

MICHAEL LAZARUS
SISTER GALLERY- LOS ANGELES



MICHAEL LAZARUS, *Echoing*, 2008. Acrylic, collage and mirror on wood, 51 x 52 cm. Courtesy Sister Gallery, Los Angeles.

Michael Lazarus is the consummate trickster. In his show at Sister, Lazarus exhibits six small paintings in the large space. The bright white walls amplified the size disparity, but the talismanic paintings pull one in closer, as if these hypnotic pieces were to reveal hidden mysteries of the collective unconscious. Each of the six wooden pieces contain similar metaphorical motifs: symmetrically carved smiley faces that resemble masks, skulls, serpents,

mirrors and geometric prisms. They are precisely painted with vibrant hues of blues, reds, greens and collaged with flesh tones cut out from skin magazines, and photographs of congested city scenes and natural landscapes.

Lazarus lures the viewer with candy colors and provocative placements, but the seduction quickly turns ambiguous. In *Echoing* (2008), pink and red lines draw one's eyes to the center where a flesh-colored snake spirals into the mask's mouth. Looking in closer, the snake's skin is also made of far-off snapshots of a city. Placed in the core of its body a tiny, circular mirror reflects the viewer's image. Lazarus tempts the viewer with the proverbial forbidden fruit to remind that once the darkness is revealed, it can never be the same.

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