



## Paul Resika at Bookstein Projects

Brianna Di Monda | May 6, 2024



Paul Resika, *Golden Firmament*, 2024, Oil on canvas, 40 x 32 inches.

nature and its unfathomable beauty. I have seen a red sky only once, when the California wildfires burned in 2020. The bluest light I have experienced was during an eclipse, when the full moon blocked nearly all of the direct rays of the sun. Standing before Resika's paintings, I am reminded of the times I was confronted by the sky as the womb of our celestial bodies.

Just last year, Paul Resika presented a meditation on the sky with his *End of Day* series, in which six paintings captured a red sun as it sets above the horizon of an indeterminate land- or seascape. His latest series, *Ode to the Moon*, continues this astronomical exploration, only this time, his attention has turned to the full moon. Through nine oil-on-canvas paintings, Resika depicts the moon across various skies: from blue mornings to red evenings to hot yellow afternoons. In fact, *Yellow Sky* has no moon: just an empty sky and the choppy ocean below. While realized in a quasi-abstract visual language of reductive forms and spare color, each painting evokes a sense of wonder at the setting moon.

The Great North American Eclipse happened just ten days before this show's opening. In a way, the exhibition augmented the sense of awe that the moon can inspire. With refined brushwork and vivid color, Resika offers in this show a meditation of



Paul Resika, *Moonlight*, 1943-44, Oil on canvas, 8 x 12 inches.

In a rear gallery, one painting, much smaller than the others, depicts a stormy night. Here, gestural brushstrokes of blues and greens cover the canvas. A small boat sails far from shore, under the full moon. While other works on view were painted within the past year, Resika completed this painting between 1943 and 1944, when he was only sixteen years old. In contrast to the relative calm and stillness of the other works, this piece brings a welcome element of surprise and a sense of controlled chaos. It also underscores nature's volatility and power: that the largest ocean waves coincide with full moons, guided by its gravitational pull.

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*This exhibition is organized by Bookstein Projects, where it is on view from April 18 to May 31.*