

EQUINOX GALLERY  
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## **Ben Reeves: *Between Dog and Wolf***

October 19 to November 25, 2017

Equinox Gallery, Vancouver

Reception for the artist: Thursday October 19<sup>th</sup>, 6 to 8pm

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Equinox Gallery is pleased to present ***Between Dog and Wolf***, an exhibition of new paintings by Ben Reeves. For Reeves, painting provides a form for experience where viewing a painting is an exercise that allows the imaginary to expand into the viewer's personal experience. Reeves' paintings are rooted in contradictions where the sensory, emotional, rational, historical, psychological, and ocular come together in pictorial space as a way to affirm and challenge the intangible space between paint, the mind, the body, and the outside world.

Ben Reeves' painting practice has often invoked the material qualities of paint as a way to draw attention to how paintings can be both images and objects. He explains:

I am interested in the materiality of painting, but also its conceptual side. Paintings are physical things – they are of the world – but they are simultaneously space for thinking about the world. These aspects are in tension with one another: how we think about the world is never exactly how the world is. I am interested in this back-and-forth, painting seems a helpful space for me to explore and challenge my thinking about things. For this reason, I have been interested in moments when painted, material gestures resolve into an image, and equally when an image 'falls apart' into autonomous passages of paint, surface and colour.

Initially inspired by the trope of the painter as intrepid explorer, Reeves has chosen tents and provisional structures as a reoccurring motif for this body of work. With their thin and porous membranes, the tents offer little in the way of protection but evoke the existential reflections on the sublime that intrigued the Romantic painters of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and later, the practices of 1960s counterculture movements and imagined utopias of the past. Huddled in masses the fabric structures suggest a burgeoning, makeshift social order where ad hoc tribes band together in favor of a more communal way of living. As private shelters, the tents also represent both the isolation and private space desired by those who seek to explore a nomadic life and a way to escape to less troubled lands or ideologies. Metaphorically, these alternative living structures act as immersive storehouses where utopias, memories, and nostalgias reside and propagate.

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The title of the exhibition *Between Dog and Wolf* comes from an expression that appeared in the French language in the 13<sup>th</sup> century referring to dusk or dawn - the liminal moments between day and night when the dissolution of daylight makes it difficult to distinguish between dog and wolf, doubt and understanding, sanctuary and menace, fiction and reality. Ben Reeves uses the title as a way to create psychological space between the viewer and the painting, and between the paint and the image.

Ben Reeves has had solo exhibitions at Museum London; Oakville Galleries, Jessica Bradley Gallery, and Equinox Gallery. His work has also been included in *The Painting Project: A Snapshot of Painting in Canada*, Galerie de l'UQAM, Montreal; *Take Your Time*, Simon Fraser University Art Gallery, Burnaby; *Shifting Space*, Museum of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Chongqing, China, and *For the Record: Drawing Contemporary Life* at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Reeves' works are held in the collections of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Museum London, Vancouver Art Gallery, Surrey Art Gallery, National Gallery of Canada, and numerous corporate and private collections.

Ben Reeves lives and works in Vancouver, BC.