



BARRY WHISTLER GALLERY

315 Cole Street, Suite 120 Dallas, TX 75207

28 August, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Barry Whistler Gallery announces the exhibition, *Painting From Here*, made up of 22 works by Terrell James (b. 1955), the storied abstractionist of Texas and the city of Houston. With the emphasis of the show being on six paintings from 2013 – 2021 incorporating a square format of 66" x 66" that she often uses. This focus will take the visitor through variation in approach and pallet be it atmospheric or linear. On view from September 18th to October 30th.

Open House: 12 - 4 PM, September 18th.

Unique in her generation, James' work has evolved along a singular line over many decades, refusing the artworld's persistent oversteer toward this fashion or that, while retaining aesthetic momentum, focused inventiveness, and operational rigor. The basic encounter between paint and canvas which compelled midcentury painterly abstraction still rambles around her imaginative scaffolding—even as she keeps that ideation walled off from the poverty of 1960s geometric reductionism or the gluttonous excesses of '80s Neo-Expressionism.

Like a diving bell slowly probing a deep trench, James sorts through the infinite evocations of the painterly mark, season after season, year after year, decade after decade.

Most often, the artist makes soft-edged quadrangels of hue loiter, close-packed, about the map of the canvas like multi-colored commuters in a rail car--possibly misled by blinding mists from bad ventilation.

While these box-shapes practice their indeterminate behavior, they sometimes receive further delineation from some dark or light line falling over them. Various, these shapes—lined or not—conga through forests of tincture like a spring rite, stew with dismay like the *Burghers of Calais*, or broil in half-mad clouds like glyphs scratched by Guston.

These contours, forms, and tones drive a conversation with emotion and aesthetics that skids away from the topical to sort through strictly universal and personal conversations—if our headline-torqued culture can still think through such things.

James' artwork delivers evidence of a devout practice—one prosecuted by a receptivity to nature and the patterns of the psyche. Her paints swim with the occasional epistemological shadow and round-house kick at knowing. In some corner or other, you might recognize thrusts at freedom or measured inducements to restraint. Her idea of painting as a “recording of a kind of awareness” discovered in “that space where you are geologically and geographically” results in an eternal return to the suggestive dialogs of surface, hatch, and smear.

Asked if she's a really a landscape artist, James replied that her depictions are driven by the consciousness that visits us in a single time and place—that she likes to record the passing importance of these perceptions—because that's all mortality gives us: just distinct moments that we can make a whole lot of, if we like.

Just as the passing combination of wind, vapor, and white-blue-gray that circle in the oleaginous horizontal of our sky gives us numberless optical and awe-making experiences, Terrell's repeated orchestration of color, shape, and tone on vertically-tacked rectangles gives us countless opportunities for the same.

Educated at the Instituto Allende in Guanajuato, Mexico and the University of the South of Sewanee Tennessee, and winner of innumerable grants, commissions, residencies, and awards, Ms. James work has been reviewed by *Artnews*, *Art in America*, and *Art Lies*, and can be found in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the San Antonio Museum of Art, the Menil Collection, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Dallas Museum of Art, Rice University, Texas Tech University Collection, and many others.

Exhibition Opening: September 18, 2021.

IMAGERY



TERRELL JAMES, *Blades and Fins*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 66 x 66 inches



TERRELL JAMES, *Above / Below*, 2018, Oil on canvas, 66 x 66 inches



TERRELL JAMES, *Three*, 2013, Oil on canvas, 66 x 66 inches

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