

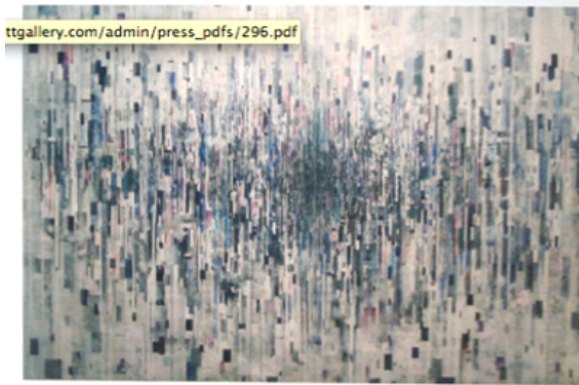
## MODERN PAINTERS

### NEW YORK

#### Ryan Wallace

Morgan Lehman // April 19–May 26

THE WORKS IN Wallace's exhibition, "Cusp," share an astronomical fixation, yet are rendered with materials that, for the most part, are anything but space-age. The result is a combination of the extraterrestrial and the handmade. "Cusp" has a specific scientific meaning that is probably more germane to the artist's practice, but from a viewer's perspective, the word's alternate or idiomatic usage—"a point of transition between two different states"—is perhaps more helpful. We are on the border of something, looking at these paintings, or at the 28-piece grid of mixed-media drawings, ((())). *Cycle 3*, 2012, is like viewing a black hole, a beckoning light. In *Glean 10*, 2011, the surface is literally cut, leaving disemboweled ribbons of material and a gaping central hole; it's a nascent tunnel through which we could burrow into the painting itself. Wallace's work doesn't aim for a serious verisimilitude, à la photographs of the cosmos taken by the Hubble Telescope. Step close and the artist's craftsmanship and mechanics are laid bare—the use of Crystallina glitter, Mylar, vinyl, and tape effect a look that is at once futuristic and scrappy. A tension between real and fabricated, or original and copy, is even more palpable in *Consensus 1–4*, 2012, a set of four pedestals holding sculptural objects behind colored, reflective Plexiglas. On the first, Wallace has placed an arrange-



Ryan Wallace  
*Atlas 2*, 2012  
Mixed media  
on canvas,  
90 x 140 in.

ment of actual rocks; the remaining three contain rocklike sculptural objects, made using materials that range from Alumilite resin to inkjet prints, and organized like four figures huddled against the cold. It's a collision of various aesthetic references and styles—the vitrine-style display cases of museums, an archaeologist's spoils, the arcane logic of a religious altar, and even (thanks to the flashy Plexiglas) an unexpected and nicely incongruous '80s nightclub flair.

But perhaps the most exciting works here are the simplest ones, a set of three almost-monochrome paintings from 2012 that share a wall. They lack that swirling white central figure—instead, we're staring at a void, framed by a richly textured border. The largest canvas, *Tablet (Blue)*, utilizes a shimmering, quasi-kitsch bluish glitter. A crafty rendering of infinite space. *Tablet (Silver)* is a solid expanse of not-quite-reflective metallic gleam; and *Tablet (White)* has the veneer of glossy ivory, like the coating on the aforementioned rocks. Compared to Wallace's other works, these canvases appear unfinished—but in an intriguing way, as if the monochromatic center is supposed to reflect the viewer (and fails to do so); or as if we are meant to try, and fail, to find some pattern in the shifting field of glitter, a decidedly human representation of the cosmos. —Scott Indrisek