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David Kordansky Gallery is very pleased to announce Saturn Returns, an exhibition of new paintings by Chris Martin. The show, which will occupy both of the gallery's exhibition spaces, as well as its facade, will open on April 9, 2016, and remain on view through May 21. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, April 9 from 6:00pm until 8:00pm.

Working from a heterogeneous array of cultural traditions, Chris Martin makes paintings that serve as living documents of the eternal present. He privileges stylistic diversity and immediacy over predetermined aesthetic ideas, generating an art that can be as primal as it is knowing, as vibrantly joyful as it is meditative and hermetic. For this reason, Martin's career is characterized by an evolution of thematic cycles rather than strictly linear development. The overt influences - musical, spiritual, and art historical - that appear throughout his work are acknowledgments of his desire to return to a common well, or universally accessible source of inspiration.

Saturn Returns takes its title from an astrological cycle that marks 30-year periods in an individual's life. Each return is said to begin at about age 27, which happens to be when a number of prominent rock musicians died from substance abuse, suicide, or other violent or unexpected causes. They include Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Kurt Cobain, and most recently Amy Winehouse, whose presence looms over much of the exhibition. Paintings dedicated to Winehouse have formed a recent infatuation for Martin, and here for the first time he will show a large-scale, larger-than-life, figurative portrait of the tragic and iconic singer.

The inclusion of this painting raises important questions about Martin's practice as a whole, namely whether or not his approach can be called pure abstraction. While a cursory survey of his exhibitions over the last 20 years might first and foremost call to mind the New York abstract expressionists that are also his spiritual forbears, a closer examination of individual works reveals many of them to be literal and metaphorical landscapes, bristling with collaged images that candidly introduce a

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figurative element to their open and experimental compositional fields.

Several works of the latter sort will be on view in the current exhibition, including large-scale canvases that feature collaged photographs of other fans' paintings of Winehouse embedded in monumental geometric forms, or alongside magazine and picture book images of birds, planets, cannabis leaves, and architecture. Like flowers emanating pollen, these images seem to exude expressive painterly auras whose potent textures and colors Martin applies with controlled abandon. The paintings become records of an ongoing dance between the artist, his arsenal of non-traditional materials (craft media like glitter and foam discs among them), and the images and emotions that he channels from the world at large. A paean to possibility and generosity, Martin's work communicates what it feels like to include it all, to be open to anything, and to assume that the heart was designed to be worn on a sleeve.

Accordingly, his practice has been characterized by a freedom regarding scale. Vast canvases are detailed with intimate physical surprises, and smaller pictures pack larger-than-life graphic punch. Martin also refuses to assume that paintings must hang on interior walls; he will install several works "in" this show in light boxes affixed to the exterior of the gallery, where they are exposed to the elements as well as the gazes of passersby. Just as he addresses the painting process itself as a porous activity, Martin acknowledges that an exhibition is part of a greater landscape, one star in a constellation of aesthetic events occurring everywhere and anywhere at once.

And yet Martin also celebrates specific locales that have proven significant to him over the years. These include, perhaps most notably, the forests of the Catskill Mountains in upstate New York, where he spent formative time as a child and where he continues to maintain a studio. A number of paintings on view feature broad bands of horizontal color, sensitively and economically rendered, which evoke both Color Field and the shifting hues of the forest sky at dawn or dusk. Works like these are

reminders that natural spirits animate Martin's work in innumerable ways (frogs, for instance, make recurring appearances). In their embracing presence, art becomes a vessel not only for cultural expression and discourse, but also for the wilder, teeming varieties of life that exceed human logic.

Chris Martin (b. 1954, Washington, D.C.) has been the subject of solo exhibitions at institutions worldwide, including most recently Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2015); Rectangle, Brussels (2015); Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2011); and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2011). Recent group exhibitions featuring his work include Nice Weather, curated by David Salle, Skartstedt Gallery, New York (2016); Spaced Out: Migration To The Interior, curated by Phong Bui, Red Bull Studios, New York (2014); I was a double, curated by Ian Berry and David Lang, The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York (2014); and Submarine Wharf - XXXL Painting, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2013). Martin's paintings are included in the public collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.