

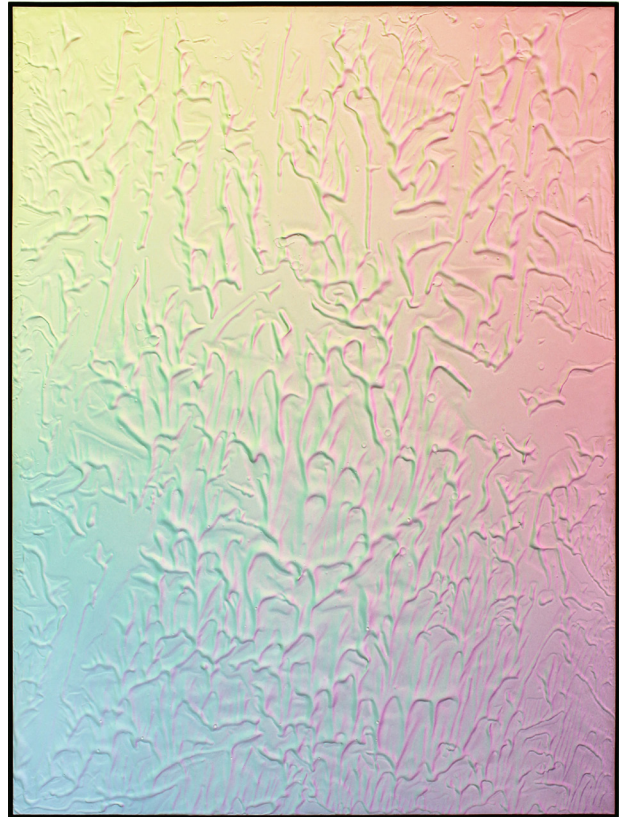


Michael Staniak: IMG_

IMG_ is the first solo museum exhibition of Australian artist Michael Staniak (b. 1982, Melbourne, Australia), whose work intentionally confuses the digital with the handmade, scrutinizing the role of technology today. Staniak's paintings' uncanny texture, trompe l'oeil effects, and hyper-saturated pigments can appear as flat when viewed online, or even as if created by 3-D printers or Epson inkjets. However, the work is entirely made by hand; the viewer is required to experience the work in person—IRL—to fully understand its complex physical depth.

Michael Staniak: IMG_ comprises paintings from four recent bodies of work: *IMG_*, *Internet Blueprint*, *DATA*, and *PNG_Binary Code*, which all begin with the artist creating a three-dimensional textured relief. Staniak's *IMG_* paintings use fluorescent pigments and holographic gradients to challenge the expectation of flatness, exuding a layered, sculptural quality. Undulations and indentations captured in the plaster's surface suggest ripples in water or sound waves. The *Internet Blueprint* series isolates a specific hue of blue popular on the Web, particularly on the social media networks Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. In the visual code of the Internet, this color signifies an empty field waiting for uploaded content.

The artist's *DATA* paintings use pulverized CDs, DVDs, M-Discs, and silicon wafer cells as their raw material. Initially ground into small particles and affixed to the canvas using resin binders and acrylic gel mediums, the compositions' iridescent palettes are contingent on the technological material from which they began—CD: green, DVD: purple, M-Disc: gray. Repurposing obsolete storage material, the *DATA* paintings question the longevity of digital information and transform temporary hardware into a medium for painting. The small particles of the DVD create a pixelated effect, as if the work was

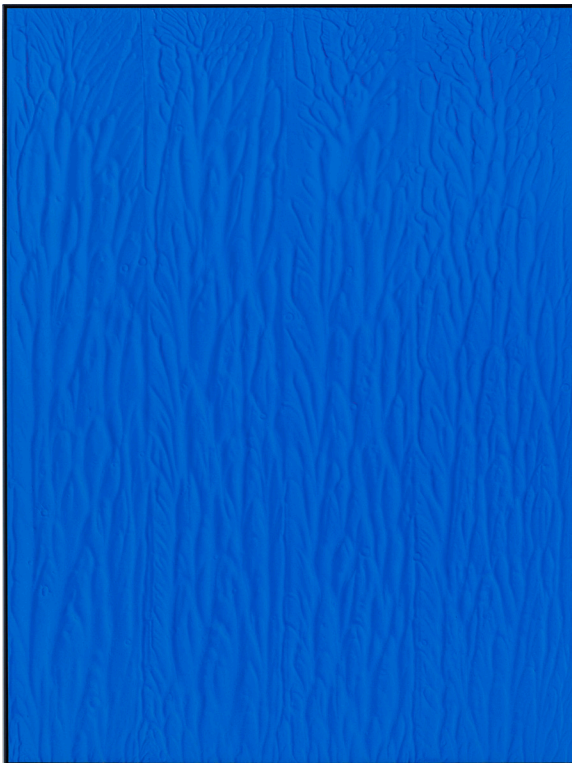


Michael Staniak, *IMG_214*, 2014. Casting compound and acrylic on board with steel frame, 48 x 36 inches. Private Collection, New York.



Audio Tour

Download the CAM app at camstl.org/app or ask for an iPod at the front desk to hear directly from the curator and artist on the audio tour.



Michael Staniak, *IMG_848 (Internet Blueprint)*, 2014. Casting compound and acrylic on board, steel frame, 47 ¼ x 35 ½ inches. Courtesy the artist and Steve Turner, Los Angeles.

once a comprehensible digital image, now corrupted into an unrecognizable, abstract state.

Binary codes are the subject of Staniak's *PNG* paintings. The title of this series is taken from PNG files, or "portable network graphics," a common form of data compression for digital images. In these works, the paintings' surfaces are overlaid with code describing other paintings culled from Internet, demonstrating the mutability of digital information.

Staniak's conceptually prescient and materially innovative work envelops the viewer in an opposition between aesthetic beauty and the numbing effects of our digitized world. In our contemporary era, nearly all information is preserved through digital means, which are in turn being rapidly replaced by more novel forms of communication. Staniak's artistic practice calls attention to the brevity of data and questions its very legibility.

Michael Staniak (b. 1982, Melbourne, Australia) lives and works in Melbourne. This exhibition is the artist's first major museum exhibition in the United States. Previous solo exhibitions include *Square of Heroes* at Arterreal Gallery, Sydney (2012) and *Liquid Crystal Baroque* at Metro Gallery, Melbourne (2011). Group exhibition credits include *Blue Times* at the Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2014) and *Go With The Flow* at The Hole, New York (2014).

Special thanks to Steve Turner, Los Angeles.

Michael Staniak: IMG_ is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Jeffrey Uslip, Chief Curator.

Related Events

RE: Post-Internet

Saturday, June 6, 1:00 pm

Chief Curator Jeffery Uslip and Dave Walsh, Associate Professor of American Culture Studies at Washington University, discuss the term "Post-Internet" as it relates to the work on view by Michael Staniak and its broader real world applications. According to art critic Gene McHugh, Post-Internet describes "art responding to [a condition] when the Internet is less a novelty and more a banality."

Artist Talk

Friday, June 19, 7:00 pm

Chief Curator Jeffery Uslip speaks with exhibiting artist Michael Staniak about his work.



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