

# MICHAEL RAEDECKER

## camouflage

**MARCH 18 – APRIL 23, 2016**

Opening: Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
from 5 pm till 8 pm at GRIMM

**GRIMM is delighted to announce the first solo exhibition by Michael Raedecker with the gallery.**

Chairs, curtains, pot plants, a floor lamp: the objects depicted in Michael Raedecker's new paintings are familiar things. Mute witnesses of our daily lives - the countless hours we've forgotten, the split seconds we will remember forever - they have the quality of stage props in an unending domestic saga. We might imagine them absorbing time like a flower absorbs sunlight, or a rag absorbs a stain.

I have used the word 'paintings', but this requires some qualification. None of these images have been made using a brush, and only some of them employ paint. Raedecker's curtains are formed from bolts of thin, rumpled cotton steeped in watered-down acrylic, which (in an echo of Morris Louis' colour field canvases) has sunk into the fibres, the uneven density of its distribution creating areas of shadow: the runching of material around a curtain rail, say, or its billowing in the breeze from an unseen window. The artist's pot plants are also the product of paint-bathed swatches of fabric, collaged on the surface of the work. Look closely at their fronds - cut into shapes that are by turns diagrammatically leaf-like, and veer towards abstraction - and we see that some of them bear printed patterns, as though living vegetable matter was mimicking, chameleon like, the qualities of commercial textile. Maybe this should not be so surprising. Nature, here, has been domesticated, conquered, potted - this new camouflage is appropriate to our human world. Here and there in these paintings, passages of Raedecker's signature stitching appear, summoning up a lampshade, or a spidery tendril. The threading of wool through canvas is, of course, slow, meticulous work. Looking at these images, we might reflect on how quickly a cheese plant grows, or a minute passes on an empty afternoon.



Michael Raedecker, *session*, 2015

If the needle is a cautious instrument, then the scissors with which Raedecker hacks out his chair works from bolts of grey fake fur operate decisively, and at speed. Unlike the application of pigment with a paintbrush, this is a process that is subtractive rather additive. As with stone carving, it is a one shot deal, with no second chances - make a mistake, and the whole image collapses back into the fabric's plush. Viewed from afar, these works appear as though they have been chiseled from concrete, or created by stirring a finger in wet cement, and it is only when we draw closer that we see how the direction of their agitated fibres has created light and shade, positive and negative space. For all that they are wall-mounted, they feel heavy, obedient to gravity, footed - like the objects they depict - on solid ground.

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While Raedecker's curtains, plants, and floor lamp belong to the domestic sphere, there is something institutional about his chairs. They might furnish a hospital, or a prison, or a school assembly hall, their particular arrangement – blocking our path like a burly security guard, grouped in a cosy, nudging pair – hinting at whole worlds of human use. (There is an echo, here, of Francis Bacon's papal thrones, and Andy Warhol's *Electric Chair*, 1963). Perhaps, though, we might also imagine them as scenery in a minimalist stage production. Fake fur, of course, is nothing if not theatrical – an understudy for life.

If Raedecker's new work is, to a degree, about stillness, the longeurs between events, then in one image something more dramatic appears to spark. In front of a charcoal-coloured curtain, a fire licks upwards, threatening to consume the fabric in its peachy flames. But this is still a painting, though, somewhere in which space might be compressed like a breathless lung, and time (and its sister, narrative) stands necessarily still. Curtains suggest the stage, but in Raedecker's work they never open. All the drama we can expect is right here on the picture plane. It is more than enough.

– Tom Morton

### About the artist

Michael Raedecker (Netherlands, 1963) was born in Amsterdam and currently lives and works in London. He received his BA in Fashion Design from the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam (1985-1990), continued his curriculum at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam (1993-1994), and at Goldsmiths College, London (1996-1997.)

In 2000, Raedecker was shortlisted for the prestigious Turner Prize. His work has been shown in several venues including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1999), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2001), the Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel (2003), Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (2009), Musée d'Art Contemporain de Nîmes, Nîmes (2010) and the Sprengler Museum, Hannover (2014). Raedecker had his first solo exhibition at Galerie Nouvelles Images in The Hague in 1998. Recent solo exhibitions include Michael Raedecker at Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin (2014), Michael Raedecker at Andrea Rosen Gallery,



Michael Raedecker, *place*, 2015

New York (2013), Michael Raedecker at Hauser & Wirth, London (2012) and Michael Raedecker: Line-up at Camden Arts Center in London (2009). Furthermore his work was included in several group shows including *Artists and their Time*, Istanbul Modern, Istanbul (2015), *Halftone: Through the Grid* at Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin (2014), *Cobra to Dumas-Collection the Heus-Zomer* at Singer Museum, Laren (2013), *Art by Michael Craig-Martin* (curator) at Haas & Fuchs Gallery, Berlin (2010), *Painting Now!* at Kunsthal Rotterdam, Rotterdam (2007), *The Trace of a Trace of a Trace* at Perry Rubenstein Gallery, New York (2006), *Imagination wird Wirklichkeit Teil III* at Sammlung Goetz, Munich (2006), *Edge of the Real – A painting Show* at Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2004), *From a Distance: Landscape in Contemporary Art*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2000) and *Graceland's Palace* at Sungkok Art Museum, Seoul (1999).

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