

David Benjamin Sherry Gloria April 23 - May 21, 2022

Morán Morán is pleased to announce David Benjamin Sherry's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery, titled *Gloria*, which features a series of large-scale works on canvas. These paintings, an evolution from the artist's photographic practice, continue to be motivated by environmental concerns, queer identity, magic, and the landscape. Sherry's travels throughout the American West and the monochrome photographs and photograms he produced over the last fifteen years now provide an active archive of ocular and experiential memories, a trove that he mined to make these paintings. In addition to the title's spiritual overtones, the show is an homage to his late mother, Gloria, whose artwork Sherry credits with inspiring aspects of this work.

Over the past two years, Sherry has found a different view of the natural world and of his practice. A move to New Mexico, with its high elevations and seemingly endless amount of open space, is known to be an energetically charged environment. Working from memory and intuition, now under the clarifying glare of the high desert light, Sherry translates his environment and experience into spirited paintings. The twelve minimal abstractions presented in this exhibition involve form, color, and some degree of mysticism to reveal an earthly and human interconnection.

Using a limited palette and organic shapes, he created a serial prism of monochromatically vibrant images. The color of each work represents one hue or wavelength of the spectrum, including black and white, and the subject matter of forms and patterns reverberate simplifications of mesas, plateaus, mountains, rock, plantlife, and even magnetic fields, dust motes, and phosphenes. In addition to considering the effect of subject matter and compositions, the materiality and process behind the work is also significant. Each canvas is executed in a high pigment matte paint that results in a stone or sand-like surface, which texturally references the desert. The meticulous hand-work in applying the many coats of paint that are necessary to build the surface became its own form of meditation for Sherry.

Perhaps the symbolism and expression of gravitational or electromagnetic waves comes out of Sherry acting as a conduit – speaking on behalf of the landscape and natural world. And in that sense, he paints as if possessed, receiving a glorious, divine dictation. Consequently, his new works are performative echoes of sacred places and relationships, relaying the magic and energy inherent to our planet and to the lived experience. Optimistic in tone and emotionally bright, the paintings take aesthetic inspiration from the Transcendental Painting Group, Color Field painters, and Op Art, while also channeling the spirit of the artists from these movements; and as reverence, he uses his own existence and energy to reveal what is beyond the visible.

"I drew from my experience of 15 years making landscape photography, as well as a strong desire to move past the photograph and its limitations. I wanted to simplify my practice and be in complete manual control of my medium and my work, without relying on anything other than my body and mind, and to lean more on intuition and the natural inclinations of the materials. With painting, I believe I can create a spiritual connection through repetition and ritual. Often I feel I am connecting, conjuring, and communicating with earthly spirits and people I have known. Maybe Gloria is communicating with me through these paintings."

-David Benjamin Sherry