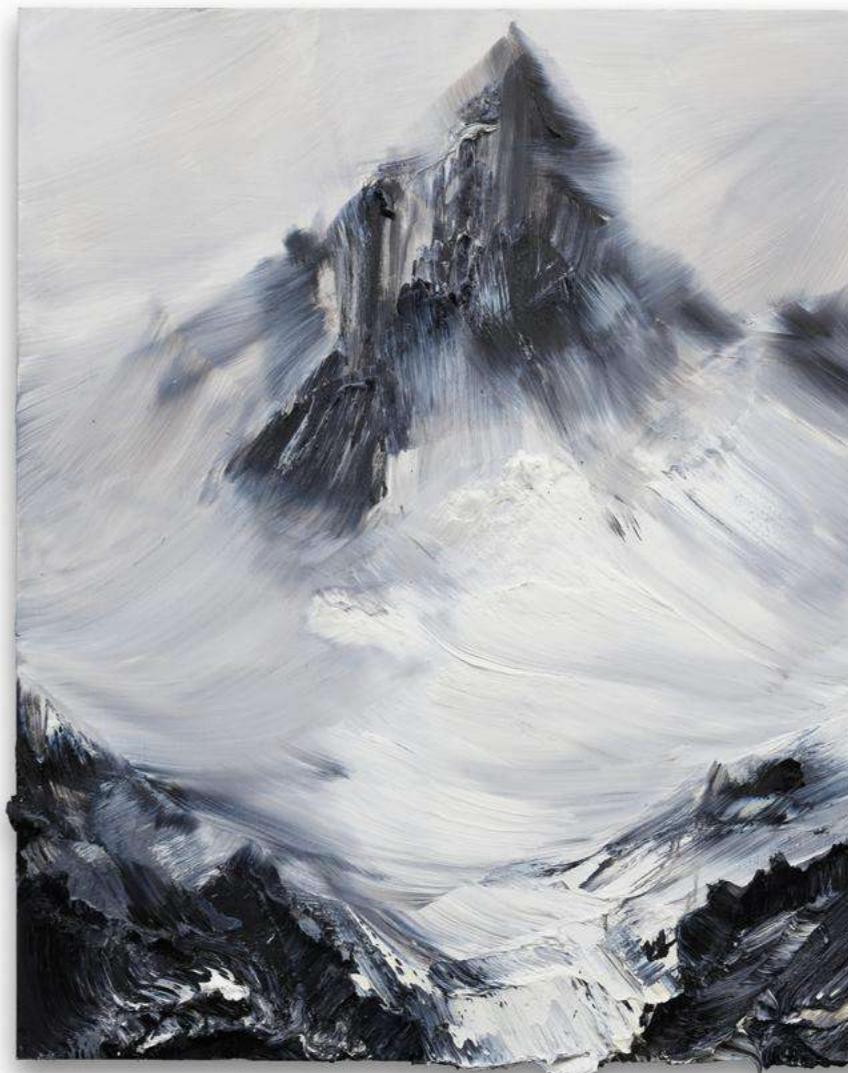


TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #2, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 150 x 130 cm



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #3, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 170 x 140 cm

13



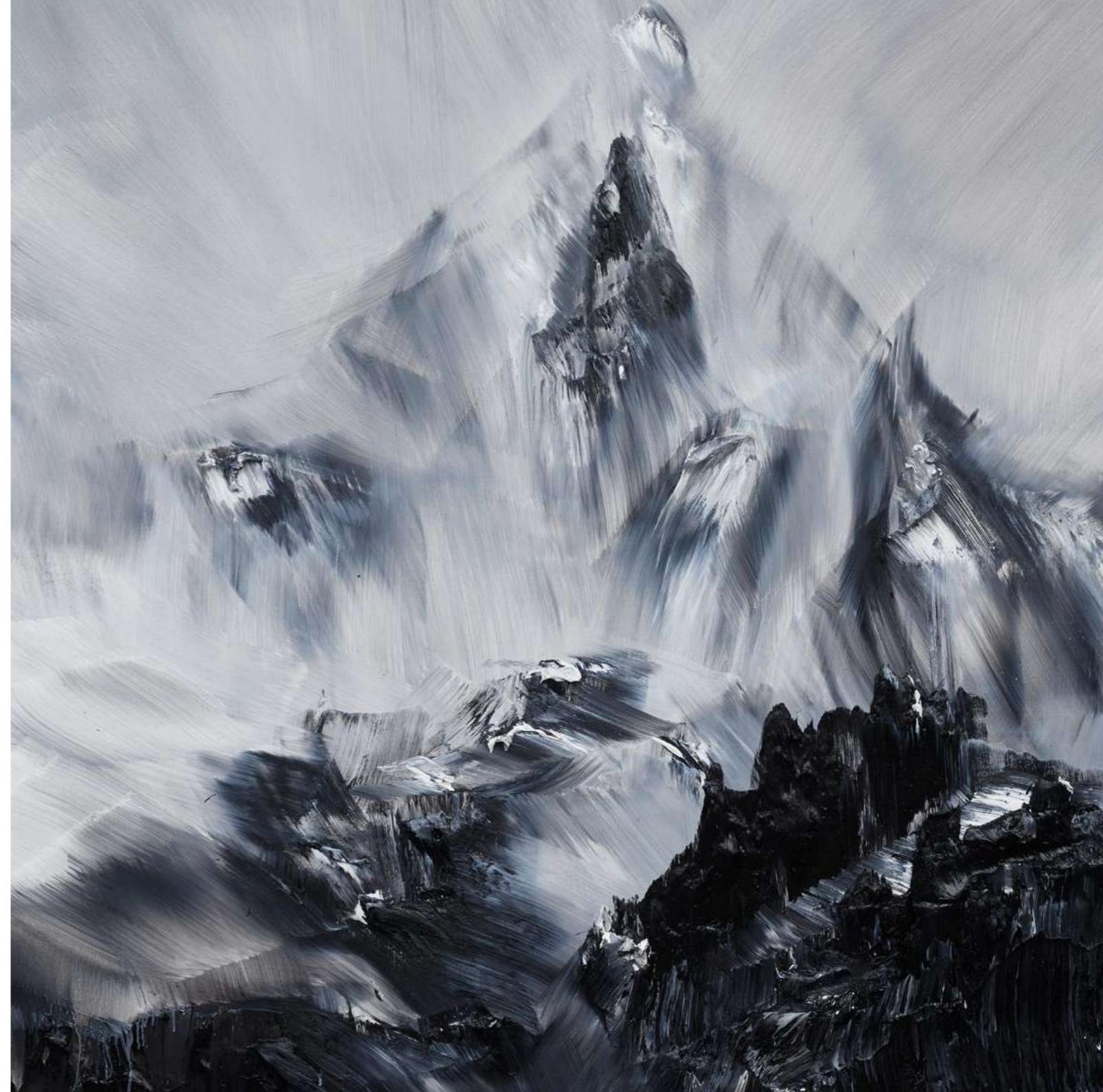
TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #4, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 170 x 140 cm

14



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #5, 2018

Oil on Canvas. 170 x 170 cm



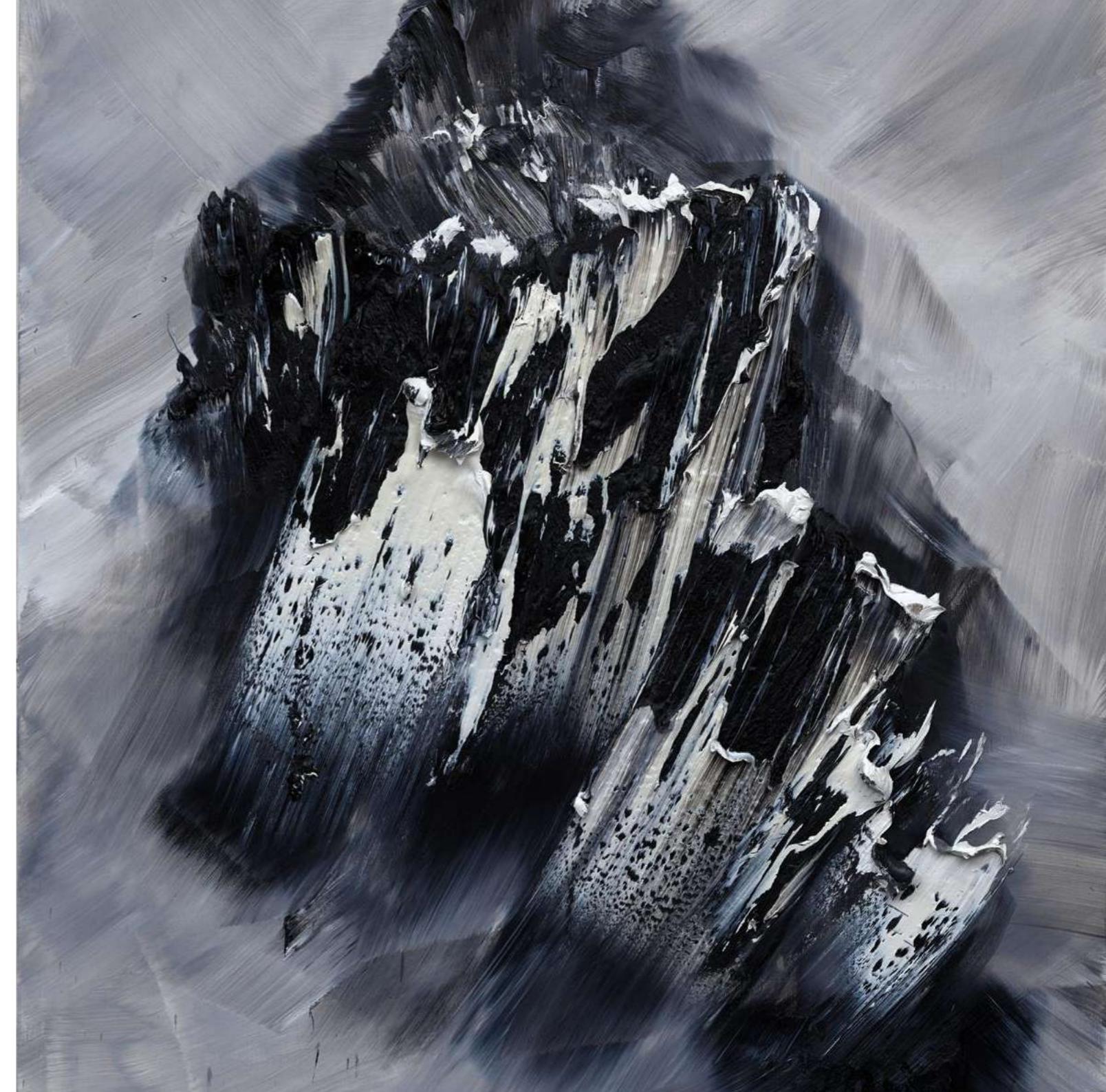


TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #6, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 170 x 230 cm





TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #7, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 200 x 170 cm





TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #8, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 250 x 160 cm

21



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #9, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 250 x 160 cm

22



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #10, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 170 x 200 cm



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #11, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 200 x 200 cm



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #12, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 150 x 130 cm

27



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #13, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 150 x 130 cm

28



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #14, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 200 x 170 cm



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #15, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 170 x 200 cm



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #16, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 200 x 250 cm



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #17, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 150 x 150 cm





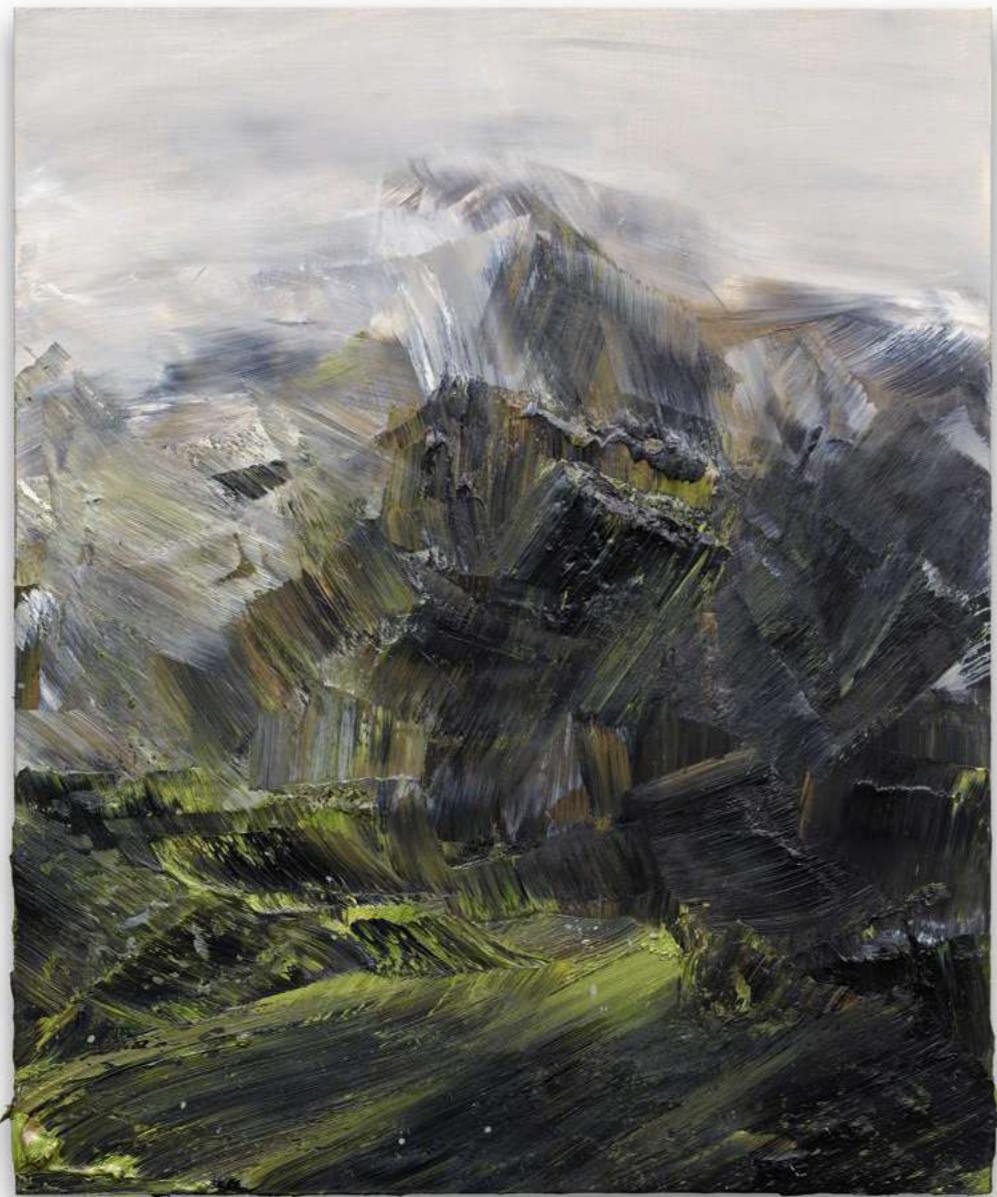
TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #18, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 170 x 230 cm



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #19, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 150 x 200 cm



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #20, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 150 x 200 cm



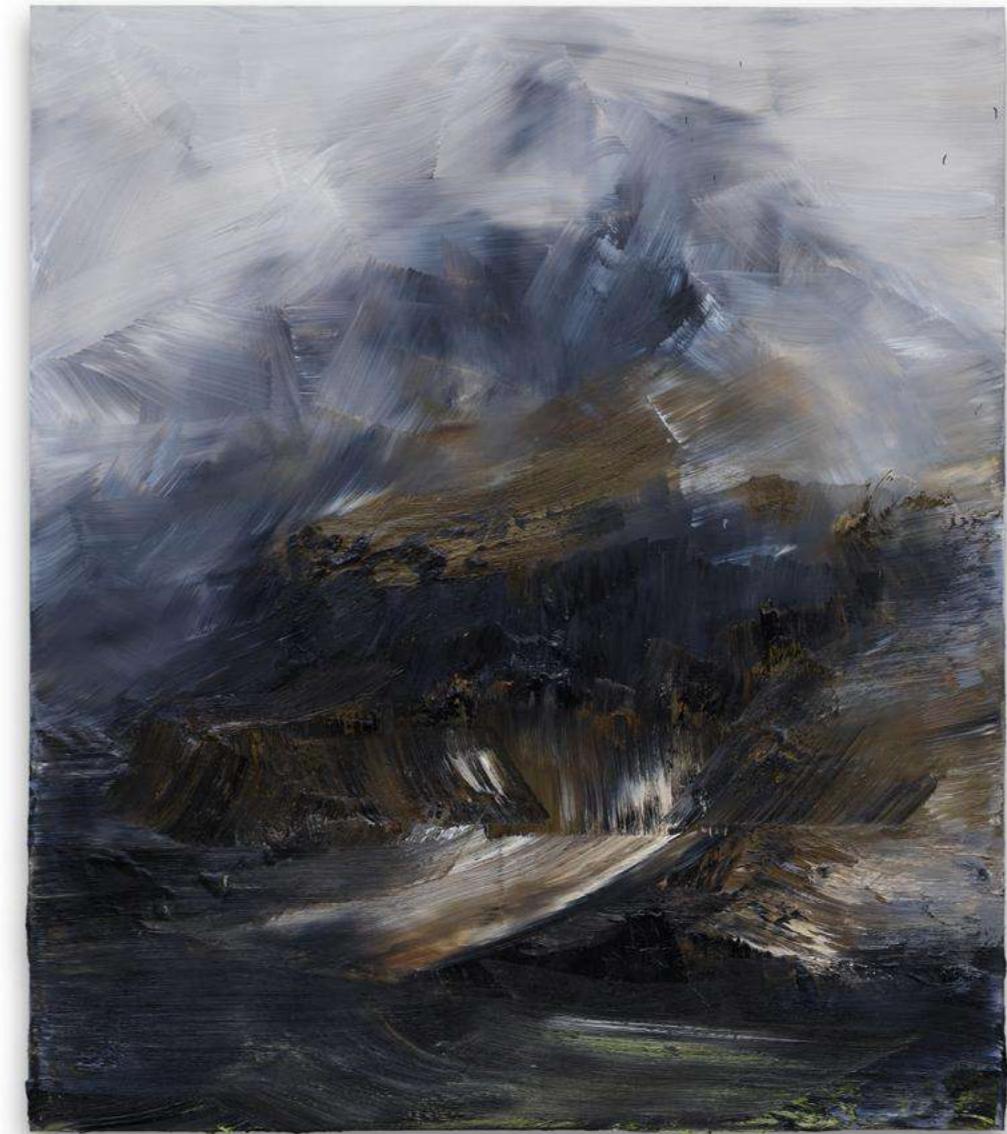
TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #21, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 170 x 140 cm

39



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #22, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 170 x 140 cm

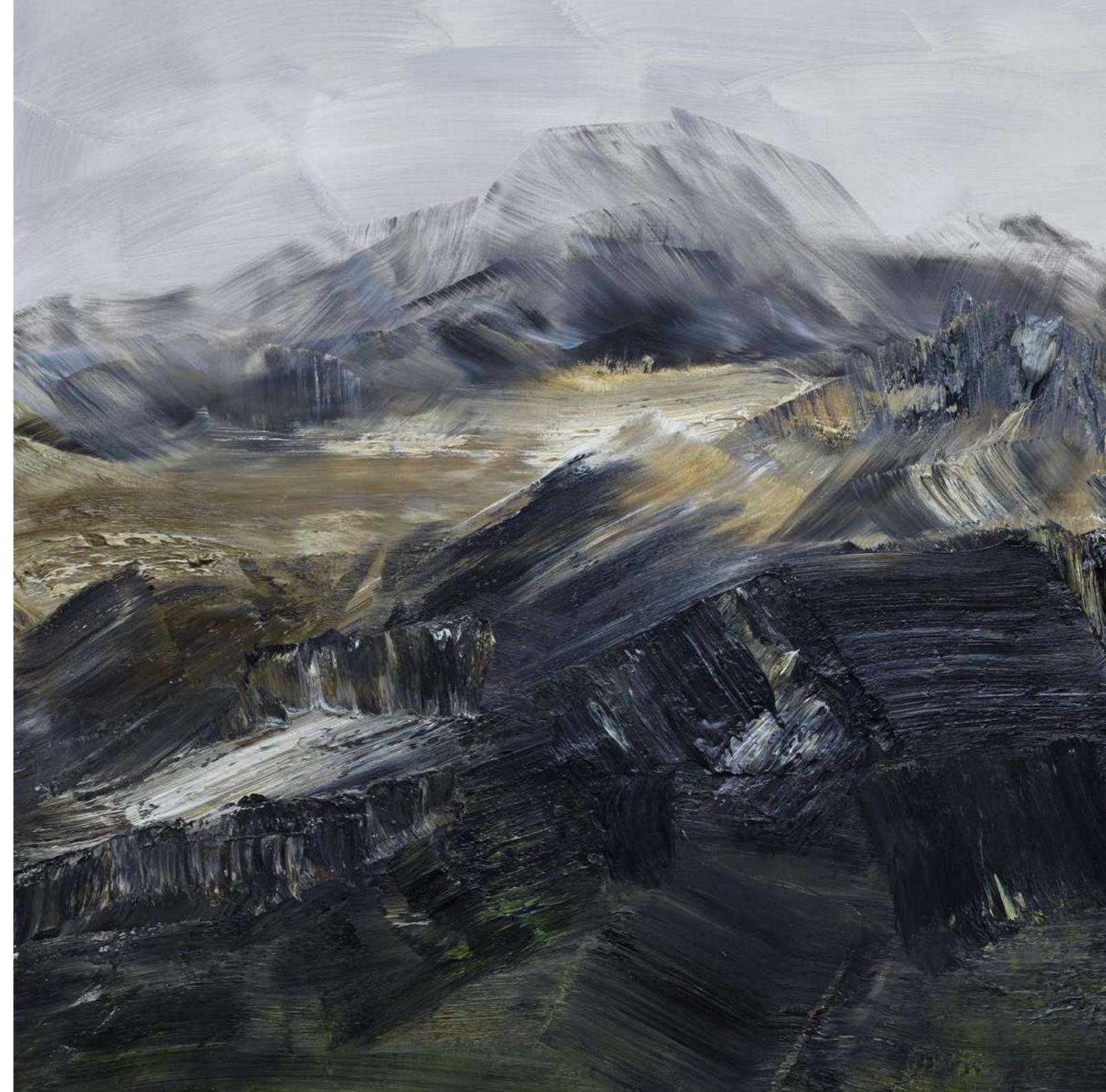
40



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #23, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 230 x 200 cm



TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #24, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 200 x 280 cm





TO SEE IS NOT TO SPEAK #25, 2018
Oil on Canvas. 230 x 320 cm

Conrad Jon Godly

B. 1962 in Davos (Switzerland)

Education

1986 Graduated Basel / School of Art / Masterclass of Painting

Career

1986-1987 Stay in the USA, first photographic works
1988-2004 Photographic work for international magazines and advertising
2008-2009 Lives and works in Vienna, Austria
2016 New studio in Japan
2018 Honored by the oldest Zen Temple Kyoto's, the Ryosokuin-Kenninji

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2018 *DARK IS LIGHT*, solo show,
Gallery Shibunkaku, Kyoto, Japan

2017 *ART TAIPEI*, Taiwan, Gallery Shibunkaku

2016 *ART STAGE SINGAPORE*, Singapore,
Gallery Shibunkaku

2016 *INS/DE*, solo show, Gallery Shibunkaku,
Kyoto, Tokyo, Japan

2015 *KIAF* (Korean International Art Fair),
Seoul, Gallery Shibunkaku

TEN YEARS AFTER, solo show, Tony
Wuethrich Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland

2014 *BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH*, Paintings
for Japan, solo show, Gallery Shibunkaku,
Kyoto, Tokyo and Fukuoka, Japan

2013 *MOUNTAIN*, solo show, Tony Wuethrich
Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland

2012 *VIEWPOINT*, solo show, Gallery
Luciano Fasciati, Chur, Switzerland

GENESIS, solo show, Museum of Art
Baselland, Muttenz, Switzerland

2011 *MASSIVE*, *FS.ART*, solo show, Berlin,
Germany

LIGHT/DARK, solo show, Gallery Katz
Contemporary, Zurich, Switzerland

2009 *TE DEUM*, solo show, Gallery Luciano
Fasciati, Chur, Switzerland

ART TAIPEI 2018, Taipei

Site-specific Art

Federal Criminal Court of Switzerland, Bellinzona

Important collections

Art collection of the SWISS NATIONAL BANK
Art collection of THE UBS Bank (United Banks of Switzerland)
Art collection of THE CREDIT SUISSE - CS bank
Art collection of JULIUS BÄR Bank
DAROS Collection
Art collection of GKB (Bank Canton of Grisons)

Selected Group Exhibitions

ALPEN Sehnsuchtsort & Bühne (ALPS Place of
longing & stage), Art Museum Salzburg, Austria
with exhibition catalogue

END OF YEAR EXHIBITION, 5 times participation at
the Art Museum Canton of Grisons

FINE ART ASIA 2018, Hong Kong

2013 *Conrad Jon Godly, Works + -*, Künstlermonografie,
(Revolver Publishing Berlin), Leinen Gebunden, 128 Seiten,
ISBN 978-3-86895-334-3

2011 *Alpen*, Ausstellungskatalog, Sehnsuchtsort &
Bühne, Residenzgalerie, Salzburg ISBN 987-3-901443-36-7



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An abstract painting featuring a complex, layered composition. The upper portion is dominated by a light, off-white or cream color, suggesting a bright sky or distant snow-covered peaks. Below this, several dark, expressive brushstrokes descend from the top right towards the bottom left, creating a sense of movement and depth. These dark strokes vary in intensity and texture, some appearing almost black while others have lighter, more translucent areas. In the lower right foreground, there are large, dark, angular shapes that resemble jagged mountain peaks or rocky outcrops. The overall effect is one of a dramatic, perhaps stormy, winter scene captured through an abstract lens.

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