

# MARC JANCOU CONTEMPORARY

Alan Michael  
*Back to the Docks*  
April 19 - May 25, 2012



Marc Jancou Contemporary is pleased to announce the first New York exhibition by Scottish painter Alan Michael. Entitled *Back to the Docks*, the show will open with a reception on April 19<sup>th</sup> from 6 - 8 PM, and will be on view through May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Since the late 1990s, Michael's work has appropriated not only images but also techniques of representation from a wide range of sources, including the realms of fashion, cinema, advertising, and design, as well as art history. By juxtaposing imagery from banal, disparate sources, and systematically repeating the same image with slightly varied palettes and compositions, Michael takes a cool, detached approach to the act of appropriation. In this way, he shifts the focus of the work from the subject being depicted to the abstract idea of reference material itself, and the fluctuating values attached to these found sources by artists, designers, and their audiences.

For this exhibition, Michael has created a new series of paintings and works on paper with a highly personal, internal circuit of reference points— in the artist's words, "a secret code." These works appropriate ideas, rather than images, and refer to an artist friend of Michael's who no longer makes art. Michael's images are based on ideas for works his friend either made or spoke about making during the course of a nervous breakdown, including paintings of cruise ships, images of vinyl text, and drawings of people she thought were following her. However, Michael's works are dramatically different from how his friend originally conceived them, executed and duplicated in Michael's characteristic photo-realist style and mode of repetition. Rather than drawing on the imagery of mass media, these new works appropriate something abstract and interior— ideas, and a state of mind.

This dense network of references is turned even further in upon itself by the ways in which these new works reference Michael's own practice and past exhibitions. For example, to create the new text paintings on view, Michael remade the vinyl signage from one of his previous shows and installed it on his studio wall, taking close-up photographs of the text that rendered it illegible. From these photographs, he painted multiple images of the lettering in real space, capturing the texture of the walls and the gleaming reflections on the vinyl in a nod to the photo-realist techniques he has long employed, and to the varied text-based works he has made for over a decade. As Michael explains, the show's title *Back to the Docks* "suggests a return to somewhere we've been before."

Michael's work has been featured in numerous museum exhibitions throughout Europe, including *BigMinis: Fetishes of Crisis*, CAPC, Museum of Contemporary Art, Bordeaux, France; *Depression*, Marmes Centre for Contemporary Culture, Maastricht, Netherlands; and *The Tate Triennial*, Tate Britain, London. In 2008, he was the subject of *Mood: Casual*, a solo exhibition at Tate Britain, and *Touch Void*, a solo exhibition at the Talbot Rice Gallery, University of Edinburgh. Michael lives and works in Glasgow. This is his first exhibition with Marc Jancou Contemporary.

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