

# Ashley Garrett



## *SLATER*

February 19th - March 22nd, 2015

Ashley Garrett: *SLATER*

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Chase Family Gallery

Mandell JCC, Zachs Campus  
335 Bloomfield Ave, West Hartford, CT  
mandelljcc.org, 860-236-4571

**Opening Reception Thursday, February 19th, 2015**

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*Field Day*, 2014 oil on canvas, 40 x 32 inches

Front cover: *Weona*, 2015, oil on canvas, 42 x 37.5 inches



Ashley Garrett's exhibition, *SLATER*, draws inspiration from the landscape and fading labor practice (once a primary industry) of slate quarrying in the town where she was raised: Bangor, Pennsylvania. The workers were referred to as slaters and Garrett reflects on the metamorphic rock, the poetics of the labor practice and the mastery of splitting techniques: "Slate...can be split perfectly straight north/south across the right striations of the axis (relative to how it comes out of the quarry). The master splitters can do this really quickly and it looks very easy, just with a small hammer and chisel, but this is a skill passed down from master to apprentice and can really only be done by a skilled, sensitive handler of the material." Alongside dimensions of labor, Garrett meditates on landscape changes, such as the deep water-filled quarries and the edges of unnatural holes in the earth, eventually filling over time. The subterranean aftermath of these environmental interventions (of stone replaced by water) reverberates on canvas, but many of the pieces also emphasize interiority.

Garrett's reflections split the utilitarian use of slate from its symbol. Most of the paintings depict wide and deep areas of color where a feeling of sinking and gravity comes across, and the dominant essence seems soft and adsorbent, like grass, earth or water, perhaps filtered and controlled by Garrett's own perceptivity. There is a tension between spatial and nonspatial orientation, specificity and non-specificity of landscape alongside patches of absence but not nothingness (blankness). Each space is filled. The paintings seem aligned with timekeeping, they are places and images of the past, cast in a light of remembrance and a negotiation of remembrance, unobsessive while distanced but deeply engaged, even embodying the subjects of the slate and slater. There doesn't seem to be a negotiation of detail but instead there is a negotiation of distance, one that is steady and welcoming of twists, organized in flow and a polychromatic convergence into darkened quarries or cave entrances. A marvelous crossing occurs to inspect landscape and fields of occurrence, and Garrett plunges into the unexplained (or this strangeness). Pathways of looking to the past, to the bond of place and time, are embodied by streaks, pinnacles, and short-lived rhythms of impression or recall that are repetitive and ever-evolving. They are finished but not overdone; they are not a mirror and not a portal, but an understanding.

-Kari Adelaide



*Quarry*, 2014, oil on canvas, 8 x 10 inches

Ashley Garrett, born in Dover, New Jersey in 1984, grew up in Bangor, a small quarrying town on the edge of farmland and Amish country in northeastern Pennsylvania. She earned her BFA in 2008 from the School of Visual Arts in New York. While at SVA she attended a summer painting residency at Escola Superior de Disseny i Art (Llotja) in Barcelona, Spain. Her paintings have recently been exhibited in three-person shows at Brian Morris Gallery in New York and Elgin Gallery in Brooklyn. She has also been included in recent group exhibitions at Novella Gallery, Schema Projects, the Whitney Houston Biennial, and Life On Mars Gallery. Her work has also been shown in group exhibitions at Apex Art in New York, Trestle Gallery, Bowery Gallery and the Newark Arts Council and in exhibitions curated by critics Jed Perl and Jeanne Siegel. Ashley contributes interviews to *Whitehot Magazine*, *Painting is Dead* and *Figure/Ground*. She has recently published interviews with artists Katherine Bernhardt, Ann Craven, Joanne Greenbaum, Judith Linhares, Lori Ellison and dancer/choreographer Molissa Fenley. Ashley Garrett lives and works in New York City.