

Petzel

JOHN STEZAKER

Double Shadow

April 21 – June 3, 2023

520 West 25th Street

Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new collages by British artist John Stezaker. The work forms part of the series *Double Shadow* which is a continuation of the artist's career-long engagement with film stills and publicity portraits dating from the age of classical Hollywood cinema. For some years, Stezaker has been cutting out the actors in publicity photos and pasting the remainder onto a dark ground to create hollowed-out silhouettes. The works on show are made by doubling this technique, superimposing one negative silhouette on top of another in a way that transforms both. The resulting images recall the paranoid, shadowy world of German Expressionist film and film noir. Their complex play of light and shade, part photographic, part produced by the collage technique, recreates the richly textured chiaroscuro of noir films, while the silhouettes themselves recall the dramatic effect of back-lighting.

The age and obsolescence of Stezaker's collection of found photographs estranges them from normal waking reality. He regards his collection "as an underworld of images liberated from their ties to legibility. Abandoned to disuse, they took on the dark aura of fascination." They became for him a "nocturnal underworld", "a world of spectres and shadows." His collage technique renders them even more obscure and fascinating.

Because the *Double Shadow* collages merge two negative silhouettes, they often convey a sense of psychological capture by a double or possession by a revenant. The philosopher Gilles Deleuze once remarked that "the cinematographic image is never in the present." Films, such as Hitchcock's *Rebecca* or *Vertigo*, often thematize film's ability to superimpose past and present and remind us that consciousness is never in the present, either. Stezaker's *Double Shadow* collages both depict this kind of haunting and awaken it in the viewer.

—Margaret Iversen

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About John Stezaker

John Stezaker (b. 1949, Worcester) lives and works in London and St. Leonards-on-Sea. Recent solo exhibitions include: *John Stezaker*, Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples, Italy (2021); *At the Edge of Pictures: John Stezaker, Works 1975–1990*, Luxembourg & Co, London, UK (2020); *John Stezaker*, National Portrait Gallery, London (2019); *Lost World*, City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand (touring show) (2017-2018); *John Stezaker*, Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, UK; *Aftermath*, York Art Gallery, UK (2017); *Film Works*, De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea, UK; *Collages*, Fotomuseum Nederlands, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2015); *John Stezaker*, Centre de la Photographie Genève, Switzerland; *John Stezaker: Working from the Collection*, Les Rencontres Arles Photographie, Arles, France; *John Stezaker: One on One*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel (2013); *Marriage*, Haggerty Museum of Art, Milwaukee, USA; *John Stezaker*, The Whitechapel Gallery, London, touring to MUDAM, Luxembourg and Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, USA (2011-2012); *Lost Images*, Kunstverein Freiburg, Germany (2010).

Stezaker was awarded the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize in 2012. His work has been the focus of a number of publications, including *Double Shadow* which will be released in Spring 2023 with Koenig; *John Stezaker: At the Edge of Pictures*, Yuval Etgar, Koenig Books, London (2020); *John Stezaker: Love*, London: Ridinghouse, published on the occasion of *Love* at The Approach, London (2019); *John Stezaker: Lost World*, London: Ridinghouse, published on the occasion of *Lost World*, touring exhibition in various Australia and New Zealand locations (2018) and *John Stezaker*, London: Ridinghouse, in association with Whitechapel Gallery, Mudam Luxembourg, and Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum (2010).

Stezaker's work is in collections worldwide, including: Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia; Arts Council England, UK; Birmingham Museums Trust, UK; British Council Collection, UK; Ellipse Foundation Contemporary Art Collection, Cascais, Portugal; FRAC Ile-de-France/ Le Plateau, Paris, France; Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, Netherlands; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA; MoMA, New York, USA; MUDAM Collection, Luxembourg; RISD Museum of Art, Providence, USA; The Rubell Family Collection, Miami, USA; Sammlung Verbund, Vienna, Austria; Seattle Art Museum, Washington, USA; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands; Tate Collection, London, UK; The University of Warwick Art Collection, Coventry, UK; The York Museum Trust, York, UK; Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK.

Petzel Gallery is located at 520 West 25th Street New York, NY 10001. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Ricky Lee at ricky@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.