



MICHAEL MORLEY AFTER THE WAR

SUMER, TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU
6 MARCH – 6 APRIL 2024

Painting's usefulness appears to have evaporated.

At the turn of the last century, there was a wonderful moment where the development of abstraction heralded a new understanding of the image. But this soon was eroded, in order to render pictures of *the view*.

What if there is no view?

What if paintings only refuge now is the unimagined?

It may have occurred in the past: religious ecstasies conjured from the collected fevered minds of the adherents. They look 'good' for all of their references to hallucination, utter despair, and the presumed rapture; but is that enough to consider what there is left to make paintings about?

Thank god for the twentieth century! I wasn't around at the start, I arrived in the latter half of it. Enough to begin to understand the looming spectres of empires and imperialism, the banality of evil and the exquisite brutality of oppression masquerading as culture. The ghosts of the Victorian era hang large as a backdrop to the prevailing indignities of cultural genocide across the globe. The Europeans, one country after another, established their authority and repressive regimes to encompass humanity. Mass murder becomes marketed as entertainment for the inquisitive classes.

News channels are the new library of contemporary thought: allowing access to the images that once were conjured from dark minds and the depraved. Francisco Goya's visions of reality are played out, not as coloured insipid reproductions, but as gloriously saturated digital video, spun across the myriad of platforms that offer subscriptions (or not), and not without an appropriate soundtrack.

I can't imagine image anymore.

Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* established a tabula rasa. Composed before I was born, this solitary piece of music establishes what a Year Zero might sound like. It seems devoid of history despite the use of a classical quartet, recognised elements lull and betray their usefulness within some burgeoning modernity. The familiarity of the elements renders their compositional gestation invisible. This is the revelation that disappears solid ground, the thing that allows for the descent into hell. This is the unrecognisable, the unimagined rendered as solid form without context or a way to understand.

-MM

Sumer is pleased to present *After the War*, an exhibition of new paintings by Kōpūtai Port Chalmers-based artist Michael Morley. This is the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery, and his first in the gallery's new space in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

The works in the exhibition bear neither title, nor date. This is a conscious choice by the artist, and one that breaks with his previous manner of working. Morley would seem to desire that such works remain nebulous, out of time; indefinite, uncertain. They are only anchored by the fact that they are presented within this exhibition with its seemingly spurious or fictive titling. After the war. Whatever, or whenever, that might be.

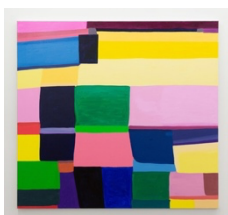
Michael Morley (b. 1963, Ahiriri Napier) lives and works in Kōpūtai Port Chalmers. He is a lecturer at the Dunedin School of Art, Ōtepoti Dunedin. His research expertise encompasses contemporary art, drawing, painting, video, and sound. Best known for his work as an experimental musician, Morley is a member of seminal noise band The Dead C (together with Bruce Russell and Robbie Yeats). He also produces music under the moniker Gate, and has previously collaborated with artists Kim Gordon, Bill Nace, Lee Ranaldo, Nina Canal, Sara Stephenson, and others. In tandem with this musical career, he has consistently maintained a studio practice as a painter. He has exhibited and performed extensively across Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, and his work represented in numerous important public and private collections throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally.



**MICHAEL MORLEY
AFTER THE WAR**

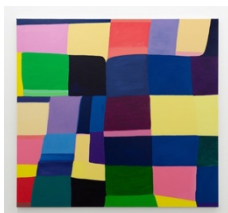
**SUMER, TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU
6 MARCH – 6 APRIL 2024**

Window Gallery



Michael Morley
No title, n.d.
Oil on canvas
198.5 x 213 cm
78 x 84 in
(MM-000026)

Main Gallery



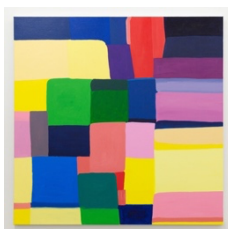
Michael Morley
No title, n.d.
Oil on canvas
198.5 x 213 cm
78 x 84in
(MM-000025)



Michael Morley
No title, n.d.
Oil on canvas
152.5 x 152.5 cm
60 x 60 in
(MM-000028)



Michael Morley
No title, n.d.
Oil on canvas
50 x 60 cm
19 3/4 x 23 1/2 in
(MM-000030)



Michael Morley
No title, n.d.
Oil on canvas
152.5 x 152.5 cm
60 x 60 in
(MM-000027)



Michael Morley
No title, n.d.
Oil on canvas
50 x 60 cm
19 3/4 x 23 1/2 in
(MM-000032)

Office



Michael Morley
No title, n.d.
Oil on canvas
50 x 60 cm
19 3/4 x 23 1/2 in
(MM-000029)



Michael Morley
No title, n.d.
Oil on canvas
50 x 60 cm
19 3/4 x 23 1/2 in
(MM-000033)