

Art Reviews

Taking Landscape Painting to New Heights

Beau Carey and Ian Fishers' exhibition considers our relationship to the earth, from the top down.



by Sommer Browning December 25, 2022



Ian Fisher, "Atmosphere No. 157 (Influence)" (2022), oil on canvas, 96 inches x 204 inches (all photos courtesy RedLine Contemporary Art Center)

DENVER — The paintings in *Carey Fisher* are as expansive and composed as one might expect from landscape paintings, though there isn't much land in them. The exhibition of new works by Albuquerque-based Beau Carey and Denver-based Ian Fisher, alumni of RedLine's artist residency program, takes place mainly in the sky, among mountain tops, the moon, and the clouds. The horizon line is often thousands of feet below view or occluded by giant ancient rocks.

Carey chooses realistic depictions of mountain peaks and ranges as one of his main subjects, but his work in this exhibition is kaleidoscopic. In "Solaris" (2022), a celestial sphere seems to rise multiple times behind multiple mountain ranges. It might be a moon the color of the sun, or the sun looking as cold and harsh as the moon. The mountain range vibrates with rich purples and Martian-like colors. Some of the paintings, like "Folie a Deux" (2022), look like reflections of themselves — the mountain ranges repeat down the canvas, almost upside down at times. In "Magdalenfjorden" (2022), a stark heavenly circle casts a cold glow across a mountain valley. The mountain paintings remind me of the delirium of standing on a cliff. The

moon/sun paintings evoke quarantine feelings of desolation; I remembered wondering, after a couple of weeks, if I had forgotten how to interact with other people.



Installation view of *Carey Fisher* (2022) at RedLine Contemporary Art Center; left: Ian Fisher, "Atmosphere No. 148 (Waterfall)" (2022); right: Beau Carey, "Magdalenfjorden," 2022

Fisher paints exquisite hyperrealist oil paintings of cloud formations. He manages to paint these ephemeral, giant puffs of water vapor with such attention and detail that the paintings seem somehow more real than real clouds. There is a sad and alluring drama about that fact, like cheating on a lover. But what is more dramatic, what is approaching transcendent really, is the perspective. I'd have to be flying to see clouds at these angles, to see them this close. But here there was nothing — not a 747's plexiglass window, not a camera lens — between me and the cloud. It's as though what I was seeing is how clouds see each other in the sky. Had I become a cloud?



Beau Carey, "Folie a Deux" (2022), oil on canvas, 72 inches x 96 inches (photo by Joshua Ware)

The effect of seeing both painters' work together is disorienting, unmooring. The longer I looked at Carey's orange moons and icy mountain-scapes and Fisher's impossible, vertiginous vistas, the more I wobbled. To be removed from the world by looking at paintings of our world is a wonderful experience. That would have been enough to carry (no pun intended) the show, but the exhibition wall text encourages viewers to draw connections to climate change, which feels a bit unearned, and the title of the show, *Carey Fisher* — the artist's last names pushed together, punning on the name of the actress Carrie Fisher, written on the wall in a death-metal font — were choices I couldn't quite square. These were overly cheeky touches that I refused to let ground me. Because for a while there, Carey and Fisher had me floating.



Ian Fisher, "Atmosphere No. 139 (Nate & Marissa)" (2022), oil on canvas, 42 inches x 54 inches (photo by Joshua Ware)



Installation view of *Carey Fisher* (2022) at RedLine Contemporary Art Center; (left), Ian Fisher, "Atmosphere No. 51-56" (2022); (right) Beau Carey, "Folie a Deux" (2022)



Beau Carey, "Solaris" (2022), oil on canvas, 40 inches x 36 inches (photo by Joshua Ware)



Beau Carey, "Anam Cara" (2022), oil on canvas, 72 inches x 96 inches (photo by Joshua Ware)

Carey Fisher continues at RedLine Contemporary Art Center (2350 Arapahoe Street, Denver, Colorado) through January 8, 2023. The exhibition was curated by Cortney Lane Stell.

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