

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRYAN HUNT Flyby

August 7 – September 6, 2015



*Montes Victor Hugo*, 2013  
oil, acrylic, charcoal, photograph on canvas, 120 x 115 in



*Cognitum Oblate (black)*, 2013  
cast aqua resin, paint, 41 1/2 x 46 1/2 in

The Drawing Room is pleased to present **BRYAN HUNT *Flyby***, an exhibition of new works focused on the expansive reach of space exploration, the study of astronomy and the structure of celestial bodies. In an installation that includes large and small paintings, wall reliefs and ceramic sculptures, Hunt's lifelong passion for galactic inquiry is transformed into a visionary cosmology.

Stretching over four decades, Bryan Hunt's unique studio practice has focused on our assimilation of the natural world through feats of engineering and aeronautics and the field of aesthetics. From the beginning, his sculpture has addressed the temperament and causal effects of the physical elements earth, wind, water – and our ability to navigate them through advances in industry, scholarship and technology. In earlier series that include his *Airships*, *Waterfalls*, *Lakes* and *Monuments*, the artist merged concept with form, resulting in works that move from the empirical to the mythic: Hunt's waterfalls and quarries induce liquid into solid, floating airships hover mid-air, and cultural icons are immortalized in bronze, steel and cast aluminum. With a keen regard for the modernist and classical sculptural traditions, Hunt has cultivated his own artistic path with a fierce independence while fully engaged in the cultural dialogue of his generation.

About ten years ago, around the time NASA's *New Horizons* satellite embarked on its mission to Pluto, Hunt decamped to the galaxy's outer reaches, too, trading in earthly subjects for the celestial. He began molding wet clay into hemispherical reliefs pocked with manmade impact craters, rivulets and vivid, imaginary topographies. The process drew on expressionistic instincts, allowing him to engage the poetic as well as the precision and mystery of the sciences. The spheres looked like fragments of a fictional universe. Riveted by their verisimilitude, he photographed them in natural light and eventually the visual data he captured with his camera morphed into vast lunar

(over)

renderings that Hunt stretched out over raw canvas in a process that combined collage, drawing and painting. Extrapolating on a single photograph, he invoked ersatz planets to emerge not unlike a false-color image from NASA, creating a series of nether worlds.

In *Montes Victor Hugo*, a monumental canvas named after one of Hunt's esteemed antecedents – the 19<sup>th</sup> century French poet, novelist and artist – the imagery seems to trace the geological lifespan of a vast celestial body. Dominating the picture plane, a massive sphere emanates from a black and white photograph collaged along the upper quadrant. Undulating with swirling strokes, cliffs and cavities, a mythical and otherworldly terrain is portrayed. Likewise, in *Sedna*, the rich color field that surges across the canvas cedes to a photograph so dramatic it might have transmitted from the Hubble Space Telescope. But what appears to be hard cinematic evidence is, in fact, a view of the clay topographies that dot the floor of Hunt's studio. Radiant and theatrical, the resulting metaphors bounce from the fictive to the corporeal.

Hunt's ceramic orbs are oracular and alien. Puddled in the crevices and clefts, a milky glaze lavishes their mottled surfaces. Rich with pictorial gesture, the clay spheres exude a sense of physical history, as if scarred by speed and asteroid hits. Similar textures animate the expansive silver and blackened swells of two large cast reliefs that appear to be bursting through the gallery walls.

As a teenager, Hunt was immersed in the Apollo Space Program. Hired as an engineer's aid and draftsman at Kennedy Space Center in 1967, he witnessed eight launches, gaining firsthand knowledge on the grandeur and complexity of the American space program. Sustaining a passion for interstellar exploration throughout his life, it is fitting that his focus on celestial allegory would come into maturity just as *New Horizons'* cameras were capturing the first ever images of the dwarf planet, Pluto. As such, Hunt's lunar landscapes and expressive visions of asteroids, atmosphere, moonscapes and outer space offer an eclectic view of the cosmos that is stunning and surrealistic. Presiding over this mythological universe, Hunt's *Flyby* has come full circle.

After completing his BFA at the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, in 1972 Bryan Hunt was accepted into the Independent Study Program of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Relocating permanently to Manhattan in 1976, he now divides his time between studios in New York City and Wainscott, on Long Island's South Fork. He was the recipient of the New York City Commission Art Award for Design Excellence in 2004 and The Academy Award in Art from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2009. Bryan Hunt's work is included in numerous public and private collections, among them the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Stedelijk Museum.

[www.drawingroom-gallery.com](http://www.drawingroom-gallery.com)

**Gallery hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10-5; Sunday 11-5**

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