

Bhakti Baxter “After Certain Amounts of Breath”



At BravinLee Programs
Media: Painting, Installation

After Certain Amounts of Breath reflects Baxter's strong interest in confronting the constructions of our daily existence and mortality in the face of other potential realities. Experiences of human relationships could dramatically shift through awareness of other possible interactions. Fears of death could disintegrate in the light of fully embracing our temporality.

After Certain Amounts of Breath is conceived in three parts. Beginning with the paintings, hung on a free-standing wall in the center of the floor, we enter a specific spectrum of color created with the help of centrifugal force, oil paint, and canvas. These works began after studying electron cloud photographs along with the idea of the photon as a light wave-particle. They also recall stories of feeling drawn towards a tunnel of light by people who have undergone near death experiences. In the same room we encounter parallel walls with vertical drawings arranged in two triptychs, one on either wall, loosely referring to paintings in church alter pieces. They explore death and disintegration into a state of pure energy. The source material for this wide spread image is an archeological finding in northern Italy Baxter came across in a newspaper in 2007, suggesting that the young deceased were lovers buried together about 5,000 or 6,000 years ago. This was during the Neolithic period, a time characterized by the onset of religious sentimentality. Several archeologists put forth views describing Neolithic societies geared towards matriarchal worship as well as indications of early Gaia mythology.

Secondly, the room in the back is a space created as a sort of lounge for thought. Through ideal proportion (Fibonacci shelf), color (Albers mural), furniture (Eames chair, lamp, table), and sound, the perception of space and time shifts drastically from the gallery before, creating an “in between” space for contemplation before turning back to exit the gallery. The combination of these parts allows for a new dimension for us to enter a space within ourselves.

Upon exiting the gallery one encounters a work that reads almost exactly as the work, untitled (Perfect Lovers) (1987-90) by Felix Gonzalez-Torres. For Baxter's interpretation titled Perfect Love (2008), the hands are removed from the two clocks and the only thing left is the circular center, which continues to turn imperceptibly. Repeating the physical process of an axis with revolutions (centrifugal force), the clocks are set to a time that is always now.

[Image: Bhakti Baxter “Untitled (what remains when we're both out of breath?)” (2008) India ink, dirt on mylar, 59 x 42 in.]