

LONDON: CANADA HOUSE

MARK KARASICK

25 April – 26 September 2003

From the rich mix of digital images which choke our eyes everyday, Mark Karasick resuscitates the analogue. Like a four-dimensional hologram, the image shimmers in and out of existence. As the artist painstakingly builds up the layers of encaustic

and pigment, so he also repeatedly scrapes them away, scoring deep into the waxy flesh of the painting, as if the only way to reveal the truth which lies behind the mask of things is to scrape away the surface of reality.

The appearance of the paintings is like that of an old scratched film, with time oxidising the silver chloride of the past, the emulsion of memory evaporating into amnesia. The gelatinous coefficient of the human eye –

which here functions as a trope for the prismatic refraction of time – is the clotted, translucent depths of microcrystalline wax from which these excavations of the innocence of early life are rendered. Concealing as much as they reveal, portrait is sacrificed for a universalised presence.

The large painting, *michael*, was accompanied by two sequential horizontal strips of the digital frames which preceded the

Mark Karasick, *michael* (detail), 2003, micro crystalline wax and pigment on canvas. Photo: Danny Bird. Courtesy: the artist



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main image; one positive, one negative, submerged under smooth skeins of wax, acting like a translucent stop-frame codex to the main image. There was also an audio element to the installation: a quadraphonic speaker filled the air with the shrill music of school-yard bells and children at play, the ebb and flow of their excited shouts and laughter

beaching us on the island of our own reminiscence, drawing us further into the painting, through its glaucous surface, into the obsidian depths beyond.

Karasick's paintings have nothing to do with photorealism; instead of foreclosing the image, as the extreme, scopophilic mimeticism of that practice tends to do, his accretive and

sedimentary praxis, with its inherent ambiguity and spectral effervescence, conversely allows the image to open up to the viewer and the viewer to open up to the image. It then becomes a site for the projection of his or her own memory, emotion and recollection.

RICHARD DYER