

**Bret Slater – “Heavy to One”**

6.4. – 18.5.2019

Opening: 5.4.2019, 6pm

The ethereal paintings of Bret Slater are beyond any recognizable scale. Like a horizon, the depth of Slater’s work rests on the edge of things: the edge of two dimensions and three dimensions, of internal and external, of soul and body. And It is through the compositional edges of these paintings that we feel the mindfulness involved in each work.

Consider how each compositional shape, when isolated, emphasizes flatness, while the relations between each shape and the translucence they are submerged under, suggest an atmospheric and perspective depth. The pulsation of this tension is as celestial as it is subatomic—like a molecule or solar system, it appears self-organized in a delicate, centralized balance. There are no terrestrial associations available for us to make, and by the otherworldly effect of these omissions, we move past their minimal quality to encounter an abundance of nuance embedded to their surface. These subtle inconsistencies refer to us to the corporeal; they feature the imperfect symmetry of anatomy and embody the idiosyncrasies definitive of individuality.

As opposed to offering a window into another dimension, or psyche, we feel each of these works as self-contained and compartmentalized. The intimacy of Slater’s work does not require us to cooperate with an illusion of simulated space as so many paintings ask of us. They are self-referential—ends in themselves, inhabiting our world like visitors from another.

In another sense, these paintings could be seen as iterations of the spaces we inhabit—when outdoors we stand on the sphere of the earth, while indoors we inhabit a rectangular matrix. Our perspective centers us in these environments and our self-awareness centers us in our body. Slater follows a Promethean impulse to unite the body with the external world; balancing internal forms of his paintings with their external shape in a way as to direct us inwards, towards a higher order of things.

Robert Samartino