



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

RYAN CROTTY | *DIVINER*

July 6 - August 25, 2019

Opening Reception Thursday, July 11, 2019, 6-8PM

For **Ryan Crotty's** second exhibition with the gallery, *Diviner*, the newest iteration of his work presents itself in several distinct series. Along with certain transitional pieces emerging from a result of chance encounters with his media's threshold, the surprisingly cohesive and broad range of forms organically feed into each other as a sort of linear evolution.

"Divination" is a practice that originated in 16th century Germany, largely as a means to locate metal with a rod shaped similarly to a wishbone. It's not surprising that concepts involving the notion of a "search" have oscillated throughout history between pseudo-science and religiosity. The belief was that one who was a Diviner could locate resources such as water, precious metals, oil, or even grave sites. The apparatus was usually held in front of them or towards the sky, and various incarnations of tools with little to no empirical merit have been invented throughout the centuries to aid in the "search," including modern explosive-detecting devices lacking any scientific mechanism from late 90's Russia. "Divining" as an archaic term has remained largely superstitious as well as metaphorical. For this reason, it has a connection to the Sublime, a philosophy that actively combines man's connection with the world to man's uncertainty--- and fear--- of the world unknown and the world beyond.

For nearly a decade, Crotty's work has been an investigation into the uncertain mechanisms of contemporary painting media. Through various means of experiment-based pushing and pulling techniques, he coaxes his oeuvre of materials to do his bidding without confining his intent to anything definitive. Rather, his process involves stumbling through the unknown to find the answer. Once it is achieved, the challenge is then to work backwards, to recreate and improve upon. Each layer of medium is a star-crossed lover in which the illusions of light and space, texture and transparency, are dueling forces that find peace where the unexpected is not only accepted but admired.

This submission to the unknown is a kind of optimistic nihilism, in the same vein of Bill Murray's infamous speech in the movie *Meatballs*. While giving a pep-talk to a football team in the midst of a game that will inevitably be lost for a myriad of reasons, he proclaims that when all is said and done, "It just doesn't matter." There is a game being played and everyone is a player; no one knows their positions or why they're here, but they must continue to play to allow themselves the possibility of winning.

Murray's mantra essentially encapsulates the history of abstraction and particularly the movement that Crotty's practice most closely emerges from, the anarchistic Light and Space movement, which saw artists using modern experimental techniques and media to great optical, spacial, and even Sublime effect, ushering in a new era of possibility for the art-object. Like Crotty's work, art created in this era was defined by experience while maintaining a mystery--- of surface, of material--- that simultaneously kept the viewer at arm's length. It was, essentially, a solution to an unidentifiable challenge. Through rooted in minimalism, Crotty's paintings are never one static thing--- they expand beyond multiple choice answers as vistas of carefully considered transitions and negative spaces contain a multitude of reads. As Crotty searches through each layer, he discovers effects and methods he himself can be surprised by; whether it be gold or a grave site.

Ryan Crotty was born in Auburn, NE and received his BFA from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Crotty went on to earn his MFA from Syracuse University, where he received the Shaffer Award for Best in Show. He has exhibited work in Nebraska, as well as New York, Chicago and Berlin. Central to his practice is time and experimentation in his studio in Auburn, NE where he resides with his family. Since his New York solo debut in 2018, Crotty has gone on to participate in numerous national exhibitions and been reviewed in publications such as *Hyperallergic* and *The Washington Post*.

Please join us for the opening reception Thursday, July 11th from 6-8PM. Refreshments will be served, and a full-color, limited edition catalog of the exhibition will be published and available for purchase. For any additional information about the exhibition or **HIGH NOON's** programming, please contact Jared Linge at jared@highnoongallery.com, or call 760.519.1956.