

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
2 August 2011

The Alan Cristea Gallery at
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GORDON CHEUNG: THE LIGHT THAT BURNS TWICE AS BRIGHT

Exhibition of new works influenced by Wikileaks' 'trophy' photos of torture, and the film *Blade Runner*, examine themes of war and conquest

14 SEPTEMBER – 5 OCTOBER 2011

Private View: 13 September, 6-8pm

London – The Alan Cristea Gallery will stage an exhibition of new works, *Gordon Cheung: The Light that Burns Twice as Bright*, from 14 September to 5 October 2011.

Cheung's multi-media artistic vision is fuelled by an anxious reflection on the current state of affairs in capitalist societies. He invokes prophetic visions of the impending end of our civilization: epic, sublime but terrifying revelations of post-apocalyptic landscapes, set against the backdrop of stock listings collage. He cross-references the cultural, mythological, political, religious and artistic to capture the 'desert of the real': a hyper-real cyberscape of toxic undertones and noxious glows, complete with rampaging fauna, paranoiac hallucinations of collapsing architecture and technopsychedelical biblical apparitions. His oeuvre can be placed within the long tradition of imagining the end of the world, displaying kinship with the Romantic landscapes of John Martin and Caspar David Friedrich.

Cheung begins a painting by laying out a background of collaged sheets from the Financial Times. Over this base, he juxtaposes layers of digital printing, ink, oil and acrylic paint. His imagery is lifted from the internet; current affairs, in particular news items surrounding the credit crisis, the 'war on terror' and environmental disasters provide much of the raw material for his work. Although the small print of stock market listings is at times barely visible, covered as it is by the heavy impasto that characterises recent paintings, the market is omnipresent in the work. But the notion of 'financial capitalism' does not interest Cheung as much as that of "virtual capitalism", of speculative financial transactions disconnected from the sphere of material production and physical reality. The fantasy of undoing and exposing the spectacle is also a recurring theme in Philip K. Dick's literature. His novel '*Do androids dream of electric sheep?*' was adapted for the cinema in 1982 by Ridley Scott in the sci-fi cult movie *Blade Runner*, a major source of inspiration for Cheung in the making of '*The Light that Burns Twice as Bright*'.

The focal point of the exhibition are four large paintings completed in 2011, measuring 150 x 200 cm, including *Still Life*, *Black Sun*, *The Highway* and *Trembling Sunrise*, shown alongside a series of smaller paintings, including still lives, which stem from the larger works.

"The Disasters of Terror is a series of small pyrographic laser etchings and Light them all up is based on a still from wikileaks 'collateral murder', the 'crazy horse' apache helicopter that killed a group of innocents including two Reuters journalists," says Cheung. *"It is the moment in between life and death where the image of destruction is created by the act of destruction"*.

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Gordon Cheung is of Hong Kong origin, born in London 1975 where he lives and works. He graduated from the Royal College of Art, 2001.

Cheung exhibits internationally, including *The British Art Show 6* and *The John Moores Painting 24*. He was commissioned for a Laing Art Solo Award (Selected by Susan May) July 2007. In 2010 Cheung staged his first US solo museum exhibition at the Arizona State University Art Museum and also had solo shows last year at ROOM Gallery, London, and at the Other Gallery, Shanghai, with an exhibition entitled *The Sleeper Awakes*, also touring in Beijing and Wenzhou in 2011. His works are in international collections including the Hirshhorn Museum, Whitworth Museum, ASU Art Museum, The New Art Gallery Walsall, Hiscox Collection, Progressive Arts Collection, UBS Collection and the Gottesman Collection.

A number of works by Cheung are currently showing alongside those of John Martin (1789-1854) at the Museums Sheffield: Millennium Gallery, until 20 September (after which the John Martin show will transfer directly to Tate Britain, from 21 September until 15 January 2012).

Notes to Editors:

One of the leading commercial contemporary galleries in Europe, the **Alan Cristea Gallery** is the primary representative for a number of established international contemporary artists, artists' estates and emerging artists. The gallery opened at 31 Cork Street in 1995 and since then has expanded to a second exhibition space at 34 Cork Street, with both galleries showing a continuous programme of exhibitions including contemporary paintings, works on paper, sculpture and installations. In addition, the gallery is known for its commitment to original prints and editions, commissioning and facilitating innovative projects by outstanding artists, and is the largest publisher of contemporary editions and prints in Europe. Forthcoming projects include Gillian Ayres, Dexter Dalwood, Edmund de Waal, Jan Dibbets, Howard Hodgkin, Vicken Parsons and Lisa Ruyter.

Title: Gordon Cheung: *The Light that Burns Twice as Bright*
Address: Alan Cristea Gallery: 31&34 Cork Street, London W1
Telephone: +44 (0) 207 439 1866
Website: www.alancristea.com
Dates: 14 Sept – 5 Oct; 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-2pm Sat
Admission: Free
Travel: Piccadilly, Green Park or Bond Street Tubes