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CHRISTOPHER ORR (b. 1967, UK)

There lies a marked contrast between the intimacy of Christopher Orr's compact oil paintings and the vastness of the scenes they depict: deep oceans, expansive skies, and formidable forests. Executed in broad-yet-precise brushstrokes, Orr's works evoke the sublime worlds of J.M.W. Turner and Caspar David Friedrich. Moreover, the diminutive figures, based on magazine shoots from the 1950s and '60s who populate these sweeping landscapes, seem out of place, as do the oversized shrubbery or animals that often appear. Through Orr's earthy palette and technique of juxtaposing areas of dry, scraped-back pigment "with richer, fresher looking passages conjures a dramatic lost world," as described by critic Michael Wilson, his romantic renderings are decidedly "post-modern" in their approach of deconstructing and merging various art historical styles into surrealistic compositions.

Christopher Orr draws his inspiration from old books and science magazines like the *National Geographic*. Frequently, he transfers parts of the found images to his paintings, maintaining their actual size. Passing on the responsibility for the scale in his paintings to his source material, he allows strangely fragmented images to develop, at the same time revealing his detachment from ideas of romantic entirety. Nature is represented in a condensed way, for example as supernatural light or uncanny mist, both possible expressions for a mystical or religious shiver. The object of attention remains disclosed to the viewer. An absence that expresses a contemporary uncertainty, as the unknown could be anything from the appearance of a UFO or a natural spectacle to an emptiness or something very trivial, Christopher Orr prefers not to spell it out.

Christopher Orr was born in Helensburgh, Scotland in 1967. He lives and works in London. Orr has participated in group exhibitions including *Between the Late and Early*, The Royal Scottish Academy, The Mound, Edinburgh, UK; *No New Thing Under The Sun*, Royal Academy, London, UK; *The Front Room*, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, St. Louis, US; *Don Quijote*, Witte de With, Rotterdam, NL; and *Ideal Worlds: Romanticism in Contemporary Art*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, DE. Recent solo shows include *Light Shining Darkly*, Kunsthau Baselland, Basel, CH; Hauser and Wirth, Zurich, CH; and *Before and After Science*, Arndt & Partner, Berlin, DE.