



TAYLOE PIGGOTT GALLERY

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TAYLOE PIGGOTT GALLERY ANNOUNCES RECENT PAINTINGS,
AN EXHIBITION WITH ARTIST STEPHEN KEENEY

Exhibition Dates: 25 June – 8 August 2020

Taylor Piggott Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition featuring the work of LA-based artist Stephen Keeney, on view in our main gallery space June 25th through August 8th at 62 South Glenwood Street, in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Keeney's large-scale, almost monumental canvases build moody layers of sumptuous, thick impasto, rendering the gallery into a veritable cathedral of quiet contemplation.

Presenting fourteen paintings, this impressive and wildly varied body of work fills three gallery rooms and captures the breadth of Stephen Keeney's capabilities as a painter. Four massive canvases, one cool and sparse, another pulsing and warm, build upon more intimately scaled works on paper that appear like igneous Chinese ink drawings. Each of these paintings speaks to the viewer in its own clear voice, however, when presented together, the viewer quickly recognizes the same deep place of physical materiality and process-based experimentation that reverberates from piece to piece.

Untitled (LEF14506), undeniably the centerpiece of the exhibition, confronts the viewer upon entry with 10-plus feet of palpable texture in gorgeous neutrals that shift as ambient light moves through the gallery. The composition splits horizontally just above eye level into two sections formed in creamy grey tones at the base of the canvas and deep navy-black with hints of electric blue-green at the top. While utterly abstract, the human brain intuitively associates the composition as some form of landscape, with foreground below and background above framing a loose understanding of a forest scene, perhaps a mangrove swamp, but just as easily an aspen stand, or, perhaps, nothing at all. Both serene and deeply mysterious, we are both perplexed of the subject of the painting yet intrinsically drawn into its world.

There's a dense physicality to Keeney's work that conjures contemporary giant Anselm Kiefer without the burdensome rhetoric of history often critically attached to Kiefer. As an artist, like Milton Resnick and very much like Kiefer, Stephen Keeney relishes in the manipulation of irregular and castoff materials. A former professor of philosophy, Keeney prides himself on being a principled person and is incredibly wary of the egoism implicit in producing art. "I don't purport to be anything but an amateur," he says, having produced immense canvases larger than most rooms. Beyond sheer size, ambition lurks within the calculated manipulation of built-up, beautifully nuanced surfaces that lead the eye on a complete journey throughout his absorbing compositions. There is scant evidence of Keeney as a self-proclaimed neophyte. Rather, this exhibition presents an experimental, practiced artist who has

found meaning, or appeal, in “the idea of doing this completely futile act” of painting. And thank goodness.

Philosopher Karl Ove Knausgaard, writing about Anselm Kiefer, gave an immaculate description of his painting, no matter where on the varied arc of his long and storied career: “Standing before it, you fall silent.” Knausgaard continued, “all my thoughts seemed to be suspended, and only emotions remained. Everyone else who came into the room fell silent, too, as if they had suddenly been transported to another place within themselves.” It’s to that place within ourselves that Stephen Keeney is transported in the act of painting. Where we go as viewers, of course, is entirely up to us.

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Stephen Keeney

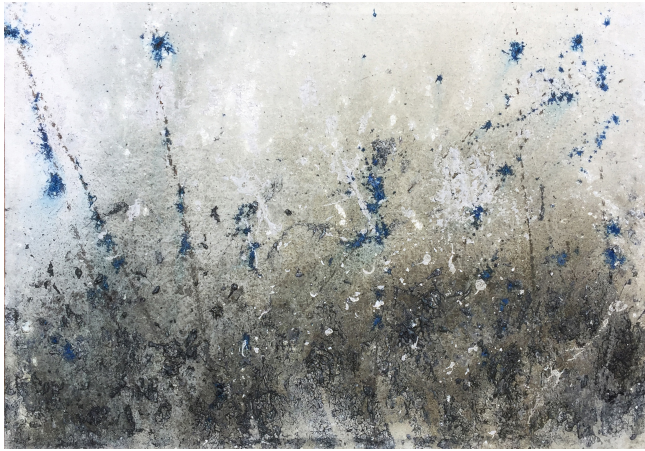
Untitled (LEF14506)

Oil and mixed media on canvas

68 x 130 x 2 in.



Stephen Keeney
Untitled (LEF13167)
Oil and encaustic, mixed media on canvas
90 x 68 x 2 in.



Stephen Keeney

Untitled (LEF14631)

Oil and mixed media on canvas

43 x 61 1/2 x 2 in.