

March 30–July 11, 2021

CY GAVIN

Aspen Art Museum

In his recent work, Cy Gavin depicts natural surroundings close to home and at a distance. A fallen tree that once demarcated a property line, a displaced rock, or a breaking wave, for instance, are all found formally represented in a new collection of paintings. Though seemingly separated from humankind, the movements alluded to in these particular subjects could be thought of with regard to migratory patterns, such as the dispersion of people from one country to another, not unlike the boulder moved by a glacier in *Untitled (Glacial Erratic)* (2021).

On the other hand, *Untitled (Dam)* (2021) portrays a patchwork of a former hydropower dam behind the artist's studio in the Hudson Valley, a region of New York itself the product of glacial activity. Now in disrepair, the dam is perhaps a monument to its own failure to stem natural forces or, to a greater extent, impose artificial borders. Similarly, Gavin's preoccupation with temporality extends to the macro. *Untitled (NEOWISE)* (2021) is a painting of the spectacular comet whose rare visibility in the Northern Hemisphere last summer coincided with a tumultuous year in America's recent past. While looking at the stars might allow reflection on the transience of humankind, this comet's depiction is simultaneously a marker of time as it passes the earth every 6,800 years.

The largest piece in this exhibition, *Untitled (Cavern)* (2021), is as much a portrayal of a cavern as it is a study in darkness—the artist often paints nocturnally, and this canvas is shown alone in Gallery 4 on light-absorbing wall paint. Gavin has painted caves before, following his interest in the subterranean both as a geological phenomenon and historical site impacted by human intervention. As such, the changing political landscapes that redefine citizenship underlie the exhibition. By connecting concepts of land ownership with the articulation of power within societies, Gavin questions how our surroundings are subject to definition or privatization, ultimately leading to the problematics of identifying a unilateral history in the present.

GALLERY 4

Untitled (Cavern) 2021
Acrylic on canvas
135 × 365 in (342.9 cm × 927.1 cm)

GALLERY 5

Untitled (Dam) 2021
Acrylic on canvas
72 × 288 in (182.9 × 731.5 cm)

Untitled (Fallen Sugar Maple) 2020
Acrylic, gesso, and chalk on canvas
81 ½ × 132 ½ in (207 × 336.6 cm)

Untitled (Glacial Erratic) 2021
Acrylic on canvas
86 ½ × 133 in (219.7 × 337.8 cm)

Untitled (NEOWISE) 2021
Acrylic and gesso on canvas
84 × 121 in (213.4 × 307.3 cm)

Untitled (Wave, breaking) 2021
Acrylic and Aquarelle pencil on canvas
88 × 89 in (223.5 × 226 cm)

All works courtesy the artist and © Cy Gavin.

Cy Gavin (b. 1985, lives and works in New York)

ABOUT THE ASPEN ART MUSEUM

Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums in 1979, the Aspen Art Museum is a thriving and globally engaged non-collecting contemporary art museum. Following the 2014 opening of the museum's facility designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Shigeru Ban, the AAM enjoys increased attendance, renewed civic interaction, and international media attention. In July 2017, the AAM was one of ten institutions to receive the United States' National Medal for Museum and Library Services for its educational outreach to rural communities in Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley and its fostering of learning partnerships with civic and cultural partners within a 100-mile radius of the museum's Aspen location.

Aspen Art Museum
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Aspen, Colorado 81611

aspenartmuseum.org
(970) 925-8050

Hours
Tuesday–Sunday, 10 AM–6 PM
Closed Mondays

Admission to the AAM is free
courtesy of Amy and John Phelan.

Cy Gavin is curated by Saim Demircan, AAM Curator at Large.

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