

Transitional Painting:

Marianne Vlaschits' Primordial Rhapsody

Painting may be deeply transitional, it may visually, mentally, and epistemically mediate between the real and the imaginative, and Marianne Vlaschits masterfully accentuates and blithely reframes this most fundamental of painting's tropes.

At the core of her artistic endeavor lies the idea of disbanding with epistemological divisions of human experience into external and internal dimensions, into body and self, being and thinking, or, as it turns out, earth and space. Akin to Jai Vedh, the puzzling protagonist of Joanna Russ' sci-fi novel *And Chaos Died* (1970), whose prime desire it is to impetuously merge with the universe, Vlaschits' paintings envision a state of affairs at once uncanny and unshackling, in which spatial realms, corporealities, shapes and patterns metamorphose into one another: The frigid anatomic cross-section of a larynx opens into a dark cosmic space with two stellar orbs floating in the supposed void (*Algieba*); undulating waves that emanate from a small head's temples are absorbed and refracted by peculiar shapes that may just as well represent lips, buttocks' or simply formal abstractions (*Sagittarius_A**), or the dance of three quaint figures that paronymically rhythmizes the deep blue cosmic landscape they traverse (*Indigo*).

More than about the initial and resulting state of her representations, Vlaschits' depictions speak to us of transitional configurations as an auspicious state in which the perspicuity of distinctive entities imploded. The term "transitional object," coined by the psychologist Donald Winnicott in 1953, typically denotes a developmental sequence in early childhood when the infant's illusion of unmitigated mergence with their mother is gradually abandoned and initially attenuated by an external object. Vlaschits' paintings, however, in which cosmic realms intertwine with human body parts and consciousness, point to a more pervasive transitionality – one that reminds us of the truly primordial forces that structured the vast galaxies of the universe in its earliest stages, and in which our differentiations and classifications of human experience seem like nothing more but a petty afterthought.