

MANIFEST

How improbable that a centuries-old tradition should continue to be one of the best arenas for exploring advanced notions of space, and our place in it; yet somehow painting endures as just such a tool, owing paradoxically to its basis in slow and silent looking. In skilled hands, painting (like poetry) is an enduring activity of such primacy and simplicity as to be ideally suited to calibrated response. This seems particularly true of abstract painting, where the artist's mediation of reality in general and consciousness in particular still seems to provide a vital graph of apperception, through a framework comfortable with uncertainty and in-between states that can neither be strictly defined as mind or matter. Where consciousness ranges somewhere between thought and the external, material world, new notions of order (and chaos) arise, for which the painters in this exhibition provide ample evidence.

The seven artists presented here all live and work in New York, although I do not attribute any overriding significance to this fact, except that they would all accept a degree of allegiance to New York School painting. Visiting artists' studios used to be a simple matter of a walk through Soho or Tribeca. Today the same visits now often entail an hour's travel or more, usually to outlying areas of Brooklyn or Queens, where local neighborhoods reflect an extraordinary variety of world cultures and populations. In recent years New York has become increasingly distanced from the American continent, and the culture these artists reflect is made up of just such a flow and movement of ideas, influences, and audience. One thing that New York still possesses (and always has had, as long as I can recall) is a core audience willing and eager to look at new and challenging paintings. The circle has widened but it is still a tribe. It is from this context that these works come to us.

All of the painters in *Abstraction Today* are highly responsive in different ways to the radical changes in our increasingly dematerialized visual environment. Our phones, computers and other devices have begun to change not only the fundamentals of external appearances – the make-up of color, the behavior of light – but the very inner order of things: how information is stored, organized and presented. The binary opposition of abstract vs. real has broken down. The artists in this show deploy realism abstractly and vice versa. This is painting embracing conceptualism and relieved of its reductionist ambitions. Abstract painting is now open to subjects and styles without limits or orthodoxies. Conventional tools and crafts still apply, mapping all possible worlds.

Raymond Foye, New York, 2018