

Sullivan Goss

AN AMERICAN GALLERY

11 EAST ANAPAMU STREET
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101
(805) 730-1460

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 13, 2026



WOSENE

WORDS IN TIME

JULY 31 - SEPTEMBER 21, 2026

OPENING RECEPTION:

1ST THURSDAY, AUGUST 6TH

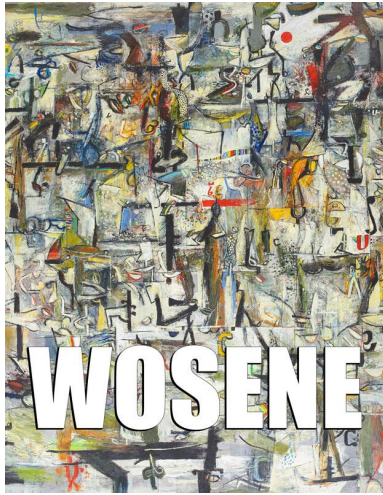
FROM 5-8pm

SANTA BARBARA, CA - Sullivan Goss is proud to host a new solo exhibition of abstract paintings for Ethiopian-born painter, **WOSENE WORKE KOSROF**. Since the gallery's last exhibition, **Wosene's works have been added to nine museum collections**. He's now in 30 public collections. His 2022 monograph, *WOSENE: Beyond Words*, is becoming a rare book as new copies have almost run out. The artist himself would certainly be entitled to look back on his achievements with pride, but instead, he continues to work quietly and persistently up in Berkeley, California. Still, it's fair for any seventy-something year old to look back.

In that spirit, the gallery will exhibit thirteen recent paintings and **one important painting from the first series of the artist's career** called *Midnight Improv*. Painted in 1987, it is part of his *Graffiti Magic* series – a body of work that grew out of his M.F.A. thesis show at Howard University in 1980. At that time, Wosene's signature use of Amharic script in "all-over" abstract painting was new to the world, but he saw analogs in the wild-style train graffiti he saw on occasional trips to New York. *Midnight Improv* will provide a new layer of context to a body of work that Wosene has painted over the last six years. Most were painted over the last year. The layering of Amharic characters in fields of paint that are built up with gestures and shapes have always suggested layers of meaning. Looking at Wosene's paintings can feel like listening to music, where rhythmic structure allows for passages of improvisation, but it can also feel like excavation. Amharic script is over two thousand years old and Wosene's abstract painting language has been evolving for forty-six years. You have to dig around in the abstraction to get a sense of how meaning can build up through a creative process driven by intuition and experimentation.

www.sullivangoss.com | www.facebook.com/sullivan.goss

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



Wosene will be present at the **1st Thursday reception on August 6th**. Come meet the artist and celebrate this new body of work. **A catalog will accompany the exhibition** and be available for purchase at the gallery.

Image above: WOSENE WORKE KOSROF *House of Words III*, 2020 | 78 x 96 inches | acrylic on linen

Image left: cover of WOSENE: Words in Time catalog. Available at the gallery for \$12.50.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Born in 1950 in the Arat Kilo district of Addis Ababa, Wosene formally trained at the Addis Ababa School of Fine Arts, and completed a BFA with distinction in 1972. In the aftermath of a 1974 military coup, Wosene was compelled to leave Ethiopia, eventually enrolling as a Ford Foundation Talent Scholar at Howard University for graduate work in studio painting in 1978. In 1991, he moved from the east coast to California and has been based in Berkeley for many years. Wosene's work has been exhibited internationally at institutions including the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC; the National Museum of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa; the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; the Crocker Museum, Sacramento; and the Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles. His work is held in the collections of many important museums. He recently had his work published in *VITAMIN TXT: Words in Contemporary Art* by Phaidon.