**Fragmentation and Harmony,**

an exhibition by

Joshua Elias & Soheila Siadate

“Understanding requires insight. Insight must be anchored.” -- Brian Greene, *The Elegant Universe*

In the works of Soheila Siadate and Joshua Elias I see two painters with very different styles yet each performing a deep dive into the nature of matter, form, energy and perception. Elias employs a lyrical palette to build abstract landscapes which retain the traces of space and earth. In a sense, he renders the external world through the interpretive atmosphere of personal experience and emotion. Siadate is interested in the underlying, fractal armature that holds the universe together from the microscopic to the cosmological. She inverts the dynamic in her adventurous, materials-rich works which give outward form to the invisible, abstract forces that shape our world from the cosmos to the microbe.

Color and shape, shape and color. In working the fertile, porous interdependence of these aspects of composition, both Elias and Siadate arrive at a shared liminality, a true border region between abstraction and the landscape. Each has a personal, specific story to tell, and yet each has determined to do so in a gestural, rarefied language of energy and impression that arises from places and events like fog from a morning lake, catching the light.

“I would describe my work as Spiritual Abstraction,” Elias has said, and that feels right. His work is characterized by eccentric palettes, notably both subtle and bold, and a taste for impasto and surface variation that amplifies the power of those colors and the emotions they convey. A flight of deep rust, concrete mustard, greyed hunter green; a drama of crimson, violet, indigo; a breeze of wildflowers and coral stone -- these colors hold their own mass, they occupy their space in the compositions like objects would do. The paint’s optical and material physicality both tells and embodies the forces of nature it portrays.

For Siadate, her most recent work has its own unique alchemy of image and abstraction, beginning with the shape of a circle. For her, the experience of the pandemic was one of both solitude and solidarity, fear and action. From the global impact of tiny particles, to the realization of how interconnected all of humanity truly is, this work expresses the awesome power of invisible forces that shape life on earth as both spiritual and physical phenomena. In her richly textured, emotionally evocative works, Siadate gives tangible form to the experience of interconnectedness, in all its glory and terror.

Taken together, there are so many stories that are told here. As the complex interplays and echoes of color, texture, line and form unfold within the works of each artist and further, in their conversation each to each, the title of the exhibition manifests. From the volatility of emotion and uncertainty, a narrative is outlined; from the encounters of line and color, the flickering energy of life is embodied; from impressions comes a sense of place; and from a life of fragments, a harmony is at last achieved.

--Shana Nys Dambrot, exhibition curator