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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Charlie James Gallery is delighted to present the exhibition:



Arnold Böcklin, *The Isle of the Dead* (Fifth version), 1886.



Doug Wichert, *6/18/19*, Chalk and acrylic on plywood, 15 x 21.5 inches, 2019.

DOUG WICHERT – *THE ISLE OF THE DEAD GERMANS*

JULY 22nd – AUGUST 29th, 2020

OPEN BY APPOINTMENT

Charlie James Gallery is delighted to present *The Isle of the Dead Germans*, Doug Wichert's first solo show at the gallery, opening July 22nd.

Words on the show from the artist:

For the past ten years or so I have repeatedly repainted Böcklin's *The Isle of the Dead* but given it my title; *The Isle of the Dead Germans*. I have had a fascination with Böcklin's *The Isle of the Dead* since my college days but only later became interested in redoing the painting myself. About the turn of the last century I arrived at the title *The Isle of the Dead Germans* but had no idea what it meant.

The title springs from a relationship I had with a friend whose families tried to escape the German racist and totalitarian collapse but were destroyed in the attempt. I considered using it on work reflecting on the collapse of the idealistic humanist worldview of German philosophers and historians but couldn't really make the name fit the project.

Then I read *Weimar on the Pacific* and saw, in the displaced German-speaking community in Los Angeles during the Second World War, the island of refuge of those now dead people and the subject of my title. The rescue effort of Hollywood in the West and the theater community in the East created two islands but I can only address the one in which I live.

The process is simple. On nearly daily early mornings before I leave for work I will draw and paint again and again the image of Böcklin's paintings while reflecting on the alienation, loss, fear and loathing of those small number of refugees who got this far and spent their days remembering loss and destruction while living in paradise of a sort. I have hundreds of them and just found another two boxes of the work in a closet. I can stop at any time, but I do not choose to do so.

The work explores and drifts and survives the sadness that it dwells upon. I live a life so much better than the lives of those persecuted and injured but I find in the topic of alienation something that draws me closer to them even if it does not connect us.

I am neither an historian nor a philosopher. I have found an image and a project and will continue to turn my thoughts and feelings towards this study of alienation within safety and privilege, as long as it means something great and lasting to me.

-Doug Wichert, July 2020

Doug Wichert received an MFA in Printmaking at CSULB in the 1970s and was Master Printer at a creative workshop in Corona del Mar in the early 1980s. Since then, he has worked designing art framing and display equipment, handling and selling art in two small art galleries here in Los Angeles.