



Miles Debas

Sundowning

October 14 - November 12, 2022

Opening Reception: Friday, October 14th 6-8pm

Freight+Volume presents *Sundowning*, an exhibition of recent paintings by **Miles Debas**. The exhibition will be on view at the gallery's 39 Lispenard St. location from October 14th through November 12th, 2022.

Miles Debas's paintings are mysteries in broad daylight. They dissociate themselves from the traditionalist associations specific to the objects and media they incorporate, and break ties with the types of illusionistic space reserved for formalist painting. More than representations, Debas's recent body of work evidences a kind of graduated process, a dream-like logic where, through detailed abstraction tethered to collage, excess resolves itself into a wilding gestalt.

However open about their subject-matter Debas's paintings might at first seem, they preserve an ambiguity that transcends the ordinary application of paint and pigment onto a surface. A work like *Koroviev*, for instance, feels equally constructed and found, craftslike and expressive. The painting quite literally overflows itself with collaged elements at the borders, and yet retains its essential identity as a work on canvas. The exploded figure which forms the painting's centralizing theme reaches out past the opacity of its ochreous skin; and the work becomes a landing site for patterned recurrences.

Another work, *Silver Cloud*, leans less on pattern or collage, and more on the intimation of symbolism. One thinks of the distinction between logos and logo: of what it means to represent something directly and what it means to stand in for something absent. The literal features of the work give way to hidden depths and recesses rendered all the more uncanny for the minimalist means by which they become accessible. The rounded silver oval, expanding across the work, carries within itself the potential for the visible canvas to contain something unseen, not unlike a lunar eclipse.

Debas uses the structural conventions of painting—stretcher bars, gestural brushstrokes, allusions to figuration, and the ineluctable edges all pictures come up against—to delineate a childlike world of expressive depth. Like totems ripped from a dream, his paintings enact a protective ritual which involves the whole consciousness of the viewer, inviting him or her to free-associate and interpret each work accordingly. Refusing to conform to our habituated notions of limits and boundaries, Debas's paintings withdraw from the visual precedents that have shaped representational paintings in the past, introducing new worlds that feel equally strategic and spontaneous.