

DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

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Alexander Ross

Recent Drawings

March 22 – April 19, 2008

Opening reception: Saturday, March 22, 6-8 pm

David Nolan Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new drawings by Alexander Ross that move between representation and abstraction to explore issues of looking, as enhanced and distorted with the aid of machines. During his residency in Giverny in 2000, Ross found himself working along the left banks of the Seine River in the rural countryside that inspired Monet and could be considered the heart of Impressionism. Ross's lifelong fascination with the emerging sciences flourished here, as he began borrowing from life outside his window to inform his palette and process. He set up a microscope on his drafting table to study his samples, treating the canvas as a scientist would: to record, manipulate, speculate, ponder, measure and store highly maintained visual data. But the resulting hyperclear articulations are not to be trusted. Their lushness has the feel of a squeaky, synthetic virtual reality.

Ross introduced the microscope to his working process to achieve a higher intellectual and visual clarity, while distancing himself, as author, from the material. He works from what he sees through the lens to render the relationships of light and movement on paper or in clay. Acid, eucalyptus, olive, pea, beryl, malachite, true viridian and soylent green line up purposefully in neat Morandi-like

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rows, or shift in controlled molecular patterns that seem to germinate out of one another. Rare do we happen upon a hint of a neutralized orange or the warm glow of an opaque red, colors that debut in this series. Ross also begins his work by sculpting clay models, which he then draws from, or alternatively, photographs before working on paper. In some instances, he edits the images of these models on Photoshop. A 67-foot inkjet mural currently on display at the Renaissance Court Wall at the Worcester Art Museum explains how far Ross can go. In the end, it is uncertain whether we are experiencing the privilege of an enlightened truth or a technological fantasy.

These new works on paper affect us on a psychological level. To trust Ross's scholarly *trompe de l'oeil* approach situates us to believe in the biology of his composition, but psychologically, to accept this proposed fate propels us back into the lost, synthetic world of Kandinsky. The struggle is mechanical and self sufficient, tapping into the strain of paranoia that new-wave science fiction authors J.G. Ballard and Philip Dick wrote about in the 80s. It plays on our current culture's fascination and paranoia with that which the naked eye cannot see, but can engineer. Ross, in Victor Frankenstein fashion, responds to the threat that materializes from his own hands, clipping the edges of his work to repress the tumorous agglomeration. But by treating the drawing as a sculpture, in the manner of Carroll Dunham or Tony Smith, Ross cannot help but add more information, more depth, more power to his system.

Born in Denver, Colorado in 1960, Alexander Ross earned his B.F.A. from Massachusetts College of Art in 1983. He was been awarded the Lewis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award in 2004 and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2003. His works have been exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide since in the mid 1990s. In 2005 he was honored with a solo show at The Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis that surveyed the last eight years of his work. In 2006 he was part of a group show entitled *Remote Viewing* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY that propelled his name into the international spotlight. In 2004 he was selected by Robert Storr to participate in SITE Santa Fe, NM. He has also showed at The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, NY; The Columbus Museum of Art, OH; The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, NY; SEAD Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium; The American Academy of Arts and Letters, NY; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City; and PS1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City.

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This solo exhibition marks the artist's first with David Nolan Gallery and will run concurrently with a show of the artist's paintings and collages at Marianne Boesky Gallery, March 22 – April 19, 2008.