

ROCKET SCIENCE

Raffael Bader

Stormy Skies

May 15th – June 12th, 2021

840 Broadway, 3rd floor, Brooklyn, 11206

The artist should paint not only what he sees before him, but also what he sees within him.

– Caspar David Friedrich

Rocket Science is pleased to present *Stormy Skies*, an exhibition of new works by **Raffael Bader**, at its new space at 840 Broadway in Bushwick, with an opening reception this Saturday, May 15th, from 1– 6pm.

The works on view were created in a lockdown in Germany and consist of both watercolors on paper and oil paintings. Fundamentally rooted in German romantic landscape painting blended with American abstractionism and Japanese ukiyo-e these works reflect a complex set of emotions permeating the world over the last year: darkness, loneliness, sense of doom and isolation, followed by brighter moments of glimmering hope and relief. In a greater context these works investigate the relationship between the landscape and the sublime.

The sublime first wound its way into art with 19th century German Romantic painting- most notably the large, nearly abstract landscapes of Caspar David Friedrich. Robert Rosenblum was the first to connect them to Modern American painting in his article *Abstract Sublime* and then in his book *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition*, which traces the sublime as it changed from Friedrich to Rothko. Comparing Romantic artists James Gordon and Caspar Friedrich to Clifford Still and Rothko, he writes: *And not the least awesome thing about Still's work is the paradox that the more elemental and monolithic its vocabulary becomes, the more complex and mysterious effects. As the Romantics discovered, all the sublimity of God can be found in the simplest natural phenomena, whether a blade of grass or an expanse of sky.*

Bader's contemplative allegorical landscapes reminiscent of Clifford Still's abstract approach to the sublime and the boundless, yet they belong to a northern romantic tradition in its specificity and occasional inclusion of biomorphic human elements that emphasize the power of the supernatural. Parallels can be drawn between Bader's abstract landscapes and Friedrich's works *Largeness* and *Neubrandenburg*. Bader's characteristic use of flattened, silhouetted forms is also reminiscent of Ukiyo-e Japanese landscape painting.

Fusion of contemporary painting techniques with a northern romantic tradition characterizes works of many prominent artists, including Gerhard Richter, Anselm Kiefer and Harold Ancart among the younger generation.

Raffael Bader was born in 1987 and lives in Leipzig, Germany. He graduated from Academy of Fine Arts, Leipzig in 2019. Future and recent exhibitions include *Im Flutlicht*, Museum der bildenden Künste (MDBK), Leipzig, Germany, *Becoming Habits: Chapter One*, Studi0, St. Moritz, Switzerland, *The Colours of Spring*, artespace, München, Germany, *Work On Paper 3*, Blue Shop Cottage, London, United Kingdom, *von hier aus sichtbar*, S1, Leipzig, Germany, *umfasste linien*, Acht-Zwei, Leipzig, Germany.

Gallery hours: Saturday, 1pm – 6pm, or by appointment.