

'Modern Painters', December 2007, New York/NY

MICHAEL RAEDECKER

HAUSER & WIRTH

Although it probably helped make his name during a craft-obsessed, post-YBA hiatus, and no doubt continues to amuse those seeking novelty, the London-based, Dutch-born Michael Raedecker's use of thread to delineate forms on canvas only partly explains the enduring appeal of his paintings. Increasingly, he's an artist on the lookout for conceptual and aesthetic resistance, and the most interesting aspect of these recent, less obviously seductive pictures is the degree to which he tests his facility and the viewer's expectations while slipping between the genres of still life and landscape. To this end, there's a whole lot of fakery going on, which might help explain the mind-set of an artist who initially

studied fashion design and, by his own admission, remains somewhat cautious of grand artistic statements.

A sense of distance and fracture is more apparent than ever. Described across four ostensibly monochrome panels, the subject matter of the largest work, *insignificance* (2007)—a ruined street—is grasped only after some scrutiny. This image lends itself to Raedecker's methods perfectly: not only because the faltering stitched line he favors is indicative of erosion but also because his way of staining and distressing the canvas, like the tricks one might employ to "age" something shamefully new, further confuses what we're looking at—the real thing or a rich person's folly?—and, as with all of Raedecker's best work, undermines touchstones of provenance and value.

—MARTIN COOMER



MICHAEL RAEDECKER, *LU5T*, 2007. ACRYLIC AND THREAD ON CANVAS, 40 X 57 IN. COURTESY HAUSER & WIRTH, LONDON.