

This catalog was produced in conjunction with:

Thaddeus Radell: Agitation on the Acheron

October 29 – November 23, 2019

Bowery Gallery 530 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street New York, NY 10001 646-230-6655 www.bowerygallery.org



Agitation on the Acheron (details) 2019, oil/wax on panel, 72 × 108 in.



# Thaddeus Radell Agitation on the Acheron

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Agitation on the Acheron 2019, oil/wax on panel, 72 × 108 in.

# On Thaddeus Radell

haddeus Radell's paintings come into being as an act of discovery. Through process (the artist judiciously inflecting materials), and through active viewing, Radell's paintings are *found* embodiments, vessels of poetic imagery which reveal themselves fully in return for one's invested attention.

In Radell's painting process there is no *a priori* subject matter upon which to depend. These works are, as Radell describes them, "intuitive constructions that begin with random marks establishing larger masses…in an undefined setting. The figures seem to be born of their surrounding environment, emerging only partially and fugitively from the mat and scarred layers of pigments."

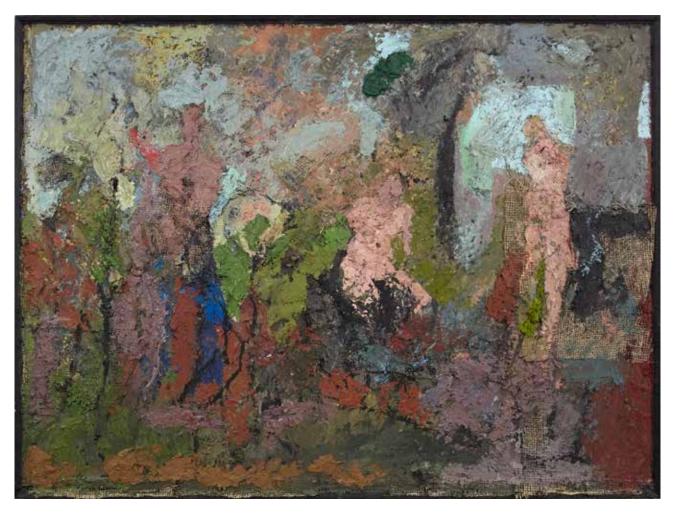
Radell's images are gradually unveiled, not imposed. Consequently, there is a built-in fungibility to each resultant form. The "object matter" in Radell's work is not present as a species of prosaic figuration, but as an action. These works arise from acts of

configuration, acts in which the viewer, with both psyche and soma, eventually participates completely. In Radell's work, both artist and viewer must discover what the painting is.

Radell's layering of materials: paint, burlap, wax (moving, adding, subtracting, forming) can continue for months before an image fully suggests itself. He develops these images towards a kind of non-specific, evocative embodiment; using the tools which painters have always used: light, dark, color, texture, form and space. Yet, just as important to the valences of meaning in Radell's work is how these pictorial forms configure themselves in the viewer's psyche when observed.

Like particles in quantum physics, the act of observing Radell's work instantly and continually changes his paintings and drawings for the observer. His images are fluid and solid at the same time. In an imaginary portrait, *Artist II*, on one viewing a painter-figure seemed to gaze off to the left at his canvas, but on a subsequent viewing stared, just as convincingly, straight into this observer's eyes. Amidst a group of figures and shapes in a painting like *Agitation on The Acheron*, a pillar can suddenly reveal itself to be a figure, and a pile of red rags can transform seamlessly and definitively into a begging dog. A piece of burlap, in a painting like *The Crossing II*, is at once a piece of burlap and a cloud, or both burlap and absolutely a cavern wall in hell. In Radell's work, in order to *find* the painting, both artist and viewer must allow themselves to get lost in a peregrination of *configuration*.

In the first Canto of *Inferno*, Dante gets lost in a dark wood. The clear path is visible but blocked by ravenous beasts, representing three negative aspects of our nature, lust, pride and avarice. It's only by descending through Hell, passing through Purgatory and, ultimately, through Heaven can Dante overcome those impediments to his spiritual and poetic realization. His escort through the most dangerous part of this journey is the poet Virgil, in the poem representing the positive, guiding force of art. Virgil is sent to aid Dante in his pilgrimage by Beatrice, for Dante a poetic embodiment of Divine



A God Sighs 2018, oil/wax on panel, 36 x 48 in.





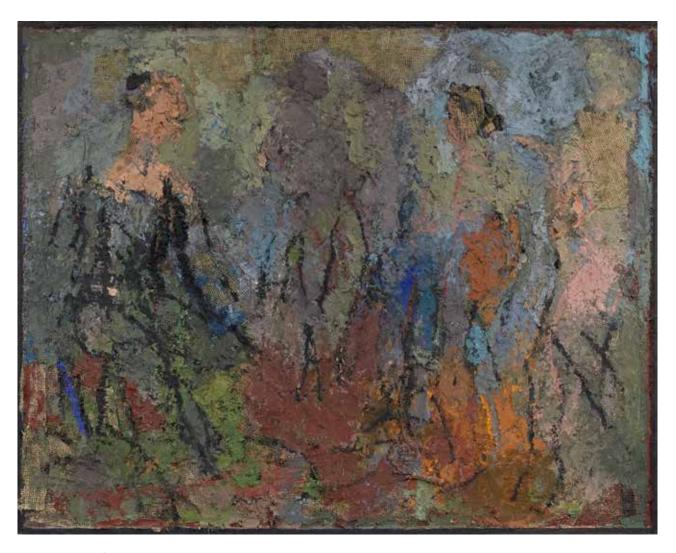
### CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

Study for Death and the Maiden 2017-18, oil/wax on panel, 48 x 34 in.

Dante and Virgil on the Banks of the Acheron 2018, oil/wax on panel, 30 x 60 in.

Past the Gates 2018, oil/wax on panel, 34 x 62 in.





The Judgement of Paris
2018, oil/wax on panel, 48 x 60 in.

Grace, who later guides him on his passage through Heaven. By the end of his arduous journey, Dante the pilgrim is freed from those early impediments to become the poet who composes the very *Commedia* in which we, as readers, observe his transformation.

Likewise, Radell's faith in the spiritual power and poetic resonance inherent in the art of Painting gives him the courage to take a spiritual odyssey with each new canvas upon which he embarks. Radell writes extensively about the influence of Dante Alighieri on his work, and several titles in this exhibition reflect that influence. Like Dante-the-pilgrim in the epic poem, Radell is willing to allow each act of painting to be a process of getting lost; a willingness to endure all the tribulations and ecstasies necessary to arrive, re-grounded on earth, metamorphosed as *The Poet*. We willingly accompany him on this fascinating pilgrimage. As we apply our awareness to Radell's paintings, we are all given the opportunity afforded to us through an art form grounded in discovery: to be both Pilgrim and Poet, over and again.

—Mark Thomas Kanter October 2019





Adrift on the Acheron 2016-18 oil/wax on panel 48 x 100 in.





### CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

The Crossing I 2019, oil/wax on panel, 24 x 48 in.

Metaphysical Landscape 2018-19, oil/wax on panel, 27 x 60 in.

Away, Away Ere Break of Day 2019, oil/wax on panel, 30 x 40 in.





*Wind* 2019, oil/wax on panel, 24 x 30 in.



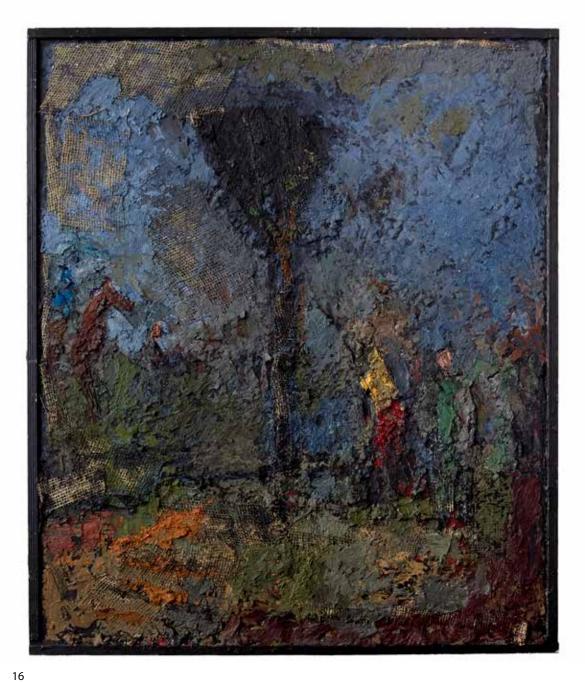
Storm
2018, oil/wax on panel, 18 x 24 in.



Achilles Stumbles on the Field of Troy 2017-19 oil/wax on panel 80 x 60 in.



Death and the Maiden 2017-19 oil/wax on panel 60 x 48 in.



Night Wanderings 2018-19 oil/wax on panel 40 x 34 in.



The Three Graces 2019, oil/wax on panel, 20 x 24 in.





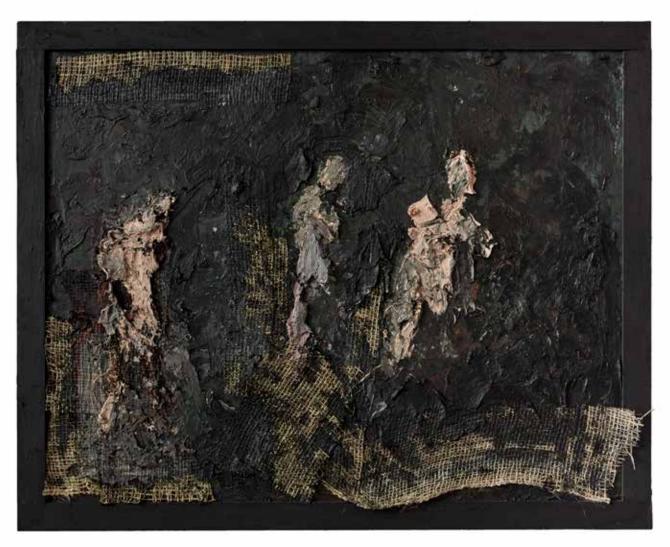
### CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

The Way Home 2019, oil/wax on panel, 24 x 30 in.

Exiled 2018, oil/wax on panel, 24 x 48 in.

The Blind Leading the Blind 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 48 x 60 in.





Figures Through the Night 2019, oil/wax on panel, 20 x 24 in.



Purgatorio 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 48 x 60 in.







*Trio* 2019, oil/wax on panel, 16 x 20 in.

Study for a Portrait of an Aging Hero 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 30 x 24 in.

Study for a Portrait of Telemachus 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 30 x 24 in.



Across from the Oil Rig 2019, oil/wax on panel, 20 x 24 in.



Desperate Passage 2019, oil/wax on panel, 16 x 20 in.







Cohort 2019, oil/wax on panel, 16 x 20 in.

Head Study I 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.

Head Study VI 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.









*Head Study X* 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.

Head Study II 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.

Head Study XVI 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.

Head Study V 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.





Head Study III 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.

Head Study VII 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.

A Distant Tower 2019, oil/wax on panel, 30 x 40 in.





Artist III
2019
oil/wax on panel
40 x 30 in.



Hommage to Rousseau 2019, oil/wax on panel, 48 x 60 in.



Artist I
2019
oil/wax on panel
40 x 30 in.



Artist II
2019
oil/wax on panel
40 x 30 in.





## CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

Charon Arrives 2019, oil/wax on panel, 24 x 36 in.

On the Outskirts of Babel 2018-19, oil/wax on panel, 48 x 72 in.

Study for Agitation on the Acheron I 2019, oil/wax on panel, 29 x 31 in.





Study for Agitation on the Acheron II 2019, oil/wax on panel, 29 x 31 in.



Study for Agitation on the Acheron III 2019, oil/wax on panel, 29 x 31 in.







## LEFT TO RIGHT:

The Crossing II
2019, oil/wax on panel, 24 x 30 in.

Head Study XV 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.

Head Study IV 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.









## LEFT TO RIGHT:

Head Study XI 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.

Head Study XII 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.

Head Study XIII 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.

Head Study XIV 2017-19, oil/wax on panel, 14 x 11 in.



Homecoming 2018, oil/wax on panel, 30 x 40 in.



Horses of Olympus 2018-19, oil/wax on panel, 48 x 72 in.

## Thaddeus Radell com

Born and raised in Michigan, the son of two artists, Thaddeus Radell completed his BFA at University of Detroit/Mercy. He moved to New York City in 1980 to study at Parsons School of Design with Paul Resika, Leland Bell and Jack Heliker. After receiving his MFA, he spent the next several years painting in the city and working as the studio assistant to Resika, Robert Deniro, Sr. and the sculptor Sydney Simon. In 1984 he moved to France, where he spent the next 14 years dividing his time between studios in Provence and Paris.

The artist returned in 2000 to New York City, where he exhibits regularly, is an Associate Professor of Painting at The Borough of Manhattan Community College, and writes reviews of exhibitions for online publications such as Artcritical.com and Paintingperceptions.com. He has been a member of the Bowery Gallery since 2014 and is represented by Thomas Deans Fine Art in Atlanta, Georgia. His work has been acquired by the Oglethorpe University Museum, Atlanta, Georgia and the Gadsden Art Center and Museum, Quincey, Florida.

Radell currently resides in New York City and Catskill, NY.



This catalog is dedicated to my mentors, Renée and Lloyd, masters of their craft.

Many thanks to Simon Carr and David Paulson for setting the bar, to John Goodrich for his tireless efforts on my behalf, Mark Kanter for his thoughtful and thought-provoking essay, Michael Seccareccia for his unerring eye, and to Elaine, my inspiration.

Thanks also to my two faithful assistants, Xiaorui Huang and David Rodriguez.

Special thanks to Thomas Deans for his relentless and ever-restless practical and moral support.

Catalog design: John Goodrich

