

JOHN KORTLANDER

DEUS OTIOSUS

These predominantly black and white paintings belong to a group of works that is an outgrowth of an earlier project called One Year of Worship, where I attended a different place of worship once a week for a year. During that year I went to the church in Amsterdam, Holland, where the Pilgrims worshiped prior to leaving for the New World. I sat quietly with Quakers in Traverse City, Michigan, and danced and ate great food with Krishnas in Columbus, Ohio, where I also joined worshipers at the Church of Scientology. Simplified crosses, and some of the little churches in rural settings that I encountered, linger in my mind and now at times appear abridged as icons in the new works.

I like to work on many canvases at once so that one canvas can immediately inform another. I am more guided by any momentary insight I might have that will make a piece engaging than the specifics of an idea I would like to convey. *Deus Otiosus* can be translated from Latin as “a god at leisure” or “a god who largely retires from the world and is no longer involved in its daily operation.” I view the works as leaning toward the philosophical rather than the spiritual, social, or political realms, and sometimes I like a little humor.

John Kortlander