

Michael Knigin

Below, a wave crashes on a desolate shore. Above, thick clouds burn against a turbulent sunset, and beyond, the sky dissolves into the celestial vastness of the unblinking stars. These images, seemingly unrelated, all merge into one within a single work of art by the innovative artist Michael Knigin.

Never before has our world been so aware of the need for our environment and our hectic modern lives to merge into one, and few artists have captured the spirit of this heightened awareness of the world around us like Knigin has. With his focus on the interconnectivity of all forms of nature and mankind's place within it, Knigin creates artwork that compels his viewers to contemplate the great chain of life.

Much as our attitude toward the landscape around us has been redefined in recent years, Knigin's images have refined the very idea of landscape artwork for an environmentally conscious generation. As such, within Knigin's artwork the Green movement finds one of its greatest artistic expressions.

"In my paintings and graphics," Knigin says, "I seek to isolate objects from their mundane contexts and reorganize them, thereby granting them new life." This technique is particularly evident in *Fiery Performer*, a performer's image is mixed in with burning clouds and intense eruptions of lava. The artwork, like so many of his other creations, is an energetic combination of the familiar and the abstract.

"When placed together," Knigin says, "these images evoke thought and a new kind of awareness. This involvement of concern, sensibility, sensitivity, and thought hopefully brings about the eventual evolvement of the viewer, affecting the viewer's awareness and thought."

This ability to evoke awe in his artwork has won him acclaim from such prominent institutions as NASA, which commissioned Knigin to visually interpret the significance of space shuttle *Discovery's* triumphant return to space in the wake of the *Challenger* space shuttle disaster.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Knigin is a graduate of Tyler School of Art at Temple University. For much of his life, following a Ford Foundation Grant to study at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles, Knigin was involved in the production of traditional lithographs.

Knigin, whose Zen-like artwork defies generalization, has been the subject of eighteen solo exhibitions throughout the United States and the rest of the world. His artwork has been featured in publications as diverse as *The New York Times* and *Art in America*, a testament to his process of ever redrawing the boundaries of contemporary art.