

ALEX KANEVSKY

Jumper, 2015
Oil on Wood, 18 x 18 in



COURTESY DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

UMBERTO TOSI

The Flying Dutchman of the Internet

This was the last time he was going to do this. The sameness was getting to him. The sublime view from his table at Greens didn't move him. Forget that the Golden Gate Bridge never wore the same dress twice—dazzling in myriad refractive effects or sauntering in stoles of wispy fog. “When I'm out on a spree, fighting vainly the old ennui . . .” The Cole Porter lyric suited him this afternoon, memorized from his LP collection. Sameness of everything, not just these semi-blind first dates with Internet sweeties.

He gazed over iffy bobbing boats, determined supertankers, and glistening turquoise swells at the distant span. He time-traveled to the not-so-distant past when the Ohlone fished from tule rafts before the Spanish showed up with their crosses to bear, before white Victorians climbed San Francisco's hills. Then he fast-forwarded to improbable spires and domes, alien and earthling, that he had drawn for video game posters as a mercenary artist with once-high aspirations.

These days, Arlo conjured storyboards for yet another RPG shooter in a gleaming East Bay high-rise, the latest being *Flying Dutchman 2*, with quantum-cannon space galleons. His job used to be fun. They were on a double deadline for the next *Odyssey* and new *Flying Dutchman Ghost Ship* RPGs for Disney. But Arlo's concentration was spooky as seven hundred head of cattle on locoweed. He spent hours on everything but his assigned tasks. The old restlessness laid clammy hands on the back of his neck. Stop it, he'd say to himself. You burned too many bridges. You're no more the boy wonder. Then, all of a sudden he would be adrift in sappy fantasies about strolling a beach with a smart and appealing woman of undetermined visage who had his back—not becoming an old guy with a studio apartment walking a three-legged dog. The dark clouds of aborted relationships would part, allowing him a warm moment on the sunny side of love.

Every seven years, the Flying Dutchman comes ashore to find the one true love that would lift his curse. So goes the legend. But what if that were part of the curse, luring him to founder unrequited on the craggy Cape of Good Hope every damn time?

Such considerations informed his online dating criteria, and after many false starts, Iolanda seemed to fill the bill. She never mentioned relationship in her blurb: