

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 30 April 2025

CHANDLER GALLERY PRESENTS *ISLAND OF SHADES*
A TWO-PERSON EXHIBITION OF WORK BY JOHN DESCARFINO

Exhibition dates: 2 May – 14 June 2025

MILL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA – CHANDLER GALLERY is pleased to present *Island of Shades*, an exhibition of works on paper by Brooklyn-based artist John, on view from May 2nd through June 14th, 2025. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, May 2nd from 6 to 8pm. All are welcome to attend.

This exhibition presents sixteen watercolor, colored pencil, graphite and collage works by the artist. Twelve of these works are part of Descarfino's recent *Island of Shades* series, and inspired by the island of Purgatory in Dante Alighieri's epic poem *The Divine Comedy*. In a statement on the series, Descarfino wrote, "As described by Dante, Purgatory is a mountain-island where the deceased hope for redemption from vices of misdirected or deficient love. The themes of transformation and atonement inherent to Dante's timeless narrative served as a poetic stimulus for this series of labor-intensive drawings.

"I selected structural elements within Dante's poem to guide my approach for making the drawings. My intention was not to illustrate the narrative, so I looked for themes and concepts in the text that might furnish ideas for materials and processes to use as analogs. With the notion of redemption in mind, I chose a set of watercolor drawings I had already begun working on that I felt still needed further resolution. I thought I might 'redeem' them by subjecting them uniformly to new sequences of labor-intensive processes. These entailed transferring, staining, optical and complementary color mixing, cutting, puncturing, and concealing. These processes generated abstract renditions of settings featured in the poem, such as geographical terrains and nebulae. I also sought to draw indirect reference to Dante's use of contrapasso as a structural principle, in the sense that the drawings were formed out of contradictions and counterpoints, embodying the tensions inherent in such a structure."

The resulting twelve works, as well as the four, earlier graphite *Flesh and Stone* works, are a visually and ideologically rich. Descarfino's commitment to detail and precision when rendering abstract ideas and

Chandler Gallery

108 Throckmorton Avenue Mill Valley California

info@chandler-gallery.com 415 444 6587 chandler-gallery.com

themes visually compels and engages viewers in considering the ideas Descarfino is drawing from: contrapasso, atonement, redemption and transformation. The sub-series of *Island of Shades* (*Island of Shades* and *Terrace*) feel as if they could be shifting phases of a single idea or place in eternal flux, while simultaneously reading as topographical studies.

John Descarfino received his BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York City and his MFA from Hunter College of The City University of New York. He had numerous solo exhibitions at the Lucas Schoormans Gallery in New York City and has shown in group exhibitions at the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX; Blum and Poe Gallery, Santa Monica, CA; Galeria Espacio 48, Santiago de Compostela, Spain; the Berkshire Museum in Massachusetts, the Edward Hopper House Museum and Study Center; David and Schweitzer Contemporary, and the South Broadway Cultural Center in Albuquerque, NM, among others. His work was reviewed in Artnews, Artnet, The Journal News, and Arte Fuse. His work is included in several public collections including the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebaek, Denmark; JP Morgan Chase; and The Capital Group, Los Angeles. He received grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Café Royal Cultural Foundation, The City University of New York Research Foundation; and Faculty Development Leaves from Parsons School of Design and The City University of New York. The artist lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

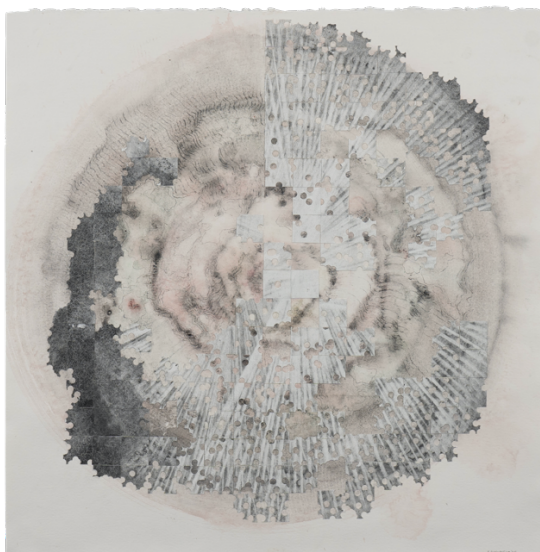


John Descarfino, *Island of Shades (IV)*, 2024, watercolor, collage, and colored pencil on paper, 15 ½ x 16 inches, 19 x 19 inches framed

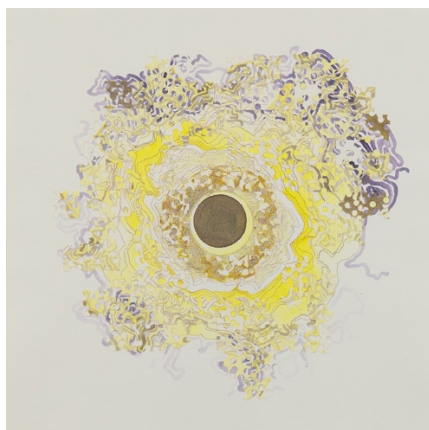
Chandler Gallery

108 Throckmorton Avenue Mill Valley California

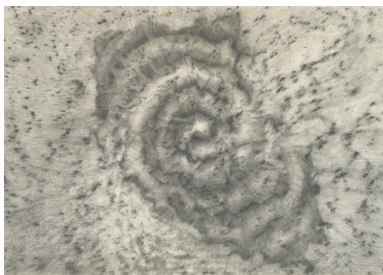
info@chandler-gallery.com 415 444 6587 chandler-gallery.com



Island of Shades (V), 2025, watercolor, collage, and graphite on paper, 19 ½ x 19 ½ inches



John Descarfino, *Terrace V (Island of Shades)*, 2024, watercolor, collage, colored pencil on paper, 16 x 16 inches, 19 x 19 inches framed



John Descarfino, *Flesh and Stone (II)*, 2009, graphite on paper, 8 ¼ x 11 ¾ inches, 13 ¼ x 16 5/8 inches framed

Chandler Gallery

108 Throckmorton Avenue Mill Valley California

info@chandler-gallery.com 415 444 6587 chandler-gallery.com

Chandler Gallery is a contemporary art gallery, founded in March of 2025 by Chandler Simpson. Sitting on the edge of Mill Valley's historic town square, the gallery finds profound reciprocity in its place. Embracing the pluralism of its positioning, Chandler Gallery finds grounding and influence in the innate mysticism of Mount Tamalpais and the towering redwoods of Muir Woods a stone's throw away, in addition to the bustling cultural locus of San Francisco nine miles to the south, just over the Golden Gate Bridge. Mill Valley is a historic and artistic hub that has long-centered the arts, and we are excited to be a part of that. Committed to championing the art of emerging and established artists, and bringing new perspectives to the Marin community, the gallery is excited to pursue culturally engaged exhibition programming.

Chandler Gallery

108 Throckmorton Avenue Mill Valley California

info@chandler-gallery.com 415 444 6587 chandler-gallery.com