

MARTOS GALLERY

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Jason Metcalf

Hie Kolob

April 2 - May 2, 2015

Opening reception: Thursday, April 2, 6 - 8pm

*"No man has found 'pure space,'
Nor seen the outside curtains,
Where nothing has a place."
If you could hie to Kolob, W. W. Phelps, 1842*

*"And the illusion would be that you were a spaceman, looking out into space and you see these stars and the planets. And some of the celestial formations were magnified and brought close to you so that you could see some of the most beautiful formations that only recently had been revealed."
Oral history of Sidney E. King, Archives of American Art, circa 1980-1983*

Martos Gallery is pleased to present *Hie to Kolob*, an exhibition by Jason Metcalf on view from April 2 - May 2, 2015 with an opening reception on Thursday, April 2 from 6-8pm. For his first solo exhibition in New York, Metcalf presents four new paintings, a sculpture, and a light work as a continuation of his diverse practice that engages with belief systems, pseudoscience, occult formalism, magic, and the anthropology of folklore.

This new body of work was initiated by the artist's many lifelong visits to the 400 foot long domed panorama that is housed at the Mormon visitor center in downtown Salt Lake City. Originally commissioned by the LDS church through a national ad firm, Evans Advertising, the mural was designed to be paired with artifacts from the institution's numerous exhibitions presented over decades at the world's fairs. Executed by folk-illustrator Sidney E. King in airbrush in the late 1960s, the panorama's structure and imagery distinctly situates the viewer within a Ptolemaic universe, although its resolution and rendering of heavenly bodies reference a modern astronomy contemporary with its creation.

Metcalf's airbrushed acrylic paintings co-opt the folk aesthetics, production methodology, and palette of the panorama in a conscious gesture of forgery. However, their imagery departs from the original, directing the viewer towards a system of early 19th century American folk astrology which informed Joseph Smith's construction of his Mormon cosmos and the astral foundation of a significant portion of American spiritual movements. Created from Metcalf's mind's-eye, the four paintings conceptually and visually point to the notions of degrees of glory, governing stars and planets, and spiritual intelligences. The paintings flow in a spectrum of incandescence and visible light, forming an optical window into the limits of our universe.

In *Kae-e-vanrash (2015)*, Metcalf utilizes the gallery's existing fixtures to create a gradient from darkness to light across the entire space, defining a parallel environment for the other artworks, while referencing the theatrics of visitor information centers and sacred ritual.

The exhibition's zenith is *A paved work of pure gold (2012)*, situated at the end of the gallery. Fabricated by a NASA contracted, precious metal plating facility that utilized advanced aerospace technologies in its creation, its perfect mirror finish and 99.999% pure-gold plating are functional in their reflection of nearly all infrared radiation, completing the spectral structure of the entire exhibition. The aftereffect of these functionalities is a brilliant pillar of light, shooting upward from the work and pointing the viewer's eye and mind towards the great expanse. In the end, the work acts as an "axis mundi", a potential divine conductor, and for those who look back upon their journey, a grand vision and a philosophy of a future state.

Metcalf's work is currently on view in a solo exhibition at the Center for Land Use Interpretation in Wendover, Utah. Other recent exhibitions include those at Gagosian Gallery, Beverly Hills; Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City; Martos Gallery, East Marion; Florian Christopher, Zurich; Salon Fur Kunstbuch, Vienna; and Thank You For Coming, Los Angeles. He attended the Mountain School of Arts, Brigham Young University, and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. His forthcoming solo exhibition will open at JOAN in Los Angeles in April, 2015. Metcalf lives in Los Angeles.

For further information, email info@martosgallery.com or call 212-560-0670.