

Franz Kaka

MICHAEL THOMPSON

Chorus Coda

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March 4 - April 1, 2023

Michael Thompson's *Chorus Coda*, the artist's first solo exhibition at Franz Kaka, draws inspiration and images from a pair of suspense films produced in the middle of the last century. In Alfred Hitchcock's psychological thriller *Suspicion* (1941) Joan Fontaine's character suspects that her new husband is not all that he claims to be. "There was always something strange about Johnnie Aysgarth" she confesses "I knew long before I married him. You could never put your finger on it, yet you were always conscious of it."

The 1970 Italian movie *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion*, stars Gian Maria Volonté as an above-the-law police detective who coldly commits murder, purposefully leaving evidence of his crime behind to test his peers willful ignorance. Volonté's character plants a series of clues carefully steering the investigation all the way along until he finally decides to turn suspicion back at himself, but his colleagues ultimately refuse to take him seriously as a suspect.

Working from stills and cropped background details sourced from these investigative dramas, in *Chorus Coda* Thompson extends the suspense of the cinematic universe in paint. But here, filmic references appear beyond only image and narrative. In the seascape *Slip Crash Craning* (2023), a violent wave is severed and repeated, doubling its image as the event of the crash hits again and again. These fractures repeat throughout the exhibition, drawing film's flicker and the form of the filmstrip into Thompson's images.

Leaking beyond the frame of the film still, the action of Thompson's paintings also spills off the edge of the canvas depicting events that exist beyond what is given to see. Like Volonté's investigators, our gaze is turned astray, instead becoming lost in the sublime of the landscape: a solitary horse in an open field (*Halting Handle*, 2023), the haunting sea view of a cliff's edge (*Crane Cover*, 2023). Here, one must look beyond appearances. With scant details from which to piece together a narrative, each scene is charged with potential and ignoring what can be seen, overlooks the drama at the edges.

Michael Thompson (b. 1997) is a painter living and working in Ontario, Canada. In 2019, he completed a Bachelor of Fine Art from Western University and became a resident artist at the Slade School of Fine Art in partnership with the Camden Art Centre in London, England. In 2022, he received a Master of Fine Art from the University of Guelph, and has been included in exhibitions in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Thompson's practice investigates the translation of photographic images into painting, often informed broadly by the idea of history. His recent work raises questions about the documentary nature of photography and offers painting as a space to occupy multiple realities simultaneously.

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