

MICHAEL CHAPMAN

# A Return to Metropolis



The composition of Michael Chapman's painting *The Lost Commuters No. 2* recalls that of one of Edward Hopper's most famous paintings, *Nighthawks*. Chapman often echoes Hopper's sense of ennui and loneliness, but there, the similarity ends.

Not content simply to have the viewer peer through the store window he makes us contemplate what is real and what may not be real. At first glance, the suited headless mannequin in the window seems in scale with the parking meter outside despite the fact that it has begun to sink into the display space's floor. Lost commuters in a smaller scale have wandered into the space from somewhere outside. The angularity of the window, adjacent architecture and

street scene are softened by the sinuous lines of the train and cars. The ambiguity is disconcerting.

The artificial light of the display window blends seamlessly with the brightly sunlit scene behind as if it is the sunlight and not the two spotlights above that provide the illumination. The people, cars and locomotive in the image are rendered like objects in a still life. Highlights and shadow make the cars appear like so many fruit arranged on a tabletop.

The scene shifts in *Metropolitan #1*, where an actual still life of fruit echoes the curves and colors of the automobiles.

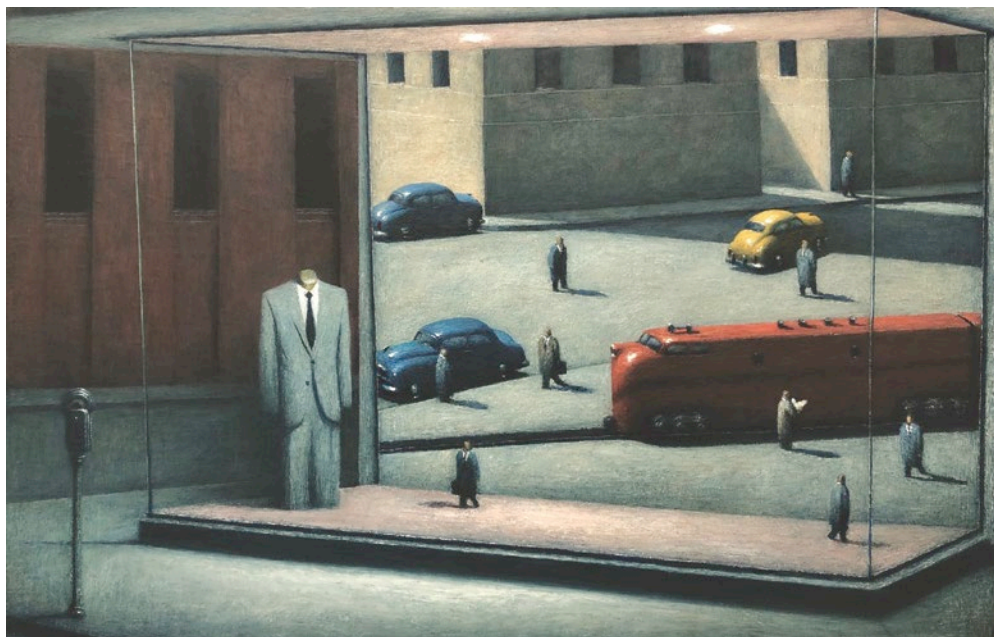
The ordinariness of everyday life found in Hopper and the surrealist changes in

scale found in René Magritte are merely recalled in Chapman's paintings, put to different use in his own way, creating a scene of familiarity and of disorientation. The paintings can be approached as mysteries to be pondered while, at the same time, admired as Dutch still lifes transported to the open spaces and sunlight of Southern California.

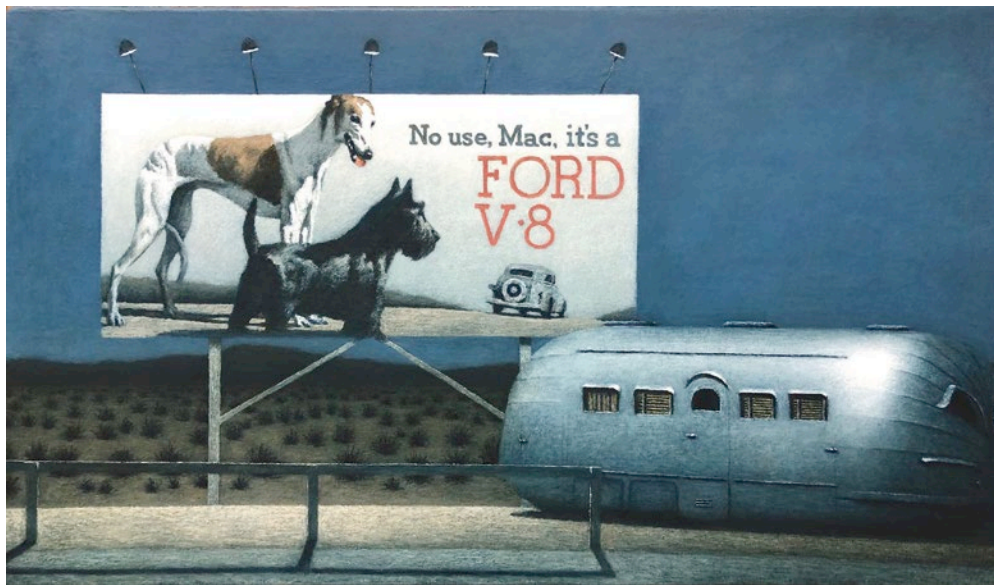
Chapman's solo exhibition *A Return to Metropolis*, featuring these and other paintings, will be on view July 20 to August 10 at Arcadia Contemporary. ●

## Arcadia Contemporary

39 E. Colorado Boulevard • Pasadena, CA 91105 • (626) 486-2018 • [www.arcadiacontemporary.com](http://www.arcadiacontemporary.com)



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1  
Metropolitan #1,  
oil on canvas, 13 x 22"

2  
The Lost Commuters No. 2,  
oil on canvas, 13 x 20"

3  
Towards Los Angeles,  
oil on canvas, 14 x 24"