

Above the Surface

Michael Muir

2nd May – 1st June 2024



Michael Muir, *Glide towards*, 2024, Oil on linen, 137 x 122 cm, 54 x 48 in

“As we bring Michael Muir’s paintings to an international audience this May, we’re not only showcasing his talent but also strengthening cross-cultural connections. This marks a significant step for the artist, who has previously exhibited exclusively in Australia.” - JD Malat

JD Malat Gallery is proud to present *Above the Surface*, an exhibition by Australia-based painter Michael Muir, marking his debut showcase in London. Presenting five new works, the exhibition from May 2nd – 1st June will transform the gallery space into a vivid extension of Muir’s paintings complete with white sand and palm trees functioning to reflect the artist’s profound connection to the natural world.

Originally from Scotland, Muir’s formative years were spent travelling throughout Southeast Asia before eventually settling in Sydney, Australia where the artist is currently based. His peripatetic upbringing deeply informs Muir’s artistic practice, manifesting in his adept ability to reconcile the juxtaposition of the familiar with the novelty of new experiences.

Muir's paintings are predominately inspired by his experience of the landscape and awe of both natural and built environments. He states, "*Above the surface* has different meanings, layers and elements to it. I continue to think about perception and reality in the context of paint. First impressions, hidden textures, and meanings. The ocean has been a constant in my life for the last 20 years and I like the idea that rhythm and lines in the ocean can create a state of flow that works across an artistic medium like painting."

In a minimalist interpretation of our constructed landscapes, Muir's paintings employ a vivid yet refined colour palette. The geometric forms he presents reveal uncertain boundaries, imbuing his canvases with natural rhythm along with an intriguing sense of an alternate dimension. Utilizing loose sketches of his surroundings as a starting point, Muir deftly wields a palette knife to apply oil paint onto his canvases. First creating flattened surfaces, he then reintroduces texture and detailed marks into the areas of colour, using the palette knife much like a pencil to create depth and dimension.

The deliberate use of broad, flat planes of colour reshapes our perceptions of the landscape, offering a unique lens through which reality unfolds. These expanses imbue the scenery with a distinct sense of simplicity, stripping away extraneous details to reveal the raw essence beneath and fostering a connection between the observer and the environment. With a meticulous eye and a profound understanding of how light shapes perception, Muir deftly employs it as a tool to evoke emotions of nostalgia.

The paintings in *Above the Surface* are strikingly optimistic, playfully shifting between memory and reality and exploring the tension between abstraction and figuration. Thoughtfully curated, JD Malat Gallery creates a space where Muir's paintings come alive and the gallery space is transformed into a lush sandy beach, inviting viewers on a transcendent journey, where boundaries blur, and the beauty of the natural world reigns supreme.

For more information, images and comments, please contact: press@jdmalat.com

Opening hours: 10am - 6pm Monday - Friday, 12pm - 6pm Saturday

JD Malat Gallery, 30 Davies St, Mayfair, London, W1K 4NB