

Ainsley Bruton

Artist Statement

Dissonance and Daybreak

I have always hated my body, always felt trapped by the boundaries of my physical self. But my body is not only bound by its materiality, but also by what it means, how it is categorized and made to conform to societal roles and expectations. Ultimately, gendered embodiment is at the heart of this painting; I attempt to visualize the trauma of living in a body defined by binary categories and the possibility of being released from those constraints. I use bodily forms that are ambiguous, undefined, and at times illegible to construct a utopian euphoric body that is just beyond our grasp. This move towards liberation is not without its pain and flaws, but that scraping and grappling for an obscure future is what gives the painting its form and movement. The tension between saturated colors and grayed out tones throughout the piece reinforces the dissonance between potential deliverance and ongoing harm. I see this painting as resting in the space between our present moment and an imagined future that is ever on the horizon, just out of reach.

The choice to work very large was intentional. The scale of the piece is an attempt to create an embodied experience that involves the viewer in the work. I want the work to feel all consuming so as to construct a different kind of spatial reality that a viewer can get lost within. This encompassing, illusory space actively implicates the viewer's body in the process of being gendered and inhabiting a gendered body, while simultaneously involving their body in the ongoing project of liberation.