

BRYAN MILLER GALLERY

Kent Dorn
Dweller

January 13 - February 18, 2012

Opening Reception Friday, January 13, 2012, 6 - 8pm

Bryan Miller Gallery is pleased to present "Dweller", a solo exhibition of new paintings by Houston based artist Kent Dorn.

Kent Dorn's paintings depict an exchange between man and nature that explores both physical and psychological terrain. The protagonist of his new body of work, the dweller, inhabits the outdoors in the same way most of us inhabit our living rooms. His cliff near a glowing fire is our sofa near a glowing television. He wades across a stream like he's crossing a street. The dweller is not depicted in every painting, but even when he is "off-camera" his peculiar presence is nearly tangible.

Also tangible is the materiality of the paint. Dorn begins his paintings by saturating raw canvas with translucent paint washes. He then selectively builds up areas to varying degrees with a process involving coagulated oil paint thickened with wax and dried oil paint skins. By exploring every physical state of paint on a single surface, Dorn introduces an essential sculptural range to the complex and storied history of representational painting.

Dorn's emotional response to the natural world takes cues from artists such as visionary watercolorist Charles Burchfield and German Romantic landscape painter Caspar David Friedrich. His propensity for ominous seeming narrative owes something to the eerie illustrations of cartoonist Charles Burns. And his close-up observation based depictions of nature evoke the drawings of John James Audubon. A result of these varied influences and the desire to maintain an open-ended allegorical reading, Dorn's paintings manage to contain all five of the primary aesthetic forms defined by philosopher Max Dessor: the beautiful, the sublime, the tragic, the ugly and the comic.

Kent Dorn was born in Greer, South Carolina in 1977. He received his BFA from Anderson College (1999) and is MFA from the University of Houston (2005). Recent solo exhibitions include "New Paintings", McClain Gallery, Houston and "Remains", Freight + Volume, NYC. Dorn is represented by Bryan Miller Gallery, Houston, Freight and Volume, NYC and Clint Roenisch Gallery, Toronto.