



TEASE

the art of

michael theise

November 12 — December 31, 2005



34439

A Fool and His Money

Oil on board
12 x 12 inches
Signed upper center

TEASE

The Art of Michael Theise

Essay written by Marcia Vose
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Cover:
Right Side, Wrong Side
Oil on board
9 x 9 inches
Signed lower right



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MICHAEL THEISE: TODAY'S TROMPE L'OEIL

[Michael Theise] is so good at what he does that the props in his paintings actually seem to project beyond the picture surface, making you want to reach out and touch them.

In Slight of Hand, Benjamin Genocchio, *New York Times*, September 12, 2004, reviewing the exhibition *Seeing is Believing: American Trompe l'Oeil* at the New Britain Museum of Art, CT.



2 x 2, 2005, oil on wood panel, 6 x 10^{1/4} inches, signed center

34304

Well into the mid-twentieth century, the U. S. government required that anyone producing facsimiles of coins and bills carry the phrase “by special permission of the Secretary of the Treasury.” Mindful of the past, Michael Theise adds little clues to his bills that give his trickery away; if you look closely at the notes on these two pages, you will be amazed to learn that the new Secretary of the Treasury is none other than Michael Theise!

Officially considered a form of still-life painting, trompe l’oeil dates back over 2,500 years to a Greek artist named Zeuxis whose painting of a cluster of grapes was attacked by hungry birds. Michael Theise takes his inspiration from 19th century American painters William M. Harnett and John Frederick Peto who pioneered the technique in this country. (Another legendary American painter, John Haberle, painted a fireplace so realistically that the family cat regularly snuggled against the hearth.) He sometimes chooses contemporary props, many of which reference the earlier artists. His *Faithful Super Soaker* (p. 21) pays homage to a famous work by Harnett, *The Faithful Colt*, 1890. He likes to play with subjects that have associations with both past and present, such as bringing together Gilbert Stuart and Jackson Pollock in *George in the Abstract* (p. 11). Like all trompe artists, he loves to capture the nuances of surface texture. Where he asserts his own artistic vision, however, is in the marriage of surface with form, and in his obvious delight in the interaction of form with idea. The complex and inviting beauty of Rosalba Peale in *A Daughter Made Famous*, p. 13 for example, combined with worn white panel, itself a pleasure to behold, gives us a painting that is disarmingly simple yet rich and evocative.

An uncle who was a painter nurtured Michael’s early artistic talents. Uncle John collected the heads of stuffed animals that adorned every inch of wall space in his house. Young Michael used these heads for subject matter, and after graduating from the Paier Academy in Hamden, CT made wildlife art his specialty. After ten years he reconnected with a former professor, still-life artist Ken Davies. Michael was so impressed with his mentor’s incredible mastery of trompe l’oeil that he decided to apply his own considerable talents to the genre.

Theise’s big break came in 1992 after meeting Jeff Cooley of Cooley Gallery in Old Lyme, CT, who held four solo exhibitions of Theise’s work. We first met Mike at our Mentors and Protégés Show in 2003, when his teacher, Ken Davies, chose him as a protégé. After seeing his incredible work, we invited him to exhibit at Vose (with the blessing of our friend, Jeff Cooley) in this, the largest showing of his work to date.

We hope you enjoy being “teased”, and we promise that your wonder at the sheer mastery of technique will more than reward the embarrassment of being fooled.

P.S. Yes, I have been fooled by Michael. When his paintings arrived, they were stacked in a row, each separated by cardboard. As I was eagerly shuffling through the new work, I stopped at *Damaged in Transit* (p. 14), and let out a loud, “Ooooh no!” After seeing my daughter’s wry smile, I could only marvel at the skill required to fool the eye, in this case my own!

Marcia L. Vose
Director, Vose Contemporary



34312

Imitating Imitation

Oil on wood panel
10 x 14 inches
Signed center



34402

A George in the Box, 2005

Oil on masonite

5¹/₄ x 4¹/₈ inches

Signed lower edge



34229

Key Note

Oil on board

7¹/₂ x 7¹/₂ inches



34237

Dealer's Choice

Oil on board
7^{1/2} x 7 inches
Signed lower right



34434

Bargain Art

Oil on board
5⁵/₈ x 6⁵/₁₆ inches
Signed right edge



34230

Easy Money

Oil on board
4³/₄ x 9³/₄ inches
Signed center

34234



Yield

Oil on board
19^{3/4} x 19^{3/4} inches
Signed center



34227

Money to Burn

Oil on board
 $4\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ inches
 Signed lower center



34361

George Gets a Promotion, 2005

Oil on masonite
 $5\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{3}{10}$ inches
 Signed lower right



34228

Key to Change
Oil on masonite
7 x 5 inches



34401

Xceptional Beauty, 2005

Oil on wood panel

22 x 14 inches

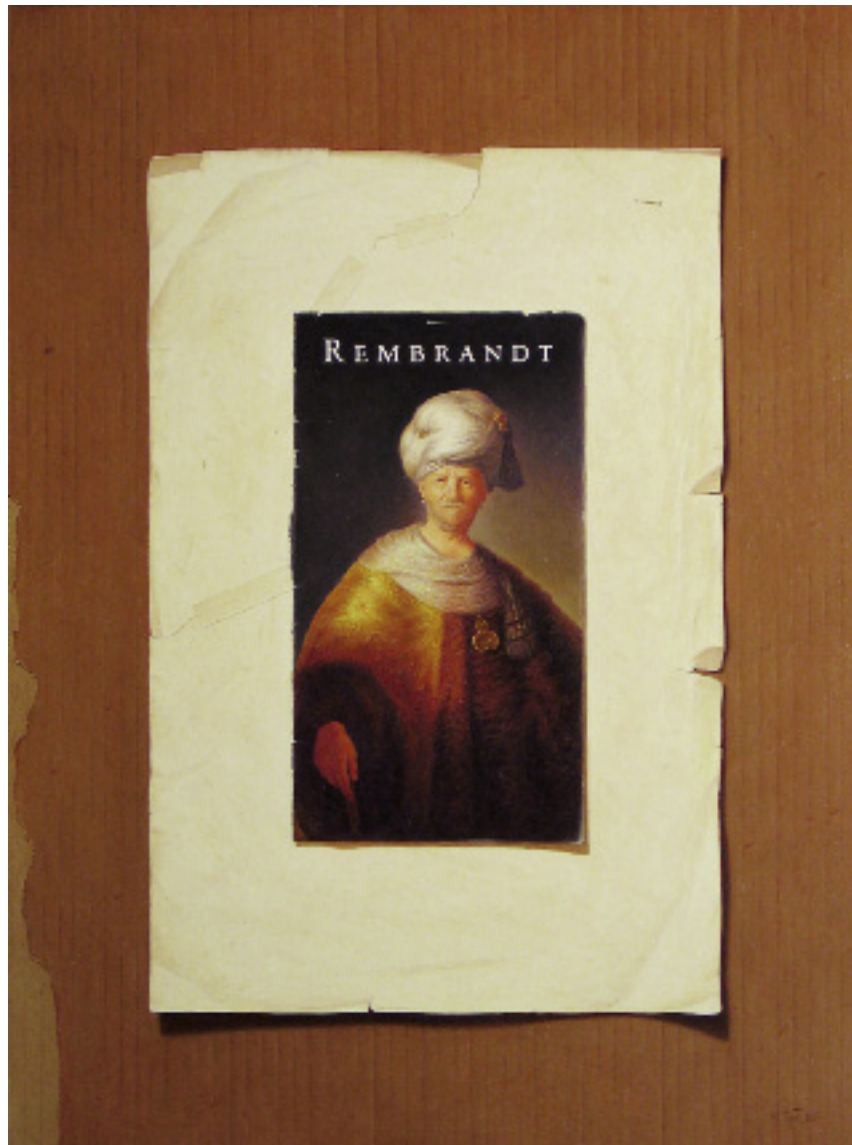
Signed lower right



34239

George in the Abstract

Enamel, acrylic, wax and oil on board
24 x 19 inches
Signed lower right



34417

Rembrandt

Oil on masonite

24 x 18 inches

Signed lower right



34358

A Daughter Made Famous

Oil on board
22 x 14 inches
Signed upper left



Damaged in Transit

Oil on wood panel
10 x 8^{3/8} inches
Signed reverse

34307



34418

Daughters of Love

Oil on board

20 x 16 inches

Signed lower right



34235

Frances

Oil on canvas mounted on board
 17^{3/4} x 13^{1/4} inches
 Signed lower right



34232

Sweethearts

Oil on board
9 x 6^{3/4} inches

Signed lower center



34308

Orchard Perfect

Oil on wood panel
12 x 7^{3/4} inches
Signed lower right



34231

Green Apple

Oil on masonite
5^{1/2} x 8^{1/4} inches
Signed lower right



34305

Antioxidant

Oil on board

3 1/4 x 5 inches

Signed lower right



34306

Unscrambled

Oil on board

6 1/4 x 5 5/8 inches

Signed lower right

34236

Fall

Oil on board
16^{3/4} x 5^{3/4} inches
Signed lower right



34399

Have a Nice Day, 2005

Oil on board
11 x 8^{1/2} inches
Signed lower right



34238

The Faithful Super Soaker

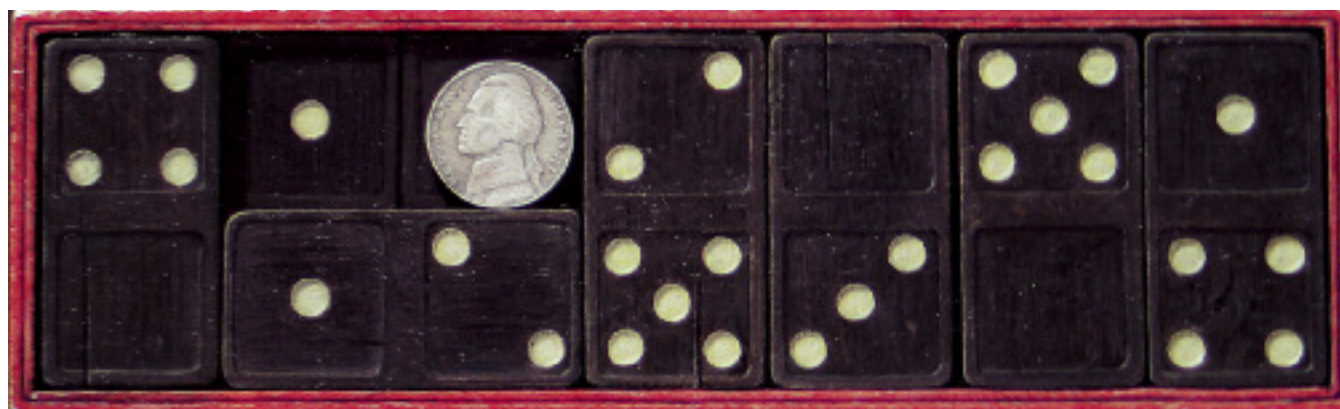
Oil on board
18^{1/2} x 15^{1/4} inches
Signed upper right



34313

Peale's New Sketch Pad, 2005

Oil on wood panel
8 x 9^{1/2} inches
Signed reverse



34400

Jefferson's Niche, 2005

Oil on wood panel
2^{5/16} x 7^{1/2} inches
Signed lower edge



34414

Taking Chances, 2005

Oil on wood panel
 19^{7/16} x 19^{7/16} inches
 Signed center



34415

Abstracting Peale, 2005

Enamel, acrylic, wax and oil on board
24 x 23^{3/4} inches
Signed lower right



34240

Plattitudes

Oil on panel
14^{1/2} x 12^{1/2} inches
Signed lower right

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