

ALEXIS ROCKMAN
"South"

"South"

545 West 23rd Street, New York

March 28th through April 26th, 2008
Opening reception March 28th, 6-8 pm

Leo Koenig Inc. is pleased to announce the opening of a solo exhibition of new works by Alexis Rockman. Inspired by the artist's recent trip to Antarctica, Rockman continues his recent exploration of painting landscape as an alchemical event.

Anchoring the exhibit is *South*, a seven-panel work on paper that is over 30 feet long. *South* is a diaristic work about the 12-day voyage by ship from the tip of South America to the Antarctic Peninsula. Accompanying this piece is a suite of watercolors inspired by the trip, as well as an allegorical painting titled *Food Chain (After Breughel)* about the stress on the food chain in that fragile ecosystem.

Foremost in Rockman's experience of the Antarctic was how alien its landscape is to the human perspective. The nearly hallucinatory experience of traveling among the glaciers had a profound impact on Rockman. "I've never seen anything like it. Ice conducts light, it gathers it and projects it at you. That is something that cannot really be photographed, so the piece becomes a construction of notes, memory, and photographic documentation," states Rockman.

The terrain is inhospitable and most Antarctic life clings to the edge of the ice and coast. All human activity is limited to the artificial environment they bring with them, much like going to another planet. Rockman observed penguins, seals, whales and other players in the ecosystem. There was also a reminder of the legacy of human disaster in the area. Upon arriving at the Peninsula their ship, the *Lindblad Endeavour*, received a message that another ship, the *Explorer*, had hit a piece of ice and was sinking. The *Endeavour* was the first on the scene and they witnessed the foundering ship and the passengers stranded in lifeboats. This event is embedded as an incident in the work, overwhelmed by the vast landscape.

Continuing Rockman's long-term interest in scientific pictorialism, *South* shows simultaneous views of above and below the water, allowing for the representation of the impossible. However, the artist's painting technique over the past few years has moved away from an illustrative approach—he allows the materials to interact in such a way that the act of painting both resembles and mimics the interaction of weather and landscape.

Alexis Rockman has a BFA from the School of Visual Arts and has exhibited his work in galleries and institutions worldwide. A solo exhibition of Alexis Rockman's recent works on paper will be mounted at the Rose Museum, Brandeis University, in May. As well, the work "South" has already been chosen for an exhibition at Mass MoCA. Most recently he has had solo exhibitions at the CAC Cincinnati, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, Camden Art Centre, London, and the Wexner Center for the Arts, OH. Public collections that have acquired Rockman's work include the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY. Rockman lives and works in New York City.

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10-6 pm. For more information or visuals, please contact Elizabeth Balogh or Nicole Russo.