

## **JUXTAPOZ:** 'Let's go to Neverland', by Catherine Angelini, February 2019



PAINTING

### **LET'S GO TO NEVERLAND: SAM MCKINNISS' POP-CULTURE VISIONS @ ALMINE RECH, BRUSSELS**

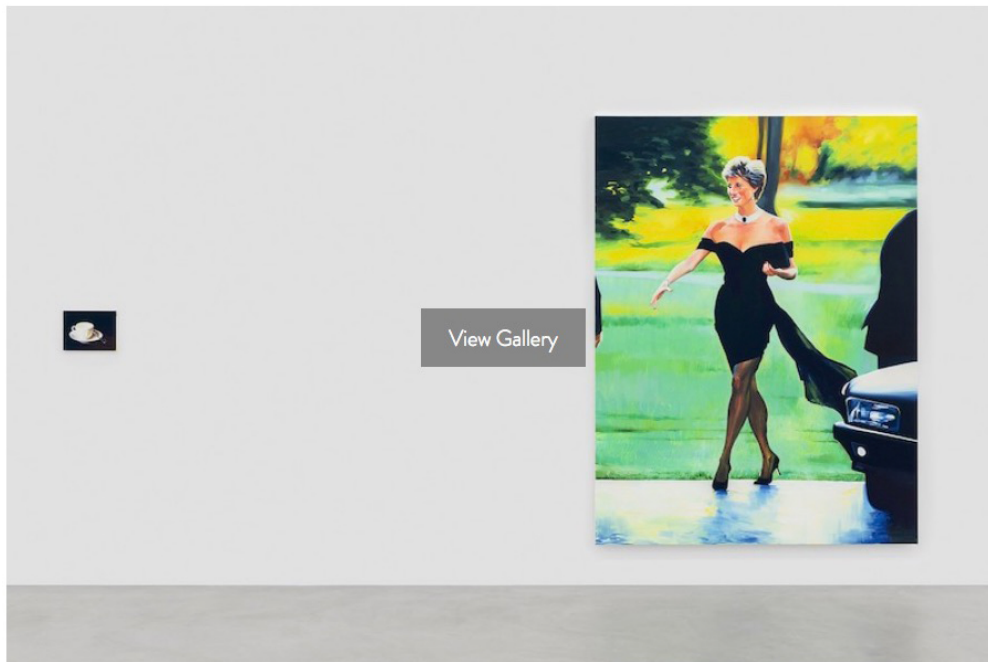
Jan 10, 2019 - Feb 28, 2019

Almine Rech Gallery, Brussels



[Almine Rech](#) is currently hosting a solo debut by the New York-based artist [Sam McKinniss](#) at their Brussels space. Neverland is the artist's continuation of work we introduced back in April last year after visiting his solo presentation with [Team Gallery at Art Basel in Hong Kong](#).

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Sam McKinniss' practice revolves around portraying and immortalizing the celebrity-obsessed culture through the universally recognizable format of an oil on canvas painting. Using real life as inspiration and the Internet as the endless source of references, the artist simultaneously mocks the fallen glory of classical painting and the artificial fame and importance of celebrity culture. This point is made pretty clear by painting and displaying a selection of classic still life or floral images alongside Terminator 2 movie poster, Marilyn Manson's performance portrait, Princess Diana paparazzi footage, or Tyra Banks and Jennifer Lopez' glam shots.

Through the traditional format once used to celebrate royalties, heroes, and landmark events, McKinniss is nowadays enshrining the actual and past icons of popular culture. Liberated from historical argument around painting's primacy or lack of legitimacy, his images depict everything from movie stills to fashion shoots, music videos, commercials, and news footage. Presented on small, medium, and large scale canvases, as well as a cluster of pencil on paper drawings, these works feel like an ode to yesterday, an artistic fairytale of our present age. Taking the ephemeral celebrity status of his subjects as a purposely weak base for the work, McKinniss has been described as a neo-Magical Realist, reconstructing the reality of the internet age into a depiction of contemporary Neverland.

**All images © Sam McKinniss**

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