

Torben Ulrich (born Oct. 4, 1928) has been called one the most colorful and unique voices in Danish culture of the 20th and 21st centuries, stemming from his lifelong activities as poet, musician, radio and newspaper journalist, painter, filmmaker, performer and athlete, all attempting to explore these fields within a transdisciplinary approach. This view has long been grounded in a process-oriented, wide-ranging study of movement in spiritual, philosophical and athletic traditions, accentuating the practical while including the historical aspects of alchemy, dance, yogic studies, Buddhism, Christian and Jewish Kabbalah, Sufism, Taoism, etc.

Torben's work with ball, rope, racquet and rice paper has its beginnings in 1971, when the Lions Club of Copenhagen asked a variety of politicians, actors, writers and others to make "a blue elephant" for a charity exhibit to benefit a senior center in Denmark. Ulrich suggested on his part another kind of elephant: the idea of play.

Today, using primarily skipping rope and tennis net, racquet and ball, Ulrich explores play and the athletic event with ink and/or acrylic, predominantly on rice paper. In some earlier series, he often first skipped an inked rope onto the rice paper, which was placed on the ground. When dry, the paper was then posted or held against a wall and an inked ball was played (not placed), as a sign of ongoing playfulness. Later, a text might have been added. In the most recent series, a text was often the first step, followed by a served or stroked net, then rope, then ball.

www.torbenuulrich.com
www.balligraphies.net

Torben Ulrich



*marks
of
play,
re-
marks
on
being*

Nov. 1-30, 2017

GALLERY 30 SOUTH 30 S. WILSON AVE. PASADENA CA 91106 (323)547-3227 @GALLERY30SOUTH

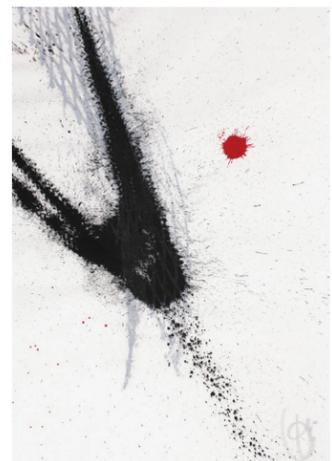
I first became aware of Torben Ulrich in the Metallica documentary *Some Kind of Monster*. His Gandalfian presence had made him a breakout star among the band's fans, and I made a mental note to learn more about him. A dozen years would pass before I came into contact with Torben and his wife, Molly Martin, following a brief conversation with author and archivist, Brian Lew, who advised me that I should contact them via the *Balligraphies* website.

After years as the director of La Luz de Jesus Gallery, I opened Gallery 30 South with my wife, Ai, to showcase the kinds of work that I couldn't show at La Luz. The former gallery's requirement that work be figurative and narrative allowed for a wide range of styles and genres, but not for abstract expressionism, minimalism, performance or installation art. Our new endeavor allowed a freedom to exhibit whatever we liked, and it became our mission to showcase artists who might help bridge the gap between figurative and abstract work. I was

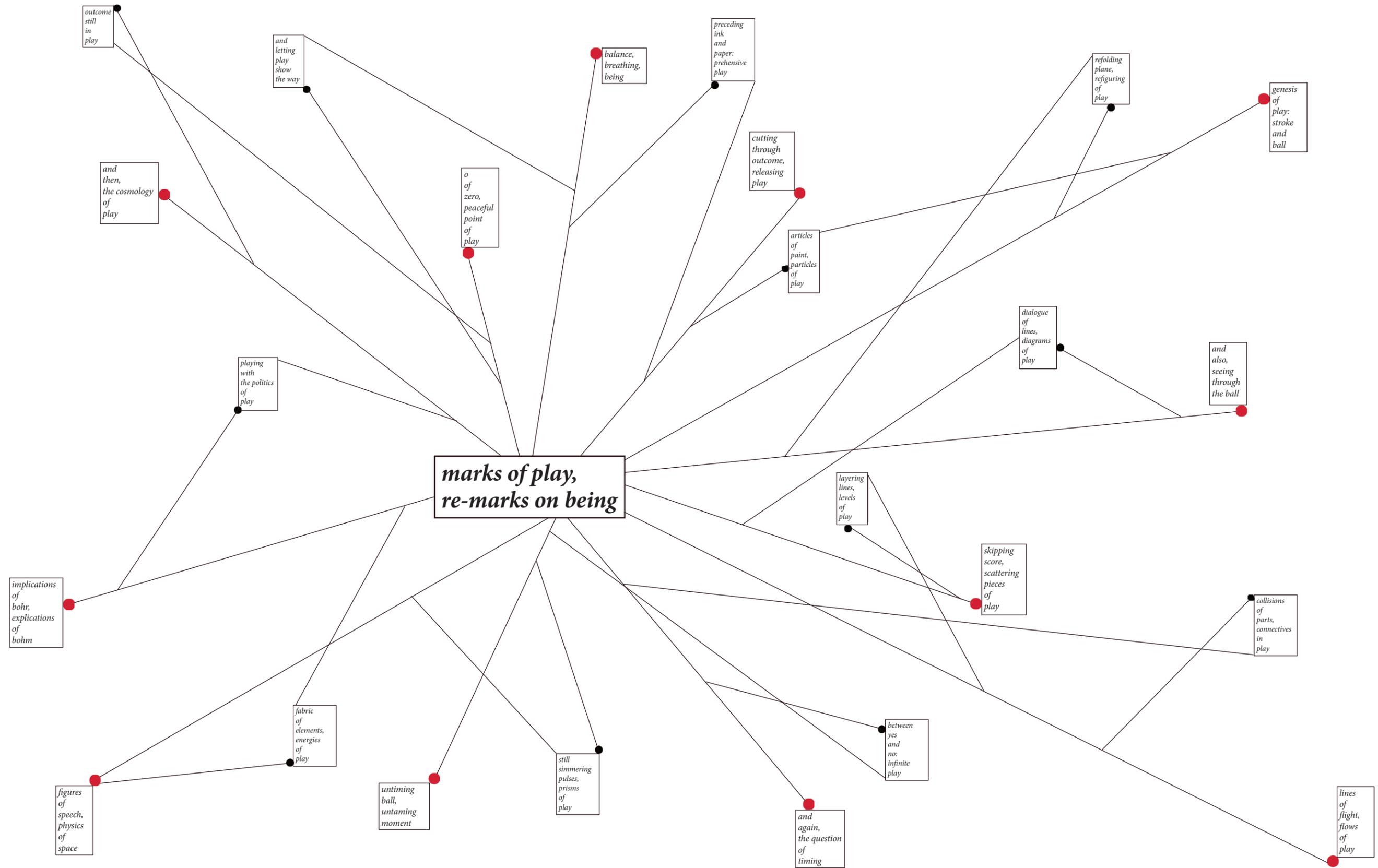
especially interested in multi-disciplinarians and looking to match high concept with high craft.

Torben's paintings are figurative abstracts, and therefore the epitome of this gallery's mission. There is an air of importance to his work because the paintings, which provide the salable goods in his exhibitions, are a byproduct of the actual art. Torben's milieu is really performance: He uses painting as a medium in which to capture motion. He is a philosopher of movement, with music being an integral component of his expression, and so one might say that Torben Ulrich is a philosopher, a musician, an athlete and a painter, in that order. He just also happens to be a genius and my friend, and it is with great pleasure that we host this exhibition, which is the first retrospective of his work in Southern California.

— Matt Kennedy
gallery30south.com



mappings, foldings, fields: textual interplay*



*Textual interplay: Red dots ● indicate first series, black dots ● second series.