

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Michel Majerus Aluminum Paintings

February 10 – April 15, 2017

Opening: Thursday, February 9, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Michel Majerus Aluminum Paintings**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 523 West 24th Street. The exhibition features seven works from 1996 and 2000, painted on aluminum panels approximately four by eight feet in size.

Majerus, who died in a plane crash in 2002 at age thirty-five, was one of the earliest painters to address how digital technology is changing the visible world, and was perhaps the first to prepare his imagery using Photoshop. Until 1996 he transferred this sampled and layered imagery onto canvas by hand. With these paintings, however, he began screen-printing it directly into the composition, a leap that would irrevocably change the course of his work.

Installed together — as the artist intended them — for the first time in over twenty years are five paintings with Nintendo's Mario character printed in the lower-right register. At the time they were made, Mario had recently been the subject of the first movie based on a video game (*Super Mario Bros.*) and, according to one survey, was more recognizable to American children than Mickey Mouse. Majerus himself was a dedicated Nintendo player, which may explain some elements of his artistic approach — a playful take on action painting infused with kinetic energy and a vivid color palette.

The other piece of digital technology often mentioned in discussions of Majerus's work is the digital sampler. Throughout his career he appropriated not only popular imagery (corporate logos, cartoons, event flyers) but also historical styles of abstract painting (the color field, the expressionist brushstroke). Majerus repeatedly cited Andy Warhol as an inspiration, and nowhere is this influence more evident than in these seven paintings. But Majerus's devotional icons, silk-screened like Warhol's on fields of bright color, were updates for the digital age. Two paintings in the exhibition feature Buzz Lightyear and Woody, computer-animated stars of the 1995 film *Toy Story*, while two others include a helix logo made of colored pixels, a new icon of the kind now familiar from computer screens and handheld devices.

Born in Luxembourg, Michel Majerus (1967–2002) lived and worked in Berlin and, shortly before his untimely death, spent a year living in Los Angeles. The Kunsthalle Basel organized a mid-career retrospective in 1996. Since Majerus's death, several European museums have organized posthumous exhibitions of his work, including the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, Tate Liverpool, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

Michel Majerus Aluminum Paintings is on view at 523 West 24th Street from February 10 to April 15, 2017, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please contact Jacqueline Tran at 212-243-0200 or jacqueline@matthewmarks.com.