

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE



Sarah Awad:

Transference and Speculation

November 1 to 30, 2012

Opening Reception:

Thursday, November 1, 6 – 8pm

Gallery Hours are:

Thurs. - Sat. 11:00am - 5:00pm

Tuesday & Wednesday by appointment

Additional images are available upon request

Left: *Apex*, 2012 Oil on canvas 22" x 24"

James Harris Gallery is pleased to announce *Transference and Speculation*, an exhibition of new paintings by Sarah Awad. This show will mark the artist's second solo exhibit at the gallery. Awad's new body of work is distinguished by stunning color fields and subtle compositional arrangements that speak to a profound canon of painting, ranging from Classical sculpture to Modernist Abstraction. Drawing heavily from the history of art in both style and subject matter, these works recall the innovative imagery of artists like Rodin, de Chirico, and Matisse, while eliciting an especially contemporary perspective on painting, situating Awad's work amongst visionary artists like David Hockney.

With *Transference and Speculation*, the artist continues to play with the rules of perspective and formal qualities within the pictorial realm. Awad's use of high-contrast outlines merging with flat blocks of color in powdery hues serves to interrupt the three-dimensional illusion of the painted image. As a result, figures and background converge, and faces are lost in shadow or remain expressionless. Exhibiting a propensity for a faux-naïf style, Awad's use of line and color alternates between figuration and abstraction, as the artist deconstructs the painting process in virtue of a preoccupation with a central figure. In works like "Witness," for example, bodies intermingle, emerging from blocks of intense shades of green and chalky whites, the colors and shadows merging and receding in layers of painterly marks. In what seems to be some sort of religious moment of transcendence, hands and arms intervene as a blocky but weightless figure falls to the ground or levitates.

Most notably, Awad's new paintings are preoccupied with the presence of the subject and its capacity for a heightened sense of narrative drama. By projecting the notion of energy and flux without overtly delineating any specific movements, Awad engages the art of implied gesture through subtle initiations of physical and psychological moments of convergence. Each figuration emphasizes the suggestion of an action, leaving the viewer in a state of imaginative speculation which is embedded in a moment viewable from multiple perspectives. As a result, Awad's often small-scale works at times feel monumental.