

# Community

## 'Wake' works well at Delaware Center for Contemporary Arts

By R.B. STRAUSS

The distance of two years has only strengthened the resolve of America since we were attacked. Some immediate predictions never came to pass, while other unforeseen events were born and still loom large. Though artists from outside our shores offer a jaundiced view on the tragedy, our own artists continue to walk a path of earnest intent.

One such deeply moving experience is "Wake," featuring work by the artistic team of Kocot and Hatton at the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, (www.thedcca.org), 200 S. Madison St. near the Wilmington Riverfront through Oct. 12.

For the first time ever, two galleries (Dupont I and Dupont II) are given over to a single body of work — paintings, drawings and a video. On view is art composed in the hypnopompic state, which is the interval between sleep and wakefulness.

Stretched along the walls of the gallery are a number of pieces in the "Black Ground" sequence, monochrome black paintings hung on point. This method suggests both the billowing clouds of thick, blinding smoke and also the sedimentary quality of coal. One last painting composed on site rests

at a 15-degree angle, thus surrendered to gravity.

The utilization of the gallery space and the pacing of the work offers it up as a retinue of sorts, a roll call of the dead. Yet for the sadness, the work itself impresses with its individual qualities amidst the single and singular palette.

These paintings are all about the texture of their making, as there is a rough hewn quality to them all, the surface of the work giving way to an ongoing growth that negates their origin in pain.

The drawings are offered in totally different fashion than the paintings, yet work well as a flip side.

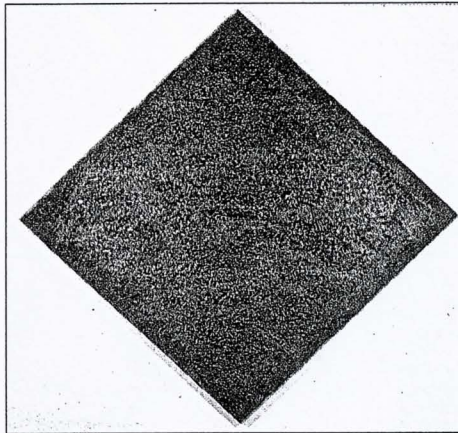
These cover a wall of the gallery, stretching from floor to ceiling, thus those rising high would need a ladder to appreciate on an immediate level.

As with the paintings, the key here is texture, yet it has less to do with surface tension than the literal mark and/or line itself.

The range here is expansive and kinetic, while the graphite serves to capture and reflect light, so that as you move, there is almost a sense of a hologram to the work. Some are all bold strokes, others barely breaths of marks and the flow over the wall is a perfect setup for the video's own take on growth.

The video binds the paintings and

### Review



Black Ground #7 by Kocot and Hatton

drawings together through a positive, cleansing image that teleports all who encounter it to a sylvan paradise opened up on a television screen. Here, a stationary camera focuses on what looks a close-up of tall grass, scattered blades topped with seedlings. These shift and wave in a breeze, and this invokes a sensory trigger so that you can smell the crisp air, feel the breeze on your face and hear birdsong. Again and again, blurred figures of birds in flight course

through the scene.

There is a near-sepia "palette" here, and the "static" camera furthers a sense of the painterly. The power of nature deflects the mood of the paintings and drawings to offer hope, proving that tomorrow can once again match today.

Subtle, spiritual, while somewhat somber, "Wake" will well linger a lifetime.

◆ Robert Strauss lives in Wilmington.