

Petzel

SEAN LANDERS

Adrift

March 9 – April 15, 2023
520 West 25th Street

Petzel is pleased to present *Adrift*, Sean Landers' seventh solo exhibition with the gallery, on view March 9th to April 15th, 2023 at 520 West 25th Street in Chelsea. Featuring over twenty new oil paintings by Landers, this largely allegorical exhibition illustrates the complexity of artistic mortality using four protagonists: *dogs*—depicted in single portraits and alone in rowboats unmoored at sea; *lighthouses*; the *ocean*; and *sperm whale skeletons* at rest on ocean shorelines. Each subject represents the dichotomy of freedom and trepidation involved in the act of releasing art to an unknown fate. "...a bit of the artist remains in their paintings, so in that way, a painting is like an artist adrift in time and space," says Landers in an interview with writer Johanna Fateman for the exhibition catalogue.

A cornerstone of inspiration for *Adrift* is Landers' long-term interest in the work of American painter Winslow Homer (b. 1836—d. 1920) and in particular Homer's ocean paintings. The vast and unpredictable ocean marks time and space, a preeminent symbol used throughout the years in Landers' paintings and art history. Homer's style is emulated by Landers in paintings throughout the exhibition including *Northeaster*, *Summer Squall*, and *Yellow Dog*.

Each of these subjects can be seen as a character existing within the vicissitudes of artistic practice. The dogs, at attention and alone in their boats, symbolize the vulnerability of art against an unknown future. These works also parallel Joachim Patinir's (b. 1483—d. 1524) painting *Charon crossing the Styx* in which a human soul is being transported by boat into afterlife. Landers sees this as symbolic for what a painting is—a vessel for the artist into afterlife.

Two lighthouses, *Portland Lighthouse, US* and *Sunderland Lighthouse, UK*, are both welcoming and warning beacons, allegories for institutions that signal to the public what art is worth preserving. This ruling system will determine the dogs' fate as they head into the unknown of art history. The bare whale bones, epic in their repose on the sandy shore echo the finality in the lifespan of an artwork. Such relics are epitaphs and beginnings, a sentiment imparted in *We Hover*, where Landers' text painted over a fierce ocean reads: *And then we hover in between existence and nonexistence in our paintings and that is both terrifying and reassuring*. For Landers, *Adrift* is the everlasting reminder that the artist, like Patinir's soul, is forever navigating the here and hereafter.

Petzel

About Sean Landers

Sean Landers was born in 1962 in Palmer, Massachusetts, USA. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1984 from the Philadelphia College of Art and a Master of Fine Arts from Yale University School of Art in 1986. Since the 1990s, Landers has been creating and exhibiting his highly conceptual body of work employing a vast range of media that includes painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, film, performance, and writing. He has exhibited internationally and nationally with notable solo shows at Le Consortium Museum, Dijon; Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, St. Louis; Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, Petzel Gallery, New York; Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York; Ben Brown Fine Arts, Hong Kong; Capitain Petzel, Berlin; greengrassi, London; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Galerie Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels; and Various Small Fires, Dallas, among others. A solo exhibition of paintings at Le Musée de la Chasse et de la A Nature in Paris, curated by Christine Germaine-Donnat, will open in October 2023. Landers' work is in the permanent collections of The Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York; Denver Art Museum, Denver; Fundación/Colección Jumex, Mexico City; Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College, Annadale-On-Hudson; Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham; Tate Modern, London; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, among others. He lives and works in New York City.

Petzel Gallery is located at 520 West 25th Street New York, NY 10001. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Ricky Lee at ricky@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.