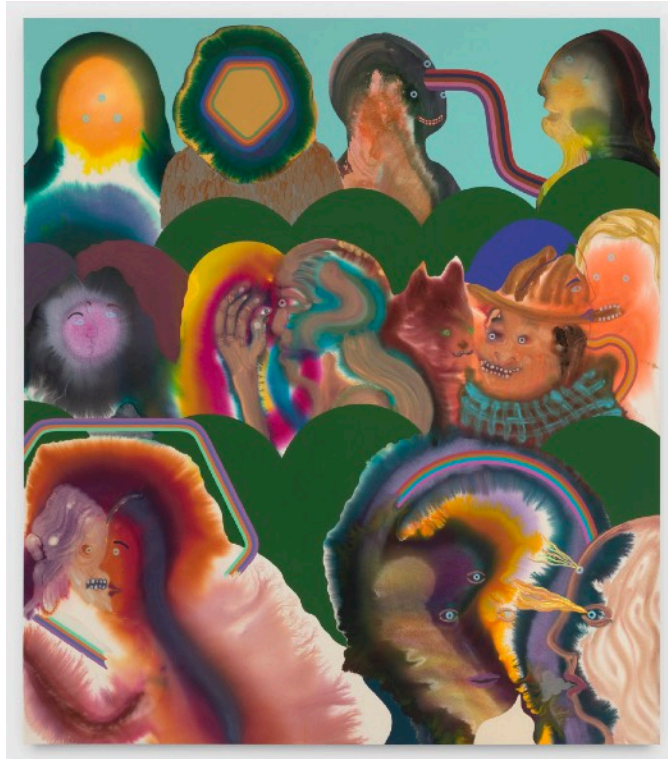




Aaron Johnson  
*Cosmic Devotion*

Open by Appointment Only  
Exhibition Dates: 30 May - 28 June 2020



Aaron Johnson, *Morning on the Green Planet*, 2020, Acrylic on canvas, 97 1/2 x 85 1/2 in.

The exhibition will be open 30 May - 28 June 2020 alongside three other solo presentations by Nicasio Fernandez, Austin Harris, and Ryan Schneider.

Aaron Johnson's work presents a spontaneous approach to painting that favors unpredictability and fluidity. Working on raw canvas with washes of color, Johnson creates an enigmatic visual experience. The paintings vibrate with loose representations of ethereal figures that dissolve into hazes of disembodied color, juicy luminosity, and radiant blurs.

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His technique pays reverence to the abstract expressionism of Color Field painting, in combination with an eccentric mode of figuration. The works call on a range of influences from Helen Frankenthaler and Rothko on one end of the spectrum to Peter Saul and James Ensor on the other, while exploring a curiosity into astrophysics and mysticism.

His spirit-like figures are in turns comical, grotesque, angelic, and ghostly. In these new paintings, the enigmatic characters, celestial beings, and interdimensional entities congregate in hallucinatory landscapes. Romantic moments reveal embracing, starry-eyed lovers who melt into each other, combine energies, and meld into a psychedelic nonduality. We witness the collisions of souls and experience a sense of interconnectedness. His visionary beings, aglow with electric auras and geometric halos, are entranced as they dissolve into psychic explosions. The dreamy landscapes seem to suggest life on another planet, or in another dimension, abundant with strange magic.

The ambiguous abstraction in these new paintings alludes to cosmic space, dark matter, gravitational fields, and parallel universes. In some canvases the semi-abstract forms become galaxy-scaled amorphous giants. In “Birth of the Earth” we witness an imagined cosmic creation myth, as ethereal apparitions gather to ceremoniously create planet Earth. “Guardians of the Three Earths” imagines a possibility of multiple earths in conjoined universes, watched over by intergalactic guardians. In transcendental landscapes, we see a vision of the cosmos as a hyper-colored, layered multiverse. In the painting “Dear Gravity” the figures have all but dissolved, as they lie down to contemplate the cosmos, and in turn they morph into layers of interstellar space.

The paintings fluctuate between ineffable visual experience and otherworldly narrative. A sense of wonderment and the psychic charge provoked by luminescent color provide a visuality that is beyond easy description. The paintings in Cosmic Devotion provoke a sense of enchantment and mystery.



### **About Aaron Johnson**

Aaron Johnson lives and works in Brooklyn, and holds an MFA from Hunter College, NYC, 2005. His work is in permanent collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Weisman Foundation, Los Angeles, and Coleccion Solo, Madrid. His work has been included in museum exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art, Mass MoCA, The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, The Knoxville Museum of Contemporary Art, and The Katzen Center at American University. His work has been exhibited at galleries internationally, including Ross + Kramer Gallery, NY; Joshua Liner Gallery, NY; Stux Gallery, NY; Marlborough Gallery, NY; AishoNanzuka, Hong Kong; Gallery Poulsen, Copenhagen; and Gallery Brandstrup, Oslo. He is the recipient of awards including The MacDowell Colony Fellowship, The Yaddo residency, and The Marie Walsh Sharpe Space Program residency. Johnson's work has been reviewed in numerous publications, including The New York Times, The Huffington Post, The Village Voice, Art News, and ArtForum, and Vice.

### **Location**

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