

SLGALLERY

JEFF KESSEL

Opening reception: Thursday, November 7, 6–8pm
November 7 to December 20, 2019

On November 7, 2019, SL Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of large-scale abstract paintings by artist Jeff Kessel in New York City.

Using spray paint, oil, and string Kessel's theatrical work in this self-titled exhibition leans heavily on its direct relation to the body. One is confronted with the confounding duality of monumental space and tactile outward surface, keeping the viewer bouncing between the literal material and the perceived expanse of the work.

Kessel strives to make the impalpable palpable. Forgoing manner and expression the paintings in this exhibition delineate and shape pictorial space giving structure to the formless. Kessel's use of kite string in these works directly references his lifelong interest in kites and their ability to make visible the abstract vastness of the expanding sky. By creating a direct link between ground and sky, the sail and tether serve to articulate the immensity of space. By breaking the plane, the intangible is made tangible, a thought which brings to mind the works of Fred Sandback who, also using string, creates architectural airspace that feels like solid mass in the otherwise empty voids of galleries and museums.

The artist's presence is strongly felt in these exuberant paintings which are alive with the youthful magic of play. Brimming with a giddiness and fervor that suggests a frenetic way of thinking inseparable from the works making, simple forms are manipulated in unexpected ways. With an acidic stop and go harmony, the paintings in this exhibition concoct a strange brew revealing the pictorial space of the visual world that feels at once oddly familiar yet distinctly bizarre.

Jeff Kessel (b. 1978) lives and works in New York City and holds an MFA in painting from Cranbrook Academy of Art and a BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Kessel has had solo exhibitions at Thierry Goldberg Gallery, NYC (2014, 2012), Derek Eller Gallery, NYC (2010), and has been in a variety of group shows, including "Parallel," a 3-person exhibition at Bortolami Gallery, NYC (2009). Kessel's work has been reviewed and featured in The Observer, Time Out New York, and Artcritical.

This marks Jeff Kessel's first solo exhibition with SL Gallery at 335 West 38th Street and will remain on view through December 20, 2019. For further information, please contact Tony Long at the Gallery, or visit our website www.sl.gallery.com/