

Michael Lacey

December 6-16

Michael Lacey returns to OUTPUT gallery to present a new series of works in collage. These atmospheric and absorbing pieces continue the artist's decade-long exploration of the ruins of a fictional civilisation, depicting scenes and landscapes rich in detail and personal symbolism.

Lacey is an artist and musician based in Liverpool. Born in the city in 1985, he studied at the Glasgow School of Art and has exhibited widely around the UK. His work across painting, collage and sculpture details a fictional netherworld shaped by his interests and experiences, typified by absurdity and unsettling humour. Lacey has exhibited across the UK, producing work in a variety of media that is characterised by bleak humour and a contemplative mood.

Ways into thinking about the exhibition:

1. How are these images constructed?
2. How has the artist developed this current body of work? What were his intentions with it?
3. How will he go forward from this exhibition?
4. Do these works have titles?

OUTPUT is a gallery working exclusively with creatives from or based in Merseyside. The programme is supported using public funding by Arts Council England. To see the full programme, please visit us online or pick up a flyer from the gallery.

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OUTPUT gallery, 32 Seel St, Liverpool, L1 4BE
OPENING HOURS: 10-6 DAILY



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Thoughts from artist Michael Lacey:

How are these images constructed?

First I'll paint a background, and then varnish it as well to make sure I don't rub away any of the paint later on. Next I glue down all of the collage parts, which are cut out of second-hand books with a scalpel. Most of these have previously been assembled into sections secured on the back with little bits of masking tape. I've got mountains of books and boxes of bits of paper, carefully sorted into categories based on subject, size and colour.

It's a real challenge to get everything to stick down without crinkling, and I spend a lot of time at this stage flattening out air bubbles with a wet cloth. Often I will paint into the collage areas as well, or add ink washes, adding atmosphere and little details. Then a few more layers of varnish, including a UV-resistant coat, to stop the paper from fading in sunlight.

How have you developed this current body of work? What were your intentions with it?

I've started bringing collage into my painting practice a few years ago because I enjoyed the feeling of vague familiarity that it brought to the work, and coming up with an idea then attempting to realise it using pre-existing material is an appealing logistical challenge.

The current body of work was inspired by painters like Arnold Bocklin, Louis Daguerre and Caspar Friedrich, and motivated by the desire to work on a larger scale and attempt more ambitious, layered compositions. Because the process involves so much trawling through old books, several smaller pieces suggested themselves along the way.

How will you go forward from this exhibition?

I've planned out the next ten works in this series. I'm also making a lot of music these days, which will be part of an exhibition in Liverpool next year.

Do these works have titles?

Clockwise from left of entrance: 1. Empty Parade 2. A House For Arnold Bocklin 3. Hidden City 4. Foreman, Squire, Bagman, Fool 5. Queen's Park 6. Machine (Which Does Nothing) 7. Buried At Sea 8. Our Lady 9. Portal 10. Falls