

# MAI 36 GALERIE

## **GLEN RUBSAMEN**

### *Détournement*

**Exhibition: September 19 – November 22, 2020, Virtual Room**

With "Détournement" we are delighted to present a new exhibition in our Virtual Room. The show focuses on some of Glen Rubsamen's most recent works, picturing military subjects and environmental themes and questioning their specific cultural and visual implications.

Détournement is the act of turning the expressions, both visual and literary, of the 'Military Industrial Complex' and its media culture against itself. It is the theft of aesthetic artifacts from their contexts and their diversion into contexts of the Artist's own devise, simultaneously, decrypting them and rendering their seductions impotent. In the case of Rubsamen's recent paintings that depict environmental catastrophes and military themes this Détournement is directed against an ever more intrusive, instrumental technoculture whose operative function is the manufacture of consent through the manipulation of symbols. In these works Rubsamen uses the visual language and visual rhetoric of military recruitment culture to subversively critique that paradigm, encouraging idiosyncratic, unintended interpretations.

In Glen Rubsamen's 2020 painting entitled 'Be All You Can Be' we see a depiction of four soldiers rendered in silhouette against a grayish blue morning sky, above them an attack helicopter hovers in an attitude of support. There is something very wrong with the painting however, against its own will it betrays a sense of melancholy and inertia. It does not inspire heroism or team work, or self sacrifice as it should given its strong similarity to the recruitment images of the US Army's 'Army Strong' publicity campaign. The soldiers helmets are covered in wires and electronics and seem to have no real identity, they are manufactured technological products. They seem to be frozen in a state of inertia, waiting for some new command code to reboot their operating systems. Like the helicopter above they are hovering in-between human and machine, Cyborg and Automaton. The 'Détournement' of this painting lies in its quietness, its stillness, a calm that undermines and perverts the recruitment message. Like the stillness in a painting of Caspar David Friedrich, the age old romanticism of the melancholic image, deactivates the sales pitch.

Glen Rubsamen's (born 1957, Los Angeles) paintings are characterized by a documentary interest in compiling, like collectibles, situations in nature of great dramatic intensity in the romantic tradition, such as sunrises and sunsets, exuberant vegetation, or images of the apocalypse. Rubsamen shows us an uninhabited and almost surrealist world, an assaulted nature that makes us think of the devastating after-effects of a meteorological or technological catastrophe. The absence of human presence, the tendency towards monochrome and the lack of spatio-temporal references create an atmosphere charged with austere quietude and spirituality.

Please contact us if you require visual any materials ([office@mai36.com](mailto:office@mai36.com)).

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