

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

NEW YORK | ASPEN

JAY HEIKES
Echo In Color

On View February 13 – March 13, 2021 | 507 West 24 Street, New York, NY



Jay Heikes, *Second Wave*, 2020. Oil on stained canvas, 75 x 112 in.
Courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen.

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Echo in Color*, Jay Heikes' fifth solo exhibition with the gallery. With his upcoming show, Heikes continues his exploration of alchemical processes and the fleeting sense of connection that can be found when turning to nature and the universe. The exhibition will feature a selection of new and recent paintings from the artist's *Mother Sky* series and *Minor Planets* sculptures. *Echo in Color* will be on view February 13 – March 13, 2021 at the gallery's 507 West 24th Street in New York. On the occasion of this exhibition, the artist's first comprehensive monograph will be published in cooperation with Gregory Miller & Co. and distributed by Distributed Art Publishers and will feature text by Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer, Jenelle Porter, Philippe Vergne, and an interview between Heikes and Hamza Walker.

Heikes is regarded for his varied practice, wherein he combines and transforms an array of media and materials, including recent works that center around a preoccupation with the philosophical tradition of alchemy. The title of the exhibition, *Echo in Color*, references the perceptual phenomena of synesthesia, a blending of the senses in which the stimulation of one modality produces sensation in another. The assembled works in the exhibition evoke a similar awareness, crossing the senses in ways that are not understood through everyday language. Heikes' preoccupation with these concepts speaks to his deep considerations of the role that art serves in culture. During a time of economic, social, and environmental turbulence, the artist creates a meditative response to this uncertainty.

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"The sheer vastness of a wide-open space is imbued with feelings of emptiness – only in a cave or canyon can the gesture of a scream be returned," said Heikes. "Through the last four years of alienation and the recent time collectively spent in isolation, I began to see the idea that in retreating to an imagined vastness, such as through a painting of the sky, the works become representations that keep us grounded and avoid the total void of the sublime."

In particular, Heikes is interested in the juxtaposition of the painting and sculpture presented within *Echo in Color*. In his *Mother Sky* works, the artist stains the canvas using a combination of vinegar, salt, and powdered pigment. As they react, these substances generate unpredictable hues, ranging from rust, indigo, copper, and fluorescent greens. Screen printed and dabbed on the canvases are voluminous shapes of clouds and smoke, composed from distortions of found and photographed images. The euphoria in the otherworldly and meditative vistas simultaneously cause an underlying unease through the eerie and acidic tones of the tempestuous, burning skies that layer the canvas. The imagined atmospheres, at first an escapist opportunity for the viewer, reflect an inability to create complete control.

Presented alongside the paintings, Heikes will feature *Minor Planets* sculptures. This series of sculptures has been crafted from a range of materials, including concrete, pyrite, salt, slag, asphaltum, quartz, rope, and dust collected from the artist's studio in the forms of modeled orbs and disks – timeless and ancient in appearance. The latest iteration of the *Minor Planets* on view in *Echo in Color* has transitioned to center on the material of concrete, giving the sculptures weight and autonomy in both their scale and composition. In this way, the juxtaposition of turning to the sky as a means of transcendence alongside the grounding materiality of the sculptures offers refuge in turbulent times. Yet even the *Minor Planets* serve as a testimony to the unpredictability of the artist's chosen mediums and form, as the metals and complementary materials in the sculptures oxidize and mutate over time. In his 2019 text on this body of works, "I Wavereth," Heikes notes, "At times it feels like I am playing God with these landscapes, imagining an atmosphere from above that has finally freed itself of all human trivialities. I was supposed to pick up the mantle of activism and help answer the people's cries but instead I became more distant, even hidden, while creating these representational moods of the soul."

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About Jay Heikes

Yale graduate and Minneapolis-based artist Jay Heikes (b. 1975) is known for his heterogeneous practice, which mixes and reinterprets a kaleidoscopic array of media—activating stories, puns, and irony in a cyclical meditation. His most recent body of work employs his preoccupation with the philosophical tradition of alchemy. Themes of evolution and regeneration, stasis and corrosion take form in his artistic actions, recharging Heikes' previous narrative pursuits and reaffirming the notion that mutation and change are essential to the creative process.

Following his first solo presentation at Artists Space, New York in 2003, Heikes participated in a number of group exhibitions at venues such as the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2003) and the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (2002 and 2005). In 2006, Heikes was included in the *Whitney Biennial: Day for Night*, curated by Chrissie Iles and Philippe Vergne. Since then, Heikes has been the subject of numerous domestic and international exhibitions, including shows at The Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2007); the Aspen Art Museum (2012); Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam (2015); Shane Campbell

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Gallery, Chicago (2015); Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley (2018); Federica Schiavo Gallery, Rome (2019); and Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, NE (2019).

About Marianne Boesky Gallery

Since its inception in 1996, Marianne Boesky Gallery has represented and supported the work of emerging and established contemporary international artists of all media. In its first decade, the gallery was instrumental in launching the careers of major artists through an innovative exhibition program; and in 2016, the gallery expanded its flagship location to its adjacent space on West 24th Street. Now, the gallery continues to actively represent many significant artists such as Ghada Amer, Donald Moffett, Sanford Biggers and Frank Stella, among others. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the gallery will be transitioning its 509 layout in Chelsea into four gallery spaces to allow for regularly rotating presentations that can be experienced in a more intimate and semiprivate manner. The 507 gallery footprint will continue to host ambitious solo and group shows open to the public that will highlight the dynamic narratives and parallels across artist, media, and theme. Boesky West, opened in 2017 in Aspen, CO will also continue its rotating exhibition program showing both gallery artists and artists invited to present special projects. These recent changes highlight the gallery's ongoing experimentation with space and architecture as well as its continued commitment to the health and safety of its dynamic roster of artists and dedicated audience from around the globe.

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For more information about Jay Heikes, please contact Gallery Director Michael Plunkett at michael@boeskygallery.com or 212-680-9889. For press inquiries, please contact Thomas Dewey Davis, THIRD EYE, at thomas@hellothirdeye.com.

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