

Pleasures In Space

Michael Childress
Christopher Dunlap
Georgia Hourdas
Benjamin Styer

July 29 - August 28, 2022

opening Friday, July 29th
6-8pm



Marvin Gardens is pleased to announce the opening of "Pleasures in Space" a group exhibition on exercises in world-building with Michael Childress, Christopher Dunlap, Georgia Hourdas, and Benjamin Styer.

An embodiment of Jakob von Uexküll and Thomas A. Sebeok's Umwelt, each artist enacts a world-into itself where color, light, pattern, and form are distinctly unique.

The subtle beauty of Michael's highly controlled expansive spatial landscapes stem from the powerful stillness and tension of his symmetric forms outlined by soft and vaporous gradations. This contrast is produced from water-saturated acrylic paint on the raw canvas revealing Michael's mastery of this technique. The images are painted as two panels, with a lower section functioning as an altarpiece's predella, where the world is envisaged through a complimentary lens. With this perspective, the viewer seems to be witnessing this world from the outside and thus having a sense of its entirety but without knowledge of the meaning.

Christopher's magnetic images display precise geometric patterning and vibrant contrasting colors entrancing the viewer and demanding full visual engagement. The overwhelming impact of the images is contrasted with the slow and methodical build-up of layers of oil paint and visible brush strokes that create depth and vibration within the patterning itself. The viewer feels like they are peering through a focused microscope, seeing only a special minute piece of that which flows outside the crop of the aperture.

While Georgia's images are graphic, their playful attitude, exquisite use of color, and refined mixed-media approach create a dynamic and captivating aesthetic of collage. The artist uses a multi-step process where she takes a photograph, prints the photograph on a thin layer of fabric that is then overlaid on the canvas and then painted on. This approach, combined with influences of outdoor experiences from her childhood in Florida, results in a two-layer image with archetypal objects from nature that are superimposed on a background that is both complimentary and competing for attention. This relationship makes the objects dance, leading the viewer to understand the objects as life from the world that we are glimpsing, like fish in the ocean.

Selected from a vast stylistic range, the two tangential works from Benjamin, are derived from the same idiosyncratic visual and emotional depth. "Blankie" creates the impression of a time-worn personal artifact that has been sunken and damp then dried by the sun over decades. The abstraction is that of a zoomed-in view of the loosened stitches of a childhood blanket that exists as a distant but precious memory. While "Dragon Brain", with bright fantastical colors that bounce off the black background, ever-shifting in symmetric repetition, lures the viewer into a richly imaginative world.

"Pleasures in Space" will be on view through August 28th. There will be an opening reception with the artists on Friday, July 29th from 6-8pm.