

PRINCIPAL

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**WOLF KAHN
(AUSTRIAN / AMERICAN))**



Dark Fog Bank Out There 1992

Oil on canvas

42.9 x 78 inches 109 x 198 cm

Signed

Provenance: Dianna and Michael Bienes; Private collection NY

Exhibited: Carone Gallery FL, Boca Raton Museum of Art (label present. The work then travelled to the other museums); Youngstown, Butler Institute of American Art; Manhattan, Kansas State University, Marianna Kestler Beach Museum of Art Reno, Nevada Museum of Art; Vered Gallery East Hampton NY

Literature: Wolf Kahn: Dialogue Between Abstraction and Traditional, 1970-1995 Cat. #9.

Variant illustrated: Justin Spring - Wolf Kahn p. 128.

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Wolf Kahn's work has been deemed some of the most adventurous and dynamic of any contemporary artist. It is a continuous exploration of tension created by color. *"Kahn challenges both avant-garde and traditional expectations, a superb colorist devoted to representation, he's virtuous enough in his techniques to dare to be mundane in his subject matter ...His beautiful colors continuously astound."*

___Justin Spring, Artforum, October 1993).

" Wolf Kahn stands virtually as a school of one...He is one of the great painters in the modernist tradition."

___ Gerritt Henry, Art in America

Kahn has come to be widely considered the premier landscape painter in America. Color is Wolf Kahn's signature and he says this about his work: *this is my primary interest. I am always trying to get to the danger point, where color either becomes too sweet or too harsh; too noisy or too quiet.* Always striving to keep his art 'tough' and to keep an 'edge', Wolf Kahn makes landscape paintings with unmatched luminosity. Wolf Kahn is America's most prominent living American Landscape painter.

WOLF KAHN is one of the most important colorists working in America today. Born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1927, Wolf Kahn immigrated to the United States by way of England in 1940. In 1945 he graduated from the High School of Music and Art in New York after which he spent time in the Navy. Under the GI Bill he studied with the well-known teacher and abstract expressionist Hans Hoffman, becoming Hofmann's studio assistant. In 1950 he enrolled in the University of Chicago from which he graduated in 1951 with a BA.

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During his early years in New York, Kahn was inspired by the gestural technique of the Abstract Expressionists and by the expressive use of colors by artists such as Milton Avery and Mark Rothko. Other influences were the suggestive broadly painted landscapes of late nineteenth century, American artists such as George Inness, and Albert Pinkham Ryder, and the French Impressionist, Claude Monet.

The unique blend of Realism and the formal discipline of Color Field painting sets the work of Wolf Kahn apart. Kahn is an artist who embodies the synthesis of his modern abstract training with Hans Hofmann, with the palette of Matisse, Rothko's sweeping bands of color, and the atmospheric qualities of American Impressionism. It is precisely this fusion of color, spontaneity and representation that has produced such a rich and expressive body of work.

An Austrian refugee from Nazi persecution, Kahn said, *"I am drawn to paint landscape out of [my] a refugee's constant search for his roots."* Though the weight of artistic interest in the late 50's was dominated by the power of the Abstract Expressionists, he became one of a group of young artists who introduced nature back into art. He has since emerged as the preeminent landscape painter of the late twentieth century, recognized for his ability to reveal emotion through light, color, and form.

Kahn derives his themes and images from the countryside in the vicinity of his summer home in Vermont, focusing his attention on motifs ranging from barns and farmhouses and simple conditions of the land to minimalist long-focus abstractions of the tenuous line between land and sky, between edge of forest and meadow where color is bundled into form. These works, which have their beginnings outdoors often developed first in his pastels, are refined and completed in the artist's studio. As a result, Kahn's, "best landscapes come about partly from memory...[he uses] the sight of nature to make a

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picture.” In this respect, Kahn’s approach parallels that of his nineteenth century predecessor William Morris Hunt, who also believed that the best landscapes were painted indoors and from memory. According to Hunt, “when before nature, you are so occupied with representing what you see, that you can’t study combination and composition, you can’t make a picture.”

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