

**Nigerian-born artist, Victor Ekpuk, repurposes ancient African language into modern art.**

*Ekpuk's work is culturally conscious, educating a new generation about a forgotten language.*



Washington, D.C. – [June 9, 2009] – The Long View Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by Nigerian-born, D.C. artist **Victor Ekpuk**.

Ekpuk is inspired by the ancient tradition of ideographic writing systems in Africa. He combines arcane symbols with his own invented pseudo-script to tell a story in his compositions. Of course the languages in which he “writes” are not comprehensible, therefore the stories become not about words themselves but about the forms the words take. Their beauty lies not in their meaning but in their shape, forcing the viewer to see the work rather than read the work. The cultural consciousness Ekpuk creates is inspiring – transforming abandoned languages into a record of permanence in art.

Ekpuk describes himself as a painter, although it is clear that drawing influences his work. He regularly paints on his drawings and draws on his paintings – in this collection, he draws on his drawings. Ekpuk has also been exploring drawing as an independent genre rather than in support of his painting. Part of that exploration has resulted in this body of work where drawing is realized through use of traditional and digital tools. The computer is used to draw, paint, make collages or manipulate forms, and the printed images provide a surface on which further embellishments with traditional drawing tools are possible. The mix of digital and traditional drawing methods makes sense for an artist who has been modernizing an ancient system of writing for years. His modern, digital expression never supersedes his respect for the traditional methods.

Ekpuk has shown across the world. Of note, his work has been featured at the Newark Museum in New Jersey, The National Museum for African Art in Washington, D.C., and The Fowler Museum in Los Angeles.

## Victor Ekpuk

June 18, 2009 – July 18, 2009

Opening Reception: Thursday, June 18, 6pm to 8pm