

Sullivan Goss

AN AMERICAN GALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 8, 2022



WOSENE WORKE KOSROF

LABYRINTH OF WORDS

JULY 29 - SEPTEMBER 26, 2024

OPENING RECEPTION:

1ST THURSDAY, AUGUST 1ST | FROM 5-8 pm

SANTA BARBARA, CA - Sullivan Goss is excited to announce its third solo exhibition by internationally renowned contemporary painter, WOSENE WORKE KOSROF. *Labyrinth of Words* features sixteen new paintings and will be accompanied by a catalog that includes a new essay by **Richard B. Woodward**, the founding curator of the African Arts Department at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.

Labyrinth of Words isn't just an exhibition title; it's also the name of Wosene's newest series of paintings. Many of the artist's most iconic works are visually complex, blending the letter-forms from the biblically-aged Amharic alphabet of his native Ethiopia with abstracted iconography that suggests story-telling. His compositions come out of the "all-over painting" approach to abstraction, which involves filling the whole canvas one passage at a time until the whole thing feels finished and balanced. Finding your way through these passages of color, letter-form, texture, and icon can feel like a maze, but many will experience it as a labyrinth of beauty, mystery, and imagination.

In the past few years, Wosene's significance as a leading voice in the international discourse on abstract art has become well-established. His work has been featured on the back cover of Pepe Karmel's anthology *Abstract Art: A Global Perspective* (2020), and in Phaidon's *VITAMIN TXT* (2024). In 2020, his painting *Elemental Coltrane II* was featured in the De Young Museum, and in 2022, *A Taste for Words X* was acquired by the Crocker Museum.

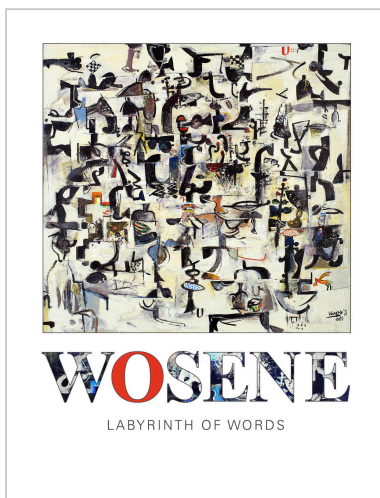
The artist will be on hand for the opening on **1ST THURSDAY, AUGUST 1ST, 2024**.

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For images or other information requests, contact Nathan Vonk at 805.730.1460 or nathan@sullivangoss.com

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Wosene was born in Ethiopia in 1950 and trained at the School of Fine Arts (SFA), Arat Kilo/Addis Ababa, where he went on to become one of his country's modern art leaders. In 1978, he immigrated to the US where he pursued a Masters of Fine Arts degree at Howard University in Washington D.C. He was mentored there by Jeff Donaldson, a major African American artist, who advised him to use his proficiency and fascination with Amharic script to develop his own abstract language. Ethiopian history got in there; so did early New York graffiti. But a lot of European and American abstract painting ideas were assimilated too, as were the syncopation and improvisation of American jazz music. In 1991, he relocated to California, settling in Berkeley in 1995 where he has remained ever since. In 1999, the Indianapolis Museum became the first U.S. museum to acquire the artist's work, but many have since joined them.



Copies of the exhibition catalog will be available at the gallery for sale. They include all of the new images for the exhibition as well as a select few recent paintings that are not part of the show. A significant new essay by Richard B. Woodward, Emeritus Curator of African Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia. The exhibition catalog also contains a reasonably complete CV.