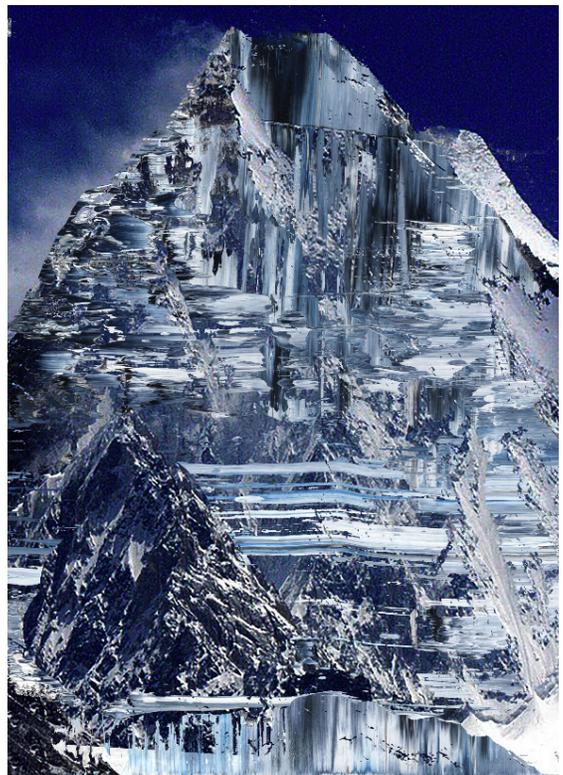


**MICHAEL KAGAN**  
**DEATH ZONE**

FEBRUARY 9–MARCH 11, 2017

OPENING RECEPTION:  
Thursday, February 9, 2017



*K2*, 2015  
Oil on photograph  
11.5 x 8.5 inches

Joshua Liner Gallery is pleased to present *Death Zone*, a series of new mixed media works on canvas from Brooklyn-based artist Michael Kagan. The exhibition features 14 new works of the world's deadliest mountain peaks. An opening reception for *Death Zone* will take place Thursday, February 9, running through to March 11, 2017. The artist will be in attendance for the reception.

Known for his dramatic paintings of man pushing the limits of nature through technology and physical stamina, Kagan magnifies his subject matter through this new body of work, exploring the sheer force and majesty that is the mountain, and the physical and emotional journey that accompanies mountaineers. In mountaineering, the "death zone" refers to altitudes rising above 8,000 meters at which the supply of oxygen becomes life threatening. Shifting his focus from portraiture to landscape, these new works celebrate the peaks of these mountains as places that not only test the limits of human strength and determination, but as places that inspire self discovery for those who ascend them. Kagan explains, "I think the idea behind the mountains is the same as my ideas behind the astronaut paintings. Man pushing his limits, but in this instance it is for himself, for a minute of peace or triumph that they get when summiting."

Diverting from his distinctive impasto approach to oil painting, *Death Zone* introduces a new process for Kagan. Incorporating oil transfers of photographic images of each mountain, the artist applies a squeegee of oil paint through a combination of laser cut stencils and silk screens over the images, leaving distinct impressions on the canvas. Selected areas of the screen are masked off, revealing glimpses of the mountain's peak beneath Kagan's layered application of oil paint. With a crisp color palette evoking glacial ice and frigid winds, these works elegantly interpret the palpable severity of ascending this dangerous terrain.

Although this new body of work presents an experimental opportunity for Kagan's practice, the artist notes his spontaneous approach to painting still integral to the creation of the work. Never removing paint once laid down, Kagan instinctively works with an impulsive hand as he explains, "there is a lack of control that I like when pulling a squeegee or a brush loaded with paint. You can't double back or you've ruined it. I go about making my large paintings in the same way, each mark is directly on the canvas and I never remove it." Mirroring his fascination with man's extraordinary use of technology in the name of discovery, Kagan's expansion on his usual process, directly employs technology and new techniques, into the final product. With a variety of new approaches from digitally printing on canvas to spontaneous mark-making, the artist pushes the limits of his own creative process, much like his painted subjects. "I think an artist should use the technology that is available, especially if it is in an honest and sincere way."

Born in 1980 in Virginia Beach, Michael Kagan received his BA from The George Washington University and MFA from New York Academy of Art, where he also completed a postgraduate fellowship in 2005. Special projects include a commission from The Smithsonian, an apparel collaboration with Pharrell Williams, and album cover artwork for The White Lies album *Big TV* which won an Art Vinyl award for Best Art Vinyl, 2013. Solo exhibitions include *Lights Out* (2016), *Thunder in the Distance* (2014), both at Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, NY; and *I am My Father's Son*, Space SBH, Saint Barthélemy, French West Indies (2012). Selected group exhibitions include *Mission to Space*, Children's Museum of the Arts (2016-2017); *Your Favorite Artist's Favorite Artist*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, NY (2014); *Shake the Dust Off*, Allegra LaViola Gallery, New York, NY (2012); and *Growing Pains*, Charles de Jonghe Gallery, Brussels, Belgium (2010).

## Contact

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### Gallery Hours

Tuesday – Saturday  
11 – 6 PM

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