ALMINE RECH

Michael Kagan: I Was There When It Happened

Sep 21, 2019 — Feb 16, 2020 | Virginia Museum Of Contemporary Art

Virginia MOCA will present the first solo museum exhibition by artist Michael Kagan. Bringing together key paintings from the past decade along with new works, the exhibition *Michael Kagan: I Was There When It Happened* traces the artist's lifelong interest in technology, space and innovation.

Michael Kagan grew up in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The Museum looks forward to celebrating a native son. Now living and working in Brooklyn, Kagan's artwork speaks to the intersection of contrasts. He paints in thick forceful brushstrokes that seem chaotic but are calculated to form cohesive, realistic images when viewed at a distance. Once applied, Kagan does not alter his brushstroke. This commitment to the initial application is emblematic of the gravity of choices and errors in his storylines of space exploration.

Using NASA photographs as source material, Kagan's paintings have a cinematic quality. They celebrate the tension between humanity and technology, the limitations and triumphs of man, and knowledge that an error in that quest for victory could result in the ultimate sacrifice. Kagan says, "I grew up looking at pictures of the moon through a telescope with my father. I went to Space Camp as a child, so I think this idea was always there to make these iconic paintings and imagery about space."

The exhibition will be a platform for STEAM-centric programming for visitors of all ages and interests. Programming will include public artist talks, school-based collaborations, STEAM workshops in our studio school, themed panel discussions, and more.

Michael Kagan: I Was There When It Happened is organized by the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art and curated by Alison Byrne, Director of Exhibitions and Education.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Virginia MOCA will publish a monographic exhibition catalogue *Michael Kagan: I Was There When It Happened*.

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