

# COLLAPSE





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*Collapse* addresses the event of the in-between.

A transitory state sparked by internal disintegration or external impact, collapse can be experienced as a grim inevitability or a generative part of process. The artists presented in this exhibition address various middle grounds that ask the viewer to consider not only a loss of structure, but potential new realities that such loss can generate. Josh Azzarella diffuses the virtual, dislocating a cinematic memory by manipulating pace. Belinda Blum paints a pre-consciousness by meshing figuration and the nonobjective. Tiffany Calvert dissolves the line between representation and abstraction, between the historical and the contemporary. The rich poverty of Julie Evanoff's drawing hand addresses cultural decline. Gabbe Grodin's small gentle paintings of televised imagery erase the border between the personal and the global. Ronna Lebo traverses the passage between painting and poetry. Carin Rodenborn articulates a concurrence of two- and three-dimensional elements.

Not every artist in *Collapse* focuses on decline; some resist it while others isolate the moment before what-has-been gives way to what-will-be. The phenomenon is nonetheless inherent in each work.

Azzarella's *Untitled #141 (The Sun is the Same...)* marks a turning point with arduous reduction. A 19 minute and 31 second video elongates the continuum between the landing of Dorothy's house in Oz and the opening of the front door into not only a strange new land, but also the radical infusion of color. Dorothy, a contemporary Chronos, embodies a temporal passage from black-and-white to color, from home to not-home, from interior to exterior as *The Sun is the Same* slows the collapse of past into future.

Azzarella explains that his works "often seek a meditative or still moment during which the viewer can stand transfixed." In her passage, Dorothy slows to the point of seemingly still (a nod to the sequence of photographs inherent in a film reel) and brings the viewer to a state of suspension. It is a pause within a pause. Relying on collective pop cultural memory, Azzarella omits the before and after and transforms a pivotal moment into the main event. *The Sun is the Same* suggests that the transition is as inhabitable as the points of departure or arrival.

Blum's *Rule 7* presents a mirror image in which a shadow hovers as much as the gestural form that casts it. The horizon line cleaves the composition, simultaneously separating and joining opposing tendencies. In the Surrealist tradition of the uncanny, *Rule 7* delivers a landscape that is legible at first, but ultimately





Josh A Z Z A R E L L A, *Untitled (The Sun is the Same. . .)*, 2012, High Definition Video

impenetrable. It inhabits the gap between figuration and the nonobjective, between the passive and the intentional. The dark stroke on light ground occurred accidentally as Blum passed by the canvas on her way out of the room, her brush held high. She inadvertently made the mark that now seems wholly intentional.

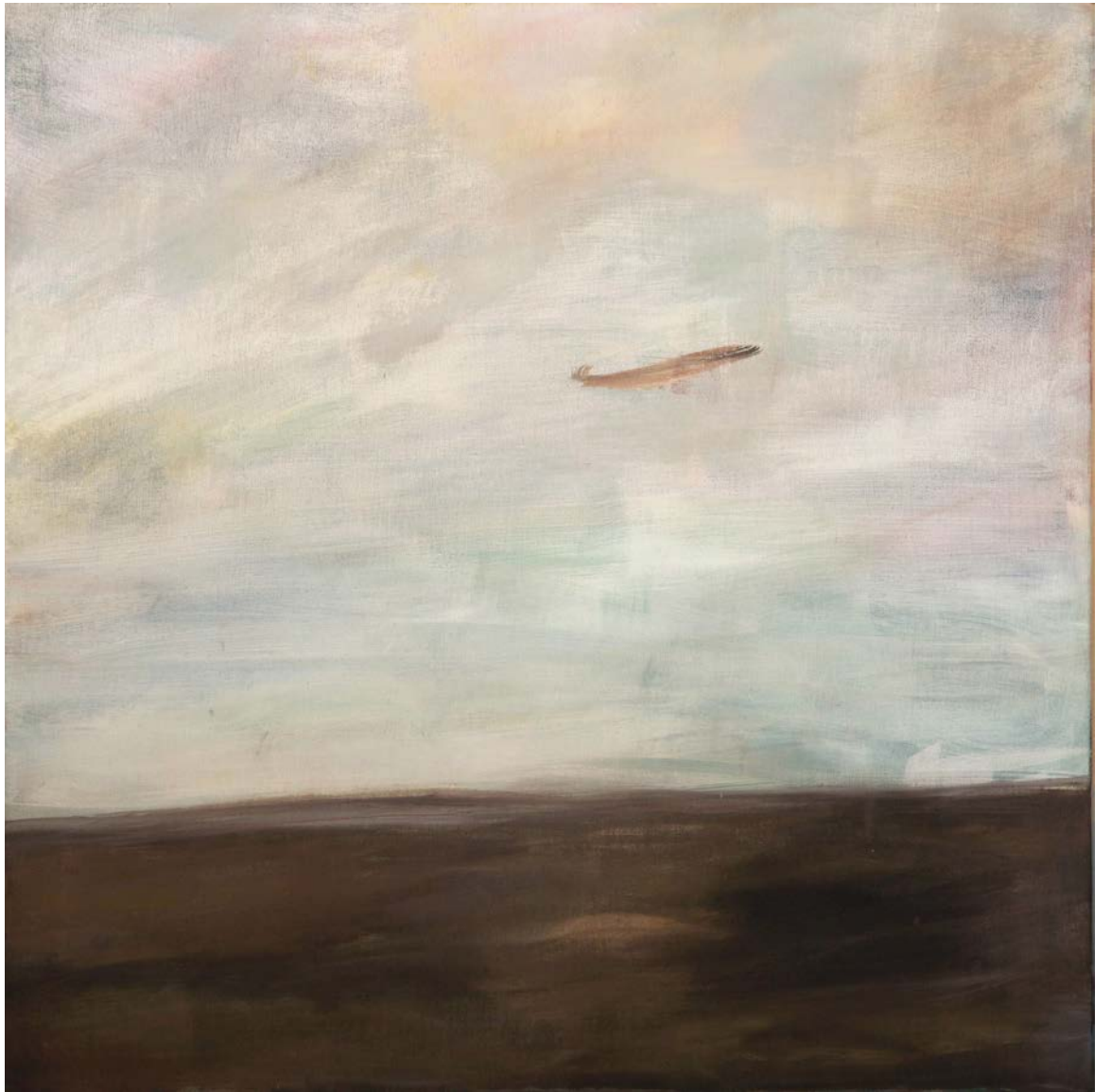
Referencing ambiguity in her process, Blum writes, "Sometimes while I am in a deep sleep and awake suddenly, perhaps from a dream or a nearby noise, I find that my body has separated from my mind and my mind has separated from my vision. In this state of disconnected consciousness my comprehension is skewed and I can no longer distinguish my location. It is from this point of perceptual illusion that I am interested in making art." With *Rule 7*, Blum cedes neither to the dream nor to the waking.

For Calvert, abstraction and figuration spar in an art historical realm, depicting not only a mutual rebuff and attraction of the narrative and the abstract, but also the proximity of tradition and innovation in painting. Calvert's gravitational collapse of narrative information is not merely an injection of visual white noise or a cannibalism of preexisting imagery, but an interruption of familiar subject matter by a proximal transmission of intangibles. Calvert writes, "I seek a precarious balance between figuration and abstraction, using the complexity of the imagery to both create the structure and to confuse, overcomplicate and obscure. Dissolution, separation, collapse, dissemination. In the disintegration of form the theme is the dissolution of order, of aspiration." In generating a visual disturbance via abstraction, Calvert notifies the viewer of a cusp in the imagery, a beginning of something other than the narrative.

Evanoff employs erasure in her mark-making as a metaphor for the retention of essential information that runs parallel with a declaration of human universals: "I create environments in which human and animal characters from disparate times and cultures interact. Using sources ranging from Jungian philosophy to classical myth to images from popular culture, I question what happens when mismatched archetypes cross paths in disjointed landscapes." Evanoff collapses temporal and societal distance by generating energetic and fragmented symbols. The content of her imagery – birth, death, sex, and violence – testifies to the survival of collective experience, to its perpetual reoccurrence in spite of cultural disintegration.

Grodin's paintings whisper the decline of empire. The slump of detainees, bodies bent in the crash position and the crush of goods, post-consumption all provide alternative endings to the narrative of dominance. With *No One's Home*, *Earthbound*, *Travel Trap*, and *Seatback Still Life*, Grodin suggests

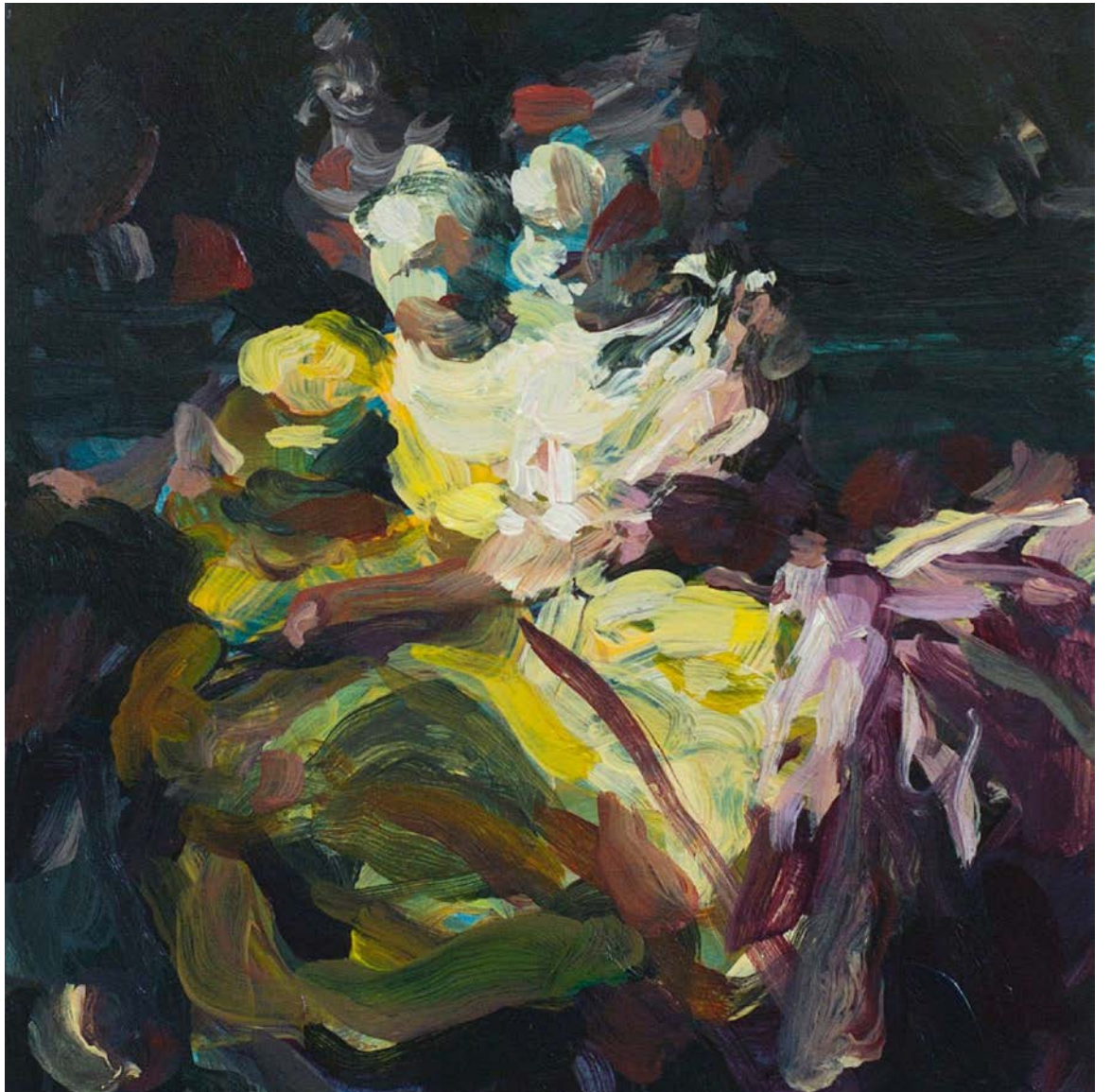




Belinda B L U M, *Rule 7*, 2010, Oil on canvas



Tiffany CALVERT, *Untitled 229*, (left); *Untitled 230* (right), 2012, Acrylic and oil on canvas



Tiffany CALVERT, *Untitled (Twins)*, 2012, Acrylic on paper

that beginnings carry the promise of their own ending. Grodin presents her point of view as simultaneously intimate and mass generated: "As both a child of the television and an artist trained to paint from observation I struggle to represent the world as it comes already represented. The various media of our time have determined the way I actually see. These processes follow from my belief that in a global culture where individual subjects are linked to one another through market economies and online networks, subjective experience is less important than collective understanding."

With the absurdity of *Peter Pan Saves Pakistan* and *George Bush Li(c)kes Ice Cream*, Lebo straddles the fields of poetry and painting juxtaposing the common and the sublime, politics and pastimes. Lebo employs an equivocal balance of word and image. She provides partial legibility in visual and lexical terms to trigger the sensation of discovery. By pitting the verbal and the visual against one another, she deprives the viewer of a resting place in both visual and verbal formats. Instead, she offers a middle ground between perception and expression: "In struggling with painting as a form with which to enter poetry itself, I have encountered a wall of concept that is difficult to traverse or destroy: The subjectivity of concepts inhibits representation of an external reality, and therefore any effort at determining a conceptual basis for poetically written paintings seems intrusive to the process of painting. This intrusion feels linguistic in nature. It seems that one must leave concepts behind in order to devote oneself to the unsayable."

As musical articulation might lengthen a note, Rodenborn extends the material of a painting into the realm of sculpture and asks the viewer to include both. Rodenborn occupies the in-between in formal terms. Though she considers herself a painter first, she ties her investigation of color and form to real time dimension. Her canvas and linen supports spill from the stretchers into the space of the viewer. Imagery becomes palpable. In her sculptural paintings, the collapse of categories is a liberating gesture: "I am looking for ways to suggest lightness, with an emphasis on the tricky nature of relationships and convergences. I am interested in both formal and metaphorical relationships, and how form and metaphor play on each other through color, shape and a consideration of edges."

In temporal, physical, linguistic, formal, cultural, or political terms, the imagery and objects presented here articulate the tension between opposing forces. The forces might be as epic (or as simple) as the past and the future, as concrete as stretcher bars, as ephemeral as history.

Adrienne Callander



Julie EVANOFF, *Geo Figure Red*, 2011, Mixed media on paper



Gabbe G R O D I N, *No One's Home* (top); *Earthbound* (bottom), 2010, Watercolor, gouache and acrylic on paper



Gabbe G R O D I N, *Travel Trap* (top); *Seatback Still Life* (bottom), 2010, Watercolor, gouache and acrylic on paper



Ronna L E B O, *Peter Pan Saves Pakistan*, 2010, Oil on Canvas

Ronna L E B O, *George Bush Li(c)kes Ice Cream*, 2010, Oil on Canvas







Carin R O D E N B O R N, *Monumental Curve*, 2013, Acrylic on linen with stretcher bars and tacks



Carin R O D E N B O R N, *Crinkle on the Horizon*, 2013, Acrylic on linen with stretcher bars and tacks



Carin R O D E N B O R N, *Skinnydip*, 2012, Acrylic on linen with stretcher bars and tacks



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AZZARELLA

BLUM

CALVERT

EVANOFF

GRODIN

LEBO

RODENBORN