

Julien Michel
In Memory Of
January 19 – March 2, 2013

Opening: January 19th, 6 – 9 pm

The exhibition Julien Michel *In Memory Of* is a tribute to a young French artist who died one year ago. Following his career's previous shows *Take Over* (2000) and *Promises, Promises* (2002) at Galerie Mehdi Chouakri, this is the third presentation of the artist's work.

Pictures from the news and internet serve as sources for Julien Michel's pieces. The artist takes his motifs from the ever-surrounding print media and internet databases. The images he uses are intended for specific purposes, operating under applicable codes to illustrate messages, announcements, postings, or advertisements. Michel pirates various images such as supermodels, dogs, flowers, refugees, cars, and anything else and transforms them into paintings. The sheer abundance of motifs reflect the mass of infinitely available, omnipresent media images. Seemingly arbitrary, the artist's selection follows no discernible criteria. But transferred in oil on canvas, the seemingly unrelated images are introduced into the sphere of art. Separated from their original context, they lay the media's strategies bare and their objectives senseless.

In another series of extremely large-format paintings, Julien Michel visually expresses his sense of media overexposure. With the help of photo editing software, he compiles motifs from varied sources to create paintings that seem excessive in every regard: the large format, the supersaturated colors, the overloaded subject matter. The wall-sized images are nearly indistinguishable from billboards. They bring to mind the aesthetics of advertising without promoting anything.

After the completion of his last series in 2002, Julien Michel was only intermittently active as an artist. His production slowed and he himself took little part in public life. In February 2012, the artist passed away at the age of 38 in Fontainebleau, France.

Special thanks to Piere-Stéphane Michel.

– Mehdi Chouakri