

CLAIRE OLIVER

513 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001

Matt Bahen: *The Curve of the Earth*

October 22 - December 12, 2015

Matt Bahen creates paintings that are grounded in a sensibility that challenges the current demand for a frenetic pace. In *The Curve of the Earth*, the viewer is confronted with a series of large dark blue nocturnal paintings. These night skies, illuminated by shooting stars and the aurora borealis, reflect silhouettes of dark mysterious structures in the landscape. A traditional representation of the sublime, the night sky connotes a backdrop for our stories. In Bahen's hands, the dark monuments behave as modernist sculptures, lionizing formalist qualities and rejecting conventional narrative.



The Roof of the Vault, 2015
oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

From a distance, Bahen's paintings appear almost photographic in clarity yet as one draws near, the image disintegrates into a series of sculptural marks. The works themselves have an intrinsic dichotomy of surface and image; the thick and rough handling of the paint reinforces the brute nature of the subject and the conceptual agenda of the work. Through heavy paint and pronounced brushwork, these paintings possess an analogue presence of the artists' hand; they accomplish a distinct separation from the photograph, which is conflated with the idea of journalistic truth.

Bahen's works tell a story; his recurring motifs convey the discord between what is and the promise of what can be. The absence of the human figure on the canvas provides a space for viewers to place themselves within the delicate balance of loss and rebirth, reveling in the beauty that surrounds us. Be it the night sky alight with stars, fires burning in the wilderness,

holes into the earth, rough waters, or abandoned interiors, all reinforce the conceptual presence of both loss and hope. Removed from the trappings of urban culture, the landscape is our common ethos which we all share.



There is Little Equity in the Lord's Gifts, 2015
oil on canvas, 36 x 36 inches

Bahen's work has been widely exhibited throughout Canada including a solo show at the MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie Ont. He has had solo exhibitions at the Hampden Gallery University of Massachusetts, Boston, MA, Canadian National Landscaping Association Ontario, Canada and The Ontario College of Art and Design where his work is included in the permanent collection. This is the Artist's second solo exhibition with Claire Oliver Gallery. Matt Bahen lives and works in Ontario.