



CLEARING

Ghost Protocol

An exhibition of new works by **Alfred d'Ursel**
January 31 – March 31, 2018

Amongst a series of delphic landscapes, *The New York Times* logo sits authoritatively at the top of a white canvas. In lieu of journalistic content below, a red and green parachute can be glimpsed as if through a monocular lens. It is in the process of landing, pulled horizontally by the inertia of an unseen body across the nebulous picture plane.

For Alfred d'Ursel's first solo presentation at C L E A R I N G in his native Belgium, we are asked to imagine the author of these paintings as a mute witness: a voyeur who treats his surreptitious gaze as objective observation.

Here, landscapes unfold in stark contrasts: The architectural details of garden walls are shocked out of the darkness of night by a camera's flash, while enigmatic desert temples are bleached by the sun's glare.

D'Ursel's approach to his practice is diaristic, a catalogue of moments in passing. Each painting gestures toward a lingering human presence, but is haunted by a lack thereof.

Without, the paintings' narratives become murky, speculative: scenes set for what is about to happen, or what may have just occurred.

Charged with personal experience, d'Ursel's paintings hover close to – but never quite touch – the emotional weight of painterly expression. As a result, we find images distilled in extremes of light and dark, and closely cropped, thus obscuring and magnifying all but the most poignant details. Painterly authorship underlines the possibility that an image is never quite what it professes to be.

This self-restriction nourishes d'Ursel's practice. In past series, visual keys gave way to cinematic foreshadowing. Here, we are left with the sense that the image as it has been transferred to canvas does not reveal – even in its sobriety – the whole truth.

Indeed, like his ongoing nod to *The New York Times*, d'Ursel's paintings question the trust we put in images. Just as photographs are not facts, so the hand of a painter cannot help but drift towards a selective gaze in search of a *punctum*.

Alfred d'Ursel (b. 1986) lives and works in Brussels. Previous exhibitions include *Shanaynay* (2017), Paris; *The Squatter* (2016), curated by Michael Callies at Gaudel de Stampa, Paris; *Two-Story* (2016), at C L E A R I N G, Brussels; and *Out of Character* (2014), at CAB, Brussels.