

Michael Raedecker | *zone*, 2024

GRIMM is pleased to present *back on earth*, an exhibition of new work by London-based Dutch artist Michael Raedecker at the gallery in Amsterdam (NL). This marks Raedecker's eighth solo exhibition with GRIMM, and coincides with Amsterdam Art Week, a city-wide programme celebrating the Dutch contemporary art scene. To accompany this event, the artist will be signing copies of his recent monograph published by Phaidon titled *everything, but not everything* at GRIMM, Amsterdam (NL), from 2 - 5 pm on Saturday, 1 June 2024.

back on earth continues Raedecker's exploration into the symbiotic and often parasitic relationship between nature and humanity – to understand our place in the world and draw attention to the proximity and power of nature in relation to the urban environment. The exhibition's title refers to the idea of the artist's studio and the act of painting creating a liminal space outside of reality – a contemplative world away from the pace and demands of life, that adheres to its own rules and logic. In recent years Raedecker has begun to explore darker scenes in his work, indicating the increased tensions and strangeness of the world today, with what he describes as '*all the world's darkness trickling into the studio*'.

While creating this new series of works, Raedecker simultaneously launched a thirty-year career retrospective at the Kunstmuseum, The Hague (NL), titled *material worlds* on view until 11 August 2024. The opportunity to reflect on his practice to date, has seen him return to the domestic in paintings such as *retreat*, having not painted an interior scene since 2016. Motifs such as the spider's web are also reintroduced – signifying the silent witness who observes the passage of time – while also referencing Raedecker's ongoing thread of embroidery, bringing details of decadence or decay to the surface of his canvas.

Over the course of his career, Raedecker has consistently explored the impact of a changing world on the meaning and context of his work, interrogating not only the subject matter but the medium through which it is communicated. Building on an initial idea in paint and thread, Raedecker photographs and digitally manipulates the piece before transposing it onto a large canvas on which he builds up a sculpted surface through paint and thread again, restoring the human hand to the digital reproduction. Traversing the handmade and the mechanical, Raedecker collapses the original into the copy and back into the original.

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The resulting work captures a prevailing sensation of the uncanny – capturing the presence of humanity through our visual absence in relation to the environment.

Recurring motifs such as deserted cars and empty cabins are suggestive of this absent figure, creating an uncanny atmosphere that bears the mark of recent departures or imprints of human interaction – the strangeness of the suburban terrain sitting at the junction where the landscape meets man-made dwellings. These evocative scenes also fabricate a sense of nostalgia, referencing the paradox of the American dream that is at once sentimental and oppressive, familiar and contaminated. A placid, dark palette is often set in violent contrast with bright blues, greens, and pinks, capturing Raedecker’s haunting observations on our own ephemerality.

This turn toward vivid monochromatic work has also been a result of Raedecker’s adoption of a transfer technique in his practice that has allowed him to shift his approach toward colour; embracing bold, dark, and vibrant hues that emphasise the contrast and dramatic potential of the nightscape. For *back on earth*, Raedecker has also produced vast blue monochromes that represent both an innocent and hopeful impulse, while also signifying the same sense of unease as his nightscapes. The endless expanse of blue sky is charged with the unknown, with plumes of threaded smoke billowing from isolated houses into the abyss.

Raedecker has long been interested in the role of the observer, taking the position of a quiet spectator in his work, documenting and responding to the changes around him. In recent years, what was once a desire to observe has become a concentrated impulse to make artwork – interrogating his artistic signature by working at scale, and in new and challenging formats. *back on earth* marks a convergence of the artist’s ideas, studies, and experiences in recent decades, inviting the viewer to step into his world for a moment to witness the strangeness of the everyday, and the capacity for beauty in the banal.

About the artist

Michael Raedecker (b. 1963 in Amsterdam, NL) lives and works in London (UK). He received his BA in Fashion Design from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam (NL), and continued his studies at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam (NL), as well as Goldsmiths College, London (UK). In 2000, Raedecker was shortlisted for the Turner Prize.

His work can be found in the collections of Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (NL); ABN AMRO Art Collection (NL); AkzoNobel Art Collection, Amsterdam (NL); Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL (US); Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo (NO); British Council, London (UK); THE EKARD COLLECTION; He Art Museum, Foshan (CN); ENECO Art Collection, Utrecht (NL); Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY (US); ING Art Collection, Amsterdam (NL); Istanbul Modern Collection, Istanbul (TR); Kunstmuseum, The Hague (NL); MAXXI National Museum of XXI Century Arts, Rome (IT); Museum van Bommel van Dam, Venlo (NL); De Nederlandsche Bank (NL); Rabo Art Collection (NL); Tate, London (UK); Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar (NL); Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (UK) as well as in many private collections.

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