

HESSE FLATOW

Michael Childress: *Equivalents*

June 3 – July 1, 2022

Opening reception: June 3, 6-8pm

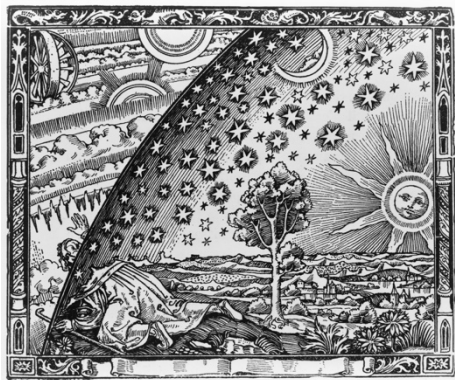
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HESSE FLATOW is pleased to announce the opening of *Equivalents*, an exhibition of paintings by Michael Childress, marking his first solo presentation with the gallery.

The theatre of reality emerges from its unobservable matrix by the agency of form and relation. That which takes form must possess a kernel of formlessness within it from which it acquires shape. The differentiated reality that appears to our senses materializes out of the nothingness that precedes it.

In this process, the elements articulate themselves by passing through a realm of order and play that imbues them with both structure and freedom.

This interim realm is the domain of archetypes, and in his *Equivalents* series, Michael Childress reminds his viewer that pattern is also an archetype. In these paintings, form grows through system and scale, adhering to the transient yet codified inclinations of Nature. Kaleidoscopic territories of symmetry and color affirm a relationship in which no state could exist without its counterpart. The centrifugal must be in conversation with the centripetal, so that their differences may expose a marriage like that of entangled particles. Spheres point us towards the intuition of wholeness, knowing all the while that wholeness is an exquisite impossibility.



The paintings in this series inherit the legacy left by the Flammarion engraving. How do we describe the formlessness that precedes form? Childress explores this question kinetically, as he applies acrylic to a raw canvas wet with water, and the paint is allowed to flow. The water extends to the boundaries of each shape as they define their own parameters through surface tension and gravity. These shapes then function as two-dimensional containers for four-dimensional concepts. The colors move in and out of relation with each other, enunciating the fact that light is responsible for all vision. As such, light is the gateway to observation, just as observation is the gateway to defining reality.

In his *Equivalents* paintings, Childress ignites an event horizon and then offers a bridge across the burning threshold. Abstraction becomes more solid than anything resembling matter. We as his viewers are invited to peak beyond the known stratosphere and are permitted to witness the moment of transition between the nothing-that-was-not and the something-that-is. In these moments, we become the observers – and as the observers, we become responsible for reality itself.

-- LD Deutsch

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Michael Childress has had solo exhibitions at New Release, New York, NY; New Image Art, Los Angeles, CA; Galerie Julien Cadet, Paris, France; Lane Meyer Projects, Denver, CO; and Cuevas Tilleard, New York, and been included in group exhibitions at Future Gallery, Berlin, Germany; HESSE FLATOW, New York, NY; Half Gallery, New York, NY; Pray For This Gallery, New York, NY; False Flag, New York, NY; Radiator Arts, New York, NY; among others. He is a recipient of the Leslie-Lohman Museum Queer Artists Fellowship and has completed a residency at AS220 (Providence, RI). Childress earned a BFA from the University of Massachusetts in 2009. He lives and works in Massachusetts and New York.

LD Deutsch is a writer whose work focuses on time, consciousness and the nature(s) and narratives of reality. She is currently writing a series of individually published essays and audio essays for *Sacred Bones Books* that explores the relationship between scientific and mythological thinking. The essays will be collected into a book to be published next year.

Image: Michael Childress, *The Wind Blows Over the Earth*, 2021, acrylic on unprimed canvas, 36 x 36 in (91.4 x 91.4 cm); *Flammarion engraving*, artist unknown, appeared in "L'atmosphère: météorologie populaire" (The Atmosphere: Popular Meteorology) by Camille Flammarion, 1888.