



Luke Butler: "Luke Butler"
2020



Courtesy of the Luke Butler

"My work reflects an abiding, lifelong fascination with heroes and heroic imagery.

From an early age, I was warned to be skeptical of the brightly colored world of TV and movies - that no matter how much it meant to me, it was not real. However, I have loved and looked deeply into that world at every stage of my life, and the relationship that has endured and evolved between us is quite real, and quite significant, and is something that I share with many friends, old and new. The tension between the disposable unreality of popular culture, and the vital, even mythic role it plays in our lives, fuels my work in art. I make paintings of moving pictures that find a new role in sitting still, where pop imagery can be both artificial and true."

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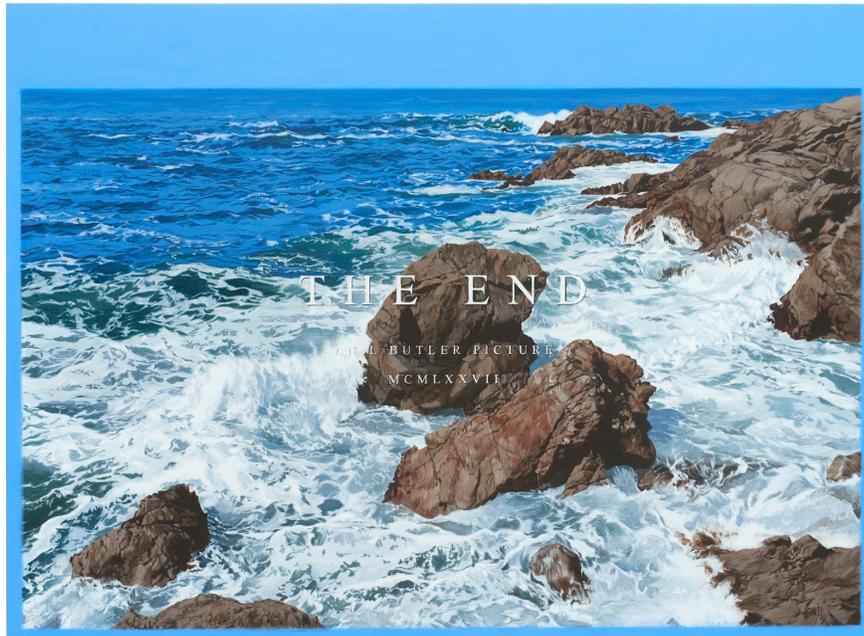
"THE END is a classic fixture of our narrative culture, which I paint as a figure in a landscape. Untethered from its established role as a moving-picture exit, its meaning strays. Static and alone in a scenic wilderness, it becomes antiheroic, absurd, a pop memento-mori. As it unfolds into a series, THE END goes from a singular entity to a refrain of comic despair that increases with repetition. Though meant to look and feel like genuine film references, these are made from pictures that I take, mostly of San Francisco's elemental coast."



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"If these text-based pieces render the actual landscape legendary and cinematic, my earlier efforts draw humanity out of the cherished and iconic television figures of my youth. Removed from their fast-moving context, men of action become figures of pathos. In paint, on canvas, frozen in mid-gesture, they have somewhat the appearance of religious painting, emphasizing vulnerability, sorrow, ambiguity- things of significance well beyond that of the tidy world of televised narrative.

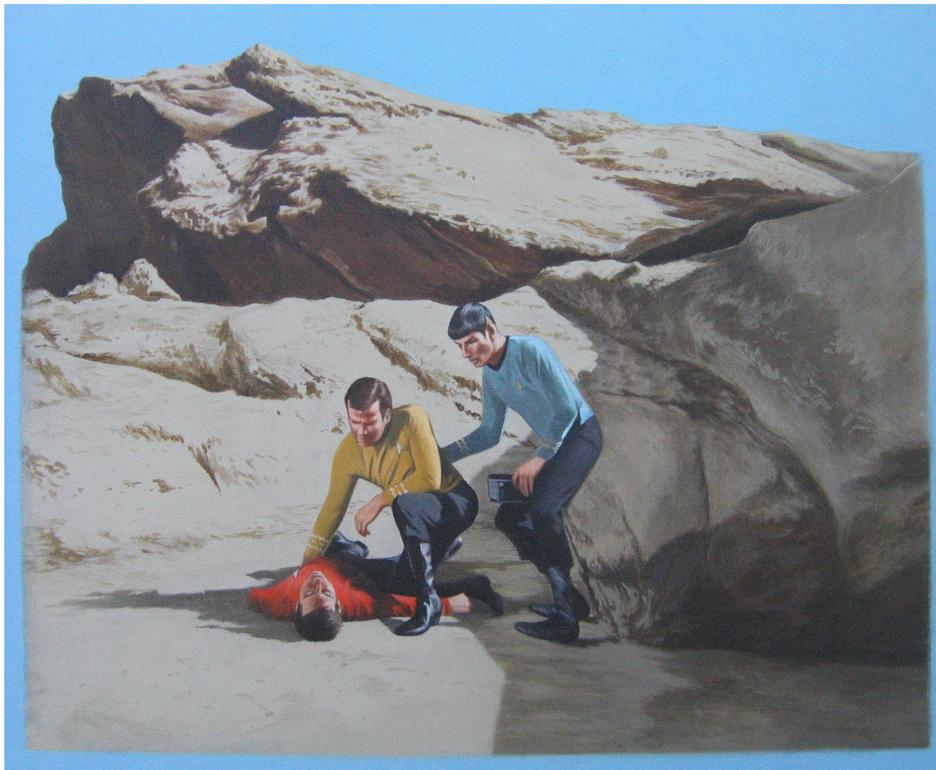
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While the figures and scenery that I paint are highly descriptive, they are contained within the flat interior of the canvas. The imagery dissolves at the edges, at the boundary of reality and artifice, where my work most wants to be."



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