

For Immediate Release:

MICHAEL ST. JOHN

This Mortal Magic

21 March through 18 April 1998

Team will present an exhibition of new work by the artist Michael St. John from 21 March through 18 April 1998. The gallery is located at 527 West 26th Street, between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, on the ground floor.

There is something seductive, yet unsettling, about this installation of paintings, sculptures and videos by Michael St. John. Entitled *This Mortal Magic*, after an essay by Dave Hickey, this exhibition was envisioned by St. John as a series of autonomous events taking place in one big open field, part of a never-ending painting.

The components are named simply: A Flag. A Pumpkin. A Rabbit. A Lamb. A House. A Sky. A Tree. A Star. Moonlight. The reactions that they elicit however, are as complex as anyone's experience of the world. The fact that most of these object-images are keyed to some holiday, speaks clearly of St. John's interest in probing our memories. For it is these holidays that furnish a collective iconography for the way that the world has been built, and which also mark the passing of time.

The artist sits, exhausted, dressed as Santa Claus, amidst a landscape in a black and white video whose accompanying soundtrack includes the stirring speech of Martin Luther King. The artist has painted an American Flag with slits cut out for a pair of blue eyes. A valentine card found abandoned on a rainy night was photographed and here its simple shape against a white ground reads as "house". A bunny rabbit sits either made of snow or covered with snow. It is the emotional undercurrent of these works that speaks in a unique, economical and valiant voice.

St. John describes *This Mortal Magic* as "a cosmological/cinematic and experiential/theatrical landscape of artifacts with an accumulative approach to content, opportuning time and the mortality of pictorial space."

"... if these illusions were not just illusions, we should not be what we are: mortal creatures, who miss our dead friends, and thus can appreciate levitating tigers and portraits by Raphael for what they are — songs of mortality sung by prisoners of time". Dave Hickey, *This Mortal Magic*.

This is St. John's first show at Team. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Sunday, Noon to 6pm. For further information and/or photographs, please call the gallery at 212.279.9219.